

EPF-4

THE NAME IS NEW BUT THE PATTERN IS FAMILIAR (BACKGROUND) (S12)

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(UNDATED) -- THE NAME IS NEW, BUT THE PEOPLE -- AND THE PATTERN -- ARE FAMILIAR.

SINCE ITS GENESIS AS THE "ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG REVOLUTIONARIES" IN THE 1920'S, THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY HAS SPONSORED SCORES OF FRONT ORGANIZATIONS DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO NON-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS AND TO MASK THE PARTY'S EFFORTS TO MANIPULATE PATRIOTIC, RELIGIOUS OR ETHNIC GROUPS.

AND NOW THE SUDDENLY-CREATED "PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT" (PRG), WHICH REPORTEDLY HAS ASSIMILATED BOTH THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NLF) AND THE "ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PEACE FORCES" IN SOUTH VIETNAM, HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST. IT IS DOMINATED BY MEMBERS OF THE "PEOPLES' REVOLUTIONARY PARTY," AN ORGANIZATION LONG AGO EXPOSED AS AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF THE RULING COMMUNIST PARTY OF NORTH VIETNAM.

HEAD OF THE NEW "GOVERNMENT" IS HUYNH TAN PHAT, WHOSE COMMUNIST AFFILIATIONS EXTEND BACK TO HIS 1945 MEMBERSHIP IN A FRONT ACTIVIST GROUP CALLED THE VANGUARD YOUTH. HE LATER WAS A PROMINENT FIGURE IN THE VIETNAMESE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, OSTENSIBLY AN ANTI-COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, BUT ACTUALLY CONTROLLED BY THE COMMUNISTS.

DRIVEN UNDERGROUND IN 1953, MR. PHAT RE-EMERGED IN 1960 AS THE HEAD OF THE SAIGON COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERATION FRONT WHEN THAT ORGANIZATION ARRIVED ON THE SCENE IN MUCH THE SAME MANNER AS THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT -- THE PURPORTED PRODUCT OF A MEETING HELD AT AN UNSPECIFIED LOCATION BY DELEGATES WHO, FOR THE MOST PART, HAVE REMAINED ANONYMOUS AND WHOSE CONSTITUENCIES ARE SHROUDED IN OBSCURITY.

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MR. PHAT BECAME SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LIBERATION FRONT IN 1964, AND HAS BEEN CONSIDERED THE REAL POWER WITHIN THE FRONT -- DESPITE THE PUBLIC PROMINENCE ACCORDED CHAIRMAN NGUYEN HUU THO. SIGNIFICANTLY, MR. THO, WHO WAS COCHAIRMAN OF THE "COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DELEGATES" OFFICIALLY CREDITED WITH FORMING THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, HOLDS THE RELATIVELY MINOR POST OF CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE "NEW GOVERNMENT."

THE IMPORTANT POST OF MINISTER OF DEFENSE IN THE SHADOW GOVERNMENT IS, APPROPRIATELY, A SHADOWY FIGURE KNOWN AS TRAN NAM TRUNG. OVER THE YEARS MR. TRUNG APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SEVERAL DIFFERENT PEOPLE. HIS NAME HAS BEEN USED BY AT LEAST TWO NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY GENERALS -- TRAN VAN TRU AND TRAN

LUONG -- AND POSSIBLY BY A THIRD, LE VAN TIEN.

EVEN MORE CONFUSING, THE FACE IN THE OFFICIAL LIBERATION FRONT PHOTOGRAPH OF DEFENSE MINISTER TRUNG HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THAT OF GENERAL LUONG, WHO ALSO IS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY.

DEFENSE MINISTER TRUNG ALSO HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE "PEOPLES' REVOLUTIONARY PARTY", ALTHOUGH UP TO NOW THE NAME "TRAN NAM TRUNG" APPARENTLY WAS RESERVED FOR THE MILITARY COMMANDER OF THE VIET CONG, REGARDLESS OF WHICH NORTH VIETNAMESE GENERAL HAPPENED TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE POST.

FORMER PARTICIPANTS IN THE "ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PEACE FORCES", WHICH THE COMMUNISTS CREATED EARLY IN 1968 IN CONJUNCTION WITH THEIR FEBRUARY-MARCH TET OFFENSIVE, ALSO ARE INCLUDED IN THE 27-MEMBER CABINET.

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THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY WAS ORGANIZED (IN THREE DAYS) AND THE APPARENT RUBBER-STAMP ROLE OF THE "DELEGATES" ALSO EVOKE MEMORIES OF THE "INSTANT GOVERNMENT" FORMED BY HO CHI MINH IN 1945.

WHEN JAPAN CAPITULATED TO THE ALLIES AT THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO -- ENDING ITS FIVE-YEAR OCCUPATION OF INDOCHINA -- THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY HASTILY CONVENED A "NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS," FOLLOWED IN LESS THAN 48 HOURS BY A "PEOPLES' GENERAL CONGRESS."

ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL NORTH VIETNAMESE NEWSPAPER, NHAN DAN, THAT "PEOPLES' CONGRESS" INCLUDED SOME 60 REPRESENTATIVES OF "VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES, POPULAR GROUPS, NATIONAL MINORITIES, RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND VIETNAMESE ABROAD." ALL OF THESE OSTENSIBLY NON-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS, IT SINCE HAS BEEN LEARNED, HAD EITHER BEEN ORGANIZED BY THE COMMUNISTS OR HEAVILY INFILTRATED.

AS NHAN DAN REPORTED IT, THE CONGRESS "UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE (COMMUNIST) PARTY AND THE VIET MINH'S TEN GREAT POLICIES AND APPOINTED THE VIETNAMESE LIBERATION COMMITTEE, WHICH BECAME THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, HEADED BY PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH."

RADIO HANOI'S JUNE 12 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORMATION OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT HAD A FAMILIAR RING: "THE VIETNAMESE ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PEACE FORCES AND OTHER PATRIOTIC FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM HELD A SOUTHERN PEOPLES' DELEGATES' CONGRESS...AND UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED TO FORM A REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT..."

THE IDENTITIES OF THE DELEGATES, AS WELL AS THE COMPOSITION OF THE "OTHER PATRIOTIC FORCES" WERE NOT REVEALED. NEVERTHELESS, AS HAD THE PURPORTEDLY NON-COMMUNIST PARTICIPANTS IN THE 1945 "PEOPLES' CONGRESS," THEY REVEALED THEIR ALLEGIANCE BY VOTING "UNANIMOUSLY" FOR A "PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT" PATTERNED ON THE EARLIER MODEL "HEADED BY PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH'S" TEAM