HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JUNE 16, 21, AND JULY 26, 1977

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
93-996 WASHINGTON : 1977

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402
Stock Number 052-070-04262-1

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CLEMENT J. ZABLOCKI, Wisconsin, *Chairman*

L. H. FOUNTAIN, North Carolina
DANTE B. FASCELL, Florida
CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR., Michigan
ROBERT N. C. NIX, Pennsylvania
DONALD M. FRASER, Minnesota
BENJAMIN S. ROSENTHAL, New York
LEE H. HAMILTON, Indiana
LESTER L. WOLFF, New York
JONATHAN B. BINGHAM, New York
GUS YATRON, Pennsylvania
MICHAEL HARRINGTON, Massachusetts
LEO J. RYAN, California
CARDISS COLLINS, Illinois
STEPHEN J. SOLARZ, New York
HELEN S. MEYNER, New Jersey
DON BONKER, Washington
GERRY E. STUDDS, Massachusetts
ANDY IRELAND, Florida
DONALD J. PEASE, Ohio
ANTHONY C. BEILENSON, California
WYCHE FOWLER, JR., Georgia
E (KIKA) DE LA GARZA, Texas
GEORGE E. DANIELSON, California
JOHN J. CAVANAUGH, Nebraska

WILLIAM S. BROOMFIELD, Michigan
EDWARD J. DERWINSKI, Illinois
PAUL FINDLEY, Illinois
JOHN H. BUCHANAN, JR., Alabama
J. HERBERT BURKE, Florida
CHARLES W. WHALEN, JR., Ohio
LARRY WINN, JR., Kansas
BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, New York
TENNYSON GUYER, Ohio
ROBERT J. LAGOMARSINO, California
WILLIAM F. GOODLING, Pennsylvania
SHIRLEY N. PETTIS, California

JOHN J. BRADY, JR., *Chief of Staff*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

DONALD M. FRASER, Minnesota, *Chairman*

MICHAEL HARRINGTON, Massachusetts
BENJAMIN S. ROSENTHAL, New York
LEE H. HAMILTON, Indiana
LEO J. RYAN, California

EDWARD J. DERWINSKI, Illinois
WILLIAM F. GOODLING, Pennsylvania

ROBERT B. BOETTCHER, *Subcommittee Staff Director*
THOMAS R. SMEETON, *Minority Staff Consultant*
JOHN P. SALZBERG, *Staff Consultant*
CLIFFORD P. HACKETT, *Subcommittee Staff Associate*
MARGARET E. GALEY, *Subcommittee Staff Associate*
ESTRELLITA JONES, *Subcommittee Staff Associate*
JOSEPHINE WEBER, *Staff Assistant*

CONTENTS

WITNESSES

APPENDIX

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Other Documents in the Series

Human Rights in the World Community: A Call for U.S. Leadership. March 27, 1974.[3] (Report of the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

International Protection of Human Rights: The Work of International Organizations and the Role of U.S. Foreign Policy. August 1; September 13, 19, 20, 27; October 3, 4, 10, 11, 16, 18, 24, 25; November 1; December 7, 1973,[3] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Human Rights in Chile (Part 1). December 9, 1973; May 7, 23; June 11, 12, and 18, 1974.[3] (Joint hearings by the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements and the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs.)

Treatment of Israeli POW's in Syria and Their Status Under the Geneva Convention. February 26, 1974.[3] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements and the full committee.)

Problems of Protecting Civilians Under International Law in the Middle East Conflict. April 4, 1974.[3] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Human Rights in Africa: Report by the International Commission of Jurists. June 13, 1974.[3] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Review of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. June 18 and 20, 1974.[3] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Soviet Union: Human Rights and Détente. July 17 and 25, 1974.[3] (Joint hearings by the Subcommittee on Europe and the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Torture and Oppression in Brazil. December 11, 1974.[3] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in South Korea and the Philippines: Implications for U.S. Policy. May 20, 22; June 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 24, 1975.[3] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Human Rights in Chile (Part 2). November 19, 1974.[1] (Joint hearing by the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs and the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Human Rights in South Korea: Implications for U.S. Policy. July 31, August 5, December 20, 1974.[3] (Joint Hearings by the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements.)

Human Rights in Haiti. November 18, 1975.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Chile. December 9, 1975.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Chile: The Status of Human Rights and Its Relationship to U.S. Economic Assistance Programs. April 29; May 5, 1976.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Psychiatric Abuse of Political Prisoners in the Soviet Union: Testimony by Leonid Plyushch. March 30, 1976.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Indonesia and the Philippines. December 18 and May 3, 1976.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Anti-Semitism and Reprisals Against Jewish Emigration in the Soviet Union. May 27, 1976.[2] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

See footnotes on following page.

Human Rights in the Philippines: Report by Amnesty International. September 15, 1976.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights Issues at the Sixth Regular Session of the Organization of American States General Assembly. August 10, 1976.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Religious Persecution in the Soviet Union. June 24 and 30, 1976.[1] (Joint hearings before the Subcommittee on International Political and Military Affairs and the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Iran. August 3 and September 8, 1976.[2] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador. June 8 and 9, 1976.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in India. June 23, 28, and 29, and September 16 and 23, 1976.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Uruguay and Paraguay. June 17; July 27, 28; and August 4, 1976.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Namibia: The United Nations and U.S. Policy. August 24 and 27, 1976.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Argentina. September 28 and 29, 1976.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in North Korea. September 9, 1976.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

The Recent Presidential Elections in El Salvador: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy. March 9 and 17, 1977.[1] (Joint hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs.)

Human Rights in East Timor and the Question of the Use of U.S. Equipment by the Indonesian Armed Forces. March 23, 1977.[1] (Joint hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs.)

Human Rights in Cambodia. May 3, 1977.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in the International Community and in U.S. Foreign Policy, 1945–76. July 24, 1977.[1] (Report of the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

The Status of Human Rights in Selected Countries and the U.S. Response. July 25, 1977.[1] (Report of the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in East Timor. June 28, and July 19, 1977.[1] (Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Taiwan. June 14, 1977.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

Human Rights in Cambodia. July 26, 1977.[1] (Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Organizations.)

---

[1] Document available from Government Printing Office, or from International Relations Committee.
[2] Document available from the International Relations Committee only.
[3] Not available.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 1977

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2:08 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Donald M. Fraser (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. FRASER. The subcommittee will come to order.

Today we begin the first day of hearings on the human rights situation in Vietnam and its implications for U.S. policy. The subcommittee, as part of its long-time work in the area of international human rights, wishes to examine the allegations of human rights violations existing under the present Vietnamese Government.

Since the coming to power of the present Government of Vietnam in 1975, there have been serious reports of widespread repressive actions, including massive arrests and detentions of persons.

The United States presently has no diplomatic or commercial relations with the Government of Vietnam. However, given the U.S. initial moves toward possible normalization of relations with this country, it is of major concern to remain informed of the situation in Vietnam.

We are happy to hear testimony from Julia B. Forsythe, Asia desk, American Friends Service Committee; Father Andre Gelinas, a Jesuit Priest, Far Eastern Province of the Jesuit Order; and Dr. William S. Turley, associate professor of political science, Southern Illinois University.

We will proceed in the order in which we have identified the witnesses. We are delighted to welcome all of the witnesses here. Ms. Forsythe, if you would like to begin, we would be glad to hear from you.

Your prepared statement will be inserted in the record.

STATEMENT OF JULIA B. FORSYTHE, ASIA DESK, AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Ms. FORSYTHE. Fine. Thank you.

I would like to begin with a brief summary of the written statement that I sent to this committee yesterday.

I should begin by identifying myself and why it is that I would presume to appear in these hearings. I worked for the American Friends Service Committee in Vietnam, in the Province of Quang Ngai, from January of 1973 and through the end of the war, and stayed until October of 1975. During that time, I worked in the physi-

cal rehabilitation center, and the job that the Quakers were doing in Vietnam was that of preparing limbs, arms and legs, for Vietnamese civilians who had been wounded.

The majority of the patients who came to the center in Quang Ngai during my first 2½ years there were wounded by ordnance, most of them dropped during the course of the war by the U.S. military, mines, grenades, bombs, and shrapnel. In my testimony, I go into a number of patients' cases, but I will let that be read.

After the end of the war, in late April of 1975, I was in Saigon. I stayed there for the following 6 months, and my concern and deep love for the Vietnamese people that had grown up during my 2½ years of service continued and deepened, and I was very concerned, and remain today to be very concerned about the conditions in Vietnam.

The things that I was most struck by after the change of government were initially how the panic that had been so much a part of the days before the change calmed down and subsided and settled, and people got back into their day-to-day life.

Normalcy was very important. The markets were open again, the people went about their business, and the panic began to subside.

During the next 6 months, a number of different occasions remain prominent in my mind. They stand out as being an important time. One of these times was the middle of the summer, when there was a demonstration downtown in Saigon. That was a demonstration when officers' wives of the officers having gone to hoc-tap demonstrated. They wanted to know what happened to their husbands. Why weren't they getting letters? There had been a rumor that one of the buses taking the men into the mountains had been hit by mines. What had happened?

Finally, the soldiers there, the bo-doi, cajoled the women off the streets, and the Government took this seriously enough then to begin setting up letter writing and family visits and so on and so forth. It was a very important time for the people of Saigon who were facing this new government for the first time in a public way, to be making their statements, and to be getting some response.

In September, about 1½ months before I left, there was another occasion that stands out as very different from the day to day, and that was the time of the money change. The old Vietnamese dong had been very inflated in its value over the course of the years, and the value of the northern dong and the southern dong were disparate, very, very different, and the new Government in Saigon, I assume, had had a long policy that they were going to change the money, although I certainly didn't know about that, and one day Dr. Hoskins and I went into the street, and the streets were entirely empty.

We didn't know what was happening, and finally our neighbor said, there were announcements on the radio. Today is the day of the money change, and we all kind of went, what? And finally, during the course of the day, our neighbors explained to us that we needed to go to our local khom—this is a low level district office—to get in line and get a number and change money like everyone else.

Well, this was a time of very great confusion, certainly for me as a foreigner, but also for people in Saigon, older people. One friend of ours' mother burned his savings because she didn't understand the an-

nouncement, but again, as at the time of the evacuation, the change, the panic kind of rose, peaked, and fell very quickly. Within 2 or 3 days, people had changed their money, and things were back to normal again, people figuring out what was a sou, what was a dong, trying to do that kind of arithmetic, but things settled down again.

I would like to conclude with my general impression of Saigon after the 3 years there. Things changed very dramatically with the end of the war. It was an important time for the Vietnamese people, that they should be able to meet each other again face to face. The brothers and husbands who had gone away in 1954 came back to Saigon and saw their families again for the first time.

I knew a man, a 24-year-old man who met his father for the first time. There were certainly those kinds of shocking, jarring meetings, but very exciting meetings as well.

That is the predominant scene in my mind as I think about Vietnam in those days, the end of the fighting, and also the very hard struggle of people to rebuild. In Saigon, there were incredible problems at the end of the war, massive unemployment, prostitution, drug abuse. I mean, these are not new things. We have all heard about these, and they were just as much there on May 5 as they were on April 15 of the year of 1975, and continue to this day, I assume. They are long-range problems.

Certainly the problems of unexploded ordnance continue until this day, people being injured as they try and get back to their farmland. My sense was that the Vietnamese people were meeting, they were reuniting, trying to reconcile their affairs and begin the very long process of building their country that had been at war for so very long.

[Ms. Forsythe's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY JULIA B. FORSYTHE, ASIA DESK, AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Thank you very much for inviting me to testify today on the subject of human rights in Vietnam. I went to Vietnam in January 1973 to serve with the American Friends Service Committee in the Quaker Service Rehabilitation Center in Quang Ngai, South Vietnam. At that time I studied Vietnamese intensively for 2 months, and then continued study after taking my position as generalist in the Quang Ngai Center. I stayed in Vietnam until October 1975, 6 months after the fighting ended, when I requested to return to the United States.

During my 3 years in Vietnam, I spent 2½ years working in the Rehabilitation Center in Quang Ngai, which was devoted to the physical rehabilitation of amputees. During my time in Vietnam I saw massive wartime violations of human rights, and I want to contrast the situation before and after the change of government in late April of 1975. It is very difficult for American observers to assess the situation in Vietnam. We are constantly subjected to rumors, and must make every effort to get first hand information about the situation in Vietnam in making judgments about the situation there. I offer my own experience in Vietnam as an illustration.

The nature of our work brought us into daily contact with the poorest people in Vietnam. Quang Ngai is one of the poorest provinces and the rehabilitation center was for civilian care. The civilian population in Quang Ngai was subject to the direct effects of the war. During the years I was in Quang Ngai this took different forms at different times.

For many, it was hunger. One year drought brought a large segment of the population near starvation. At one time I traveled with our team doctor, Thomas R. Hoskins, to a nearby district where we saw children sorely affected by malnutrition, a result of eating only leaves for some months. The apparent cause was that the Saigon armed forces—the ARVN—were hoarding rice supplies. These

had been purchased by the United States for distribution to the neediest people, but they had never been delivered. We heard rumors at that time that families were committing suicide rather than face starving to death, but I have no proof of that rumor.

For others it was death and injury from weapons. I saw a young child come into our center. She was just 5 years old. Both her legs were blown off and three of her four sisters were dead. An ARVN soldier had thrown a land mine on the bed where they were sleeping because one of the sisters had refused to marry him. I saw a 13 year old village girl come to our center entirely paralyzed from the waist down because ARVN soldiers had used her for target practice. I also knew of a family that lived near the airport and in a PRG rocket attack, lost their son.

The daily fear and distress of all these episodes became much more intense during the 2 months preceding the American evacuation. In late March 1975, Tom Hoskins and I went from Saigon to Da Nang in an effort to return to the Center in Quang Ngai. That proved impossible. Tom was invited to stay on and work with the Buddhists in Da Nang, while I was asked by the Buddhists to leave. They feared for my safety, thinking that there might be a rocket attack on the city. But they could not know how hysterical the evacuation would become, placing me in much greater danger as I tried to leave. Thousands of people pushed and crowded onto the wharf in the middle of the night. A young boy lost his mother when she fell into the water and was crushed by the evacuation barge pounding against the pier. Leaving by air was impossible for the ARVN troops prevented anyone from boarding an airplane. On that trip I met a former patient of the Quang Ngai Center. He reported that Quang Ngai had been leveled by fighting. I was sick in my heart, as the panic mounted. I finally made my way to Saigon, and stayed with the rest of the AFSC team there. We heard that Da Nang, where Tom was, had changed hands, and that Earl Martin, a Mennonite who had stayed on in Quang Ngai had been killed.

For the whole month of April we heard one story after another from our Vietnamese friends who came to the door. We were told that all the ARVN officers in Da Nang had been lined up, shot through the hand, and strung on barbed wire. All the women in Saigon would be forced to marry cripples and amputees from the North, we were told. Another report went that all women with long fingernails would have them pulled out. On and on. We heard that a reliable source in the U.S. Embassy had a story of atrocities in Ban Me Thuot. Who is he, we asked? Can we speak to him? It is confidential, was the Embassy reply. And we wondered who started the rumors.

Many Vietnamese had heard that any American could claim any Vietnamese as family and take them out. The men in our group were approached constantly to marry Vietnamese women who were complete strangers, for large sums of money. At the adoption agencies there was a complete breakdown of normal operating procedures. One agency simply refused to take children from mothers in such a panicked frame of mind on the premise that the mothers could change their minds after the new government came into power and the panic subsided.

This was the time when many Americans and Vietnamese left the country. For them, "reality" in Vietnam is the unchanging memory of these last days of panic, and the image of the monstrous evil they felt was about to overwhelm Vietnam.

With the end of April came the end of the rockets, the attacks on the airport and presidential palace, and finally, the end of the fighting.

It took a number of days for the city to calm down again. People in Saigon had been strung out to unbelievable tension. Many families had watched their children depart for the United States with no idea if they had ever arrived in safety. Were their children among those killed in the plane that crashed? Were they in camps in Guam? There were no answers to these questions.

For those who stayed, the market opened in a day or two. The streets were quickly jammed with people filled with curiosity. The bo doi "foot soldiers", shy and country bred, stood in the streets and joked with the Saigonese. "Did you really think we would hurt you?" "Did you believe we would pull out your fingernails?" "How could you think that of your brother?" For there was a whole new category of people—fathers, uncles, brothers, and sons back from the "other side". People in Saigon took up a daily hunt for family members back from the war. The fighting was over and the long process of reconciliation was begun.

And Earl Martin, reported killed in Quang Ngai, arrived in Saigon, very much alive. All the reports we had heard about Quang Ngai were false. A total of

four rockets had landed in the town, and no one was hurt. The rehabilitation center was open and running well. Earl himself had traveled all over the province as he had never been allowed to do before. Our amputee friend, it seemed, had believed the worst about Quang Ngai because he was running away.

Then at the end of May the first letter came from Tom Hoskins in Da Nang. All was well. He was working in the Da Nang General Hospital as staff doctor. I wrote him, asking about the stories of atrocities there. Rumors, all rumors, he replied. Da Nang was peaceful. Stories about brutal treatment of captured ARVN officers were untrue, the fabrications of panic stricken minds.

And there was no bloodbath. During all those years Americans had convinced ourselves that there would be one, and there was no bloodbath. It was as simple and amazing as that.

The new Provisional Revolutionary Government seemed very intent from the start to implement a policy of reconciliation, especially with the people of Saigon. The people on the "other side" saw their Saigon relatives as the victims of years of exploitation by the French and Americans. Many cadre returning from the jungle after 30 years absence remarked how Americanized the city seemed, and yet how familiar the slums appeared.

The soldiers were everywhere, which was discomforting to some of us. They camped in the public squares, did their own laundry, and walked everywhere they needed to go. The first days were spent in quiet talking with people. Everywhere in the city groups of young and old alike were sitting talking with the bo doi, and getting to know each other. Feelings of immense relief spread throughout the city, and people went back to work.

A program called hoc-tap—or study and practice—was announced, which involved most people in some way. It was not met with any great apprehension by most people I knew. A doctor living on Yen Do Street (the same one we lived on) said he was glad the fighting was over. He just wanted to get his study-practice out of the way quickly so that he could go back to work. He had been an army doctor. That summer he completed his hoc-tap, and returned to his home in Da Nang to work.

Another neighbor, a lieutenant, went away in the general assembling of ex-army officers in June, and was back before the end of September. He was not enthusiastic about hoc-tap. In fact he found it boring. But he was glad it was over and he could rejoin his family.

But Saigon remained the fertile source of distressing rumors. In July, after the officers had been gone for a few weeks, I saw a group of officers' wives demonstrating in front of the Saigon cathedral. A rumor had been circulating that a bus bound for hoc-tap had hit a mine. The women wanted a full report. They also wanted to be able to write their husbands. There was long wrangling between the women and some bo-doi. Finally the soldiers cajoled the women into leaving the street. Within a few days the government announced in the newspapers that letters would start flowing between families and those in hoc-tap.

Another rumor flourished that on July 29th there would be a coup throwing out the PRG. July 29th came and went quietly.

So the summer went on. AFSC doctor Tom Hoskins came from Da Nang to Saigon in late August. People slowly trickled back from hoc-tap. A friend from Quang Ngai came for a visit to Saigon and reported that in Quang Ngai all the men in study-practice came home every week—for more rice. It turned out that Tom Hoskins had also undergone hoc-tap. All the workers in any kind of organization, including the hospital where he worked, as well as the woman who collected our garbage in her little wagon, were involved in meetings and political discussions with other workers. In the hospital where Tom worked, the hoc-tap meetings lasted for three hours every week, and sometimes involved just reading the newspaper.

In September there was another brief time of special anxiety. The money was changed. One morning Tom and I went out on the streets and found them entirely empty. We were not in the habit of listening to the radio in the morning and did not know that the money change was about to begin. Our neighbors explained, and we went back home to listen to the instructions. It took us a full day to find out what was happening. Finally we got on the track with our neighbors already way ahead of us. We went to our local "khom" office where people were lined up with numbers, and slowly changing the old, much inflated currency into new PRG dong.

The regulations weren't clear at first, and there were rumors of corruption. People said the bo-doi were accepting bribes; or that crowds of people could

not be handled; or that there was not enough money for everyone to get new money for old. Certainly it was a very frustrating time for Saigonese. The surprise of the money change was startling. (The reason given for the secrecy was to prevent people from creating a black market in the new money before the bills actually appeared.) The unclear initial regulations caused many people to make mistakes. For example, one journalist friend reported that his mother had burned stacks of money he had saved at home because she had misunderstood the announcements. The government apologized publically in the press for the confusion, and clarified its regulations and procedures, allowing necessary additional time. Finally, over a three day period, all the money was exchanged. Everyone got the new bills, while those with large amounts to change were given credit in newly established bank accounts for the balance.

Even though that time brought an air of panic back to Saigon, similar to the month preceding the change of government, I heard only one rumor of an attempted suicide. A Chinese man from Cholon was said to have jumped off his roof. However, the report went on, he failed to kill himself because an awning below caught him and broke his fall.

In my 6 months in Saigon following the end of the fighting and after the Americans had left I was free to travel anywhere in the city, and did so. We had given our car to the Rehabilitation Center, so I spent my time traveling by public bus or on foot. This gave me ample chance to meet ordinary people, and observe the impact of the new government on the daily lives of people.

I became deeply impressed by the spirit of the students. They began a campaign to clean up the city. Fountains that had grown green with filth were drained and swept clean. The streets were cleaned. Everywhere young men and women organized young children into play groups. Their voices could be heard singing at almost any time. Some students even volunteered to go out to the new Economic Zones to help open the ground that had been abandoned during the war years. That took more courage than we might think. The work was dangerous. One young student friend lost his leg by stepping on a mine during this process. But the students were excited and ready to do some positive service for their country.

The range of emotional response to "liberation" or "gia phong" was as diverse as the population itself. There were those who had worked for the Americans and mourned the loss of their relatively high paying jobs. Some openly hoped that the Americans would come back, or at least the Russians. On the other hand, a bread seller in the market was relieved that she wouldn't have to go on paying the exorbitant bribe to keep her son out of the military. Less enthusiastic was a cigarette seller on the corner, who said she was going to wait it out in Saigon, and when she stopped making enough money she was going back to her family farm in Phan Rang. Our local tailor, though, was delighted. He had left the North when he was 13 and now he could openly dream about going home for Tet.

And this was a major theme of those months, one very unexpected by Americans who had daily been taught to think that North and South were separate and hostile. It was family reunion time. Everywhere families were getting together again. Fathers were coming home to find families full grown. Children with Saigonese values were faced with fathers who had been living in the jungle for years. Tension and uncertainty were real. But so were joy and excitement as families met face to face, some for the first time in over 30 years.

The human rights of the Vietnamese people have been of deep concern to the American Friends Service Committee since 1954, when the first statement advising the U.S. not to get involved in a military action there was published. For me, personally, living in Vietnam for 3 years has changed my life entirely. I have been deeply affected by what I experienced, and my concern about the human rights of Vietnam is more intense than ever. Today we are meeting to try to evaluate the status of human rights in Vietnam. The question is as important as it was 20 years ago. And will be as important tomorrow.

The fact is the human rights have been denied to the Vietnamese people for a long time. From the time that the first U.S. bomb was dropped on civilians to the last canister of napalm, human rights for the millions of Vietnamese have been ignored or abnegated. Today in Vietnam the people continue to face a very hard struggle to produce enough rice to live, because of the American wartime policy of carpet bombing, and chemical defoliation of vast areas of the country side. In fact, Vietnam is listed as one of 15 food short nations by the Food and Agriculture Organization. Areas of Vietnam are so littered with unexploded ordnance

that farmers attempting to return to their homes are being killed or losing limbs as they try to cultivate their own fields. The new government in Vietnam has fallen heir to two decades of prostitution and drug abuse that grew up around the American military presence. For the prisoners who lived under Diem and Thieu and faced torture, abuse, and confinement in the Tiger Cages, the days are filled with trying to regain lost health. Now we have a chance to make it up to these people.

Secretary Cyrus Vance in a recent address on the topic of human rights suggests that we think of human rights in three categories: the first the right of the person, not to be abused or tortured, the second the right of human beings for economic and social benefits, and thirdly the right of citizens to civil liberties. I have seen no reports that any detainees, in re-education camps or criminals in Vietnam at this time have been tortured or abused, as was the case just 2 years ago under Thieu. Secondly, based on my experience in Vietnam and my experience since that time as Assistant Director of the Asia Desk at AFSC, it is clear that the Vietnamese government is making every attempt to share the resources of the country with all citizens in an equitable manner. Dr. Thomas Hoskins reported on the dramatic change in health care in Da Nang in the short time he worked there. Drugs were no longer slipped from the store room shelves at the hospital and sold on the black market. Patients were given health care classes, and equal access to the hospital beds. Friends who visited from Quang Ngai, reported they have a health center and a free school and cattle innoculations for the first time. A recent AFSC delegation to Vietnam confirmed earlier impressions that the poor people of Vietnam are benefactors of any aid that is flowing into that country. The governmental officials are not hoarding gold away as under past governments. For the first time goods and services are being brought to all the people.

The third question is that of civil/political rights. This is a question that is constantly under debate even in the United States, and the hardest for us to decipher in another country. There is no question that the new government in Vietnam is firmly controlling all the institutions that affect peoples lives. Just as people are not allowed to steal drugs from the hospital for personal abuse or resale, people are not allowed to publish material that will encourage the decadent morals flourishing under the former government; just as commercial enterprises are not allowed to hoard supplies and to jack up prices, people are not allowed to organize against the state. The Vietnamese government is an unabashedly communist and not a capitalist society; motivating factors in their society are very different from our own. But that does not mean that automatically there are massive violations of the human rights of the people. I have found the opposite to be true.

I am attaching to my testimony an article and a letter written by two Mennonite missionaries, Earl Martin and James Klassen,[1] who worked in Vietnam for many years and stayed on in Vietnam after the change of government as I did. Because they were in Vietnam in a religious capacity, and I was not, I offer their statements, with their permission, in addition to my own to provide another dimension to the discussion of human rights in Vietnam.

In conclusion, I would like to say that finally we have a chance to undo some of the damage that we have done in Vietnam over the long course of this struggle. If we are honestly concerned with the rights of the Vietnamese people, we will no longer withhold from them the help and assistance that they need. Any claim that we are concerned with human rights in Vietnam in the context of denying this help has a very hollow ring. I sincerely hope that our concern for the human welfare of the Vietnamese people will continue, and that as the Vietnamese are seeking to bring their country back together again, we will join with them in the work of rebuilding.

Mr. FRASER. Thank you very much, Ms. Forsythe. I think our plan is to ask questions of everyone as a panel, so we will hold our questions for the moment.

Ms. FORSYTHE. Fine. Thank you.

Mr. FRASER. So, our second witness, then, is Father Andre Gelinas. Is that the correct pronunciation?

Father GELINAS. That is perfectly all right.

Mr. FRASER. We are delighted to have you. Why don't you proceed?

[1] The above mentioned documents were not received at the time of publication.

STATEMENT OF REV. ANDRE GELINAS, JESUIT PRIEST, FAR EASTERN PROVINCE OF THE JESUIT ORDER

Father GELINAS. First, a word of introduction on my sources of information for the facts that I am about to describe.

I am a Canadian, a Jesuit Priest, as has already been stated. I came to Vietnam in 1957 as a professor of Chinese history at the University of Saigon. Starting in 1963, and for 13 years without interruption, I was on the staff of the Alexander-de-Rhodes Student Center, which has been for all these years the largest and most influential center of activities for Vietnamese University students.

After the Communist takeover, I stayed on at the center for 15 more months, moving around freely within the borders of Giadinh Province. My information on conditions outside of Giadinh Province comes from these hundreds of Vietnamese students and families that I dealt with daily.

I might add here that most of these were Buddhists and Confucians, only one-third being Christians.

Now, the facts. Let me start with the most obvious, the expected: the complete suppression of the freedom of speech, press, and information. Before the Communist victory, South Vietnam published 27 daily newspapers, 22 in Vietnamese, 3 in Chinese, 1 in French, and 1 in English. It also produced some 200 scholarly journals, scholarly, technical, or literary, and a number of popular magazines. It had three TV channels and some 2 dozen radio stations.

In May 1975, every single one of these newspapers, serials, and stations were suppressed. Back issues of magazines, books, records, and cassettes were confiscated from homes and from libraries and burned in the streets in huge bonfires. From then on, our only source of information was one TV channel owned by the Government, on the air for 2 hours only, from 7:30 to 9:30, and concerned exclusively with propaganda.

Also, two radio stations and three dailies providing the same propaganda, the same editorials, and the same selection of biased news items dictated by the unique party-controlled news agency.

No one was allowed to listen to short-wave radio, and any person aware of this crime in his neighborhood and failing to report it could be deported to the work camps with his entire family.

It was also the duty of every citizen to report all private conversations deemed contrary to the spirit of the revolution. I hurry to add, however, that at least in Saigon this often repeated threat failed to curb the curiosity of the people. News items from the daily bulletins of the BBC and of the VOA were eagerly sought after, and spread through the population like brushfire.

Another basic human right which has been wiped out by the Communist victor is the freedom of movement. Without a special pass from the police, no one is allowed to go from place to place, not even to the next village or suburb. These official passes are not always easy to obtain, and often they can be had only through bribery.

It goes without saying that permission to travel abroad is restricted to official envoys of the Government. Thousands of Vietnamese Americans can testify to this who are hopelessly separated from their wives, children, and parents.

Another basic right ignored in Vietnam is the right for a court of law, or at least for a hearing before condemnation. Some 300,000 men have been imprisoned in reeducation camps for over 2 years now, and not one of them has ever been judged, condemned, or even accused of any crime.

In Saigon, someone disappears nearly every day, and note that I am not talking on hearsay. Many of my friends have seen their daughter, their son, their husband fail to come home for supper. After frustrating inquiries from one police station to another, they were invariably told that if they want to stay out of trouble, they should mind their own business, or that the police does not know where this person is, but if he or she was not a criminal, he would surely be home by now.

Arrests are usually made in one of the following four ways, all of which I have personally witnessed. First, the person is called to report to the police station, and is never heard of since. Many priests have disappeared in this way. Second, the person is quietly kidnaped by the police patrol car while walking back home on the street or walking to work or walking to the market. This seems the most often-used method. To list only the big names, Father Minh, Father Loc, Father Thanh were arrested in this way.

Third, the house is raided, usually at dawn. All the occupants are ordered out, and a search conducted without witness by a swarm of troops invariably produces some damning evidence, guns, documents, U.S. dollars, and so on.

Fourth, the house is searched at night, and the person is carried away during curfew hours.

It is impossible to know how many persons are presently in jail. All I know is that all jails are crowded, that at least two large new ones have been built near Saigon, and that almost all U.S. BOQ's and BEQ's are now used as houses of detention, as many as 26 persons occupying the average GI single bedroom. I know this from the report of prisoners who have come back to tell me.

Now, not everyone is sent to jail, and only men with a high school education are kept in reeducation camps, but every single South Vietnamese, young or old, man or woman, is submitted to the triweekly sessions of political brainwashing, which often drag on from 7 o'clock to midnight. Everyone has to show his contrition for past crimes, his hatred for Americans who, among other crimes, used to cook and eat Vietnamese babies, so it is said, and his love for the Marxist-Leninist society.

Everyone is threatened with deportation to the work camps if he does not join in the campaign of denunciation against his neighbor, if he clings too hard to religious convictions or if, in any way, he fails to cooperate fully with the new regime.

The right to one's own convictions is another one that has been banished from Communist Vietnam.

The list could go on and on, but I think my time is over, and I may say more under the questions.

Mr. FRASER. Thank you very much, Father.

Now for our third witness, Prof. William Turley. Your prepared statement will be included in the record.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM S. TURLEY, PH. D., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Mr. TURLEY. Yes; I have a paper that I wrote over the weekend, and I will not read it in its entirety.

I will only sketch out some of its major themes, and leave the rest to emerge in discussion afterward.

Perhaps I should start by giving a little bit of background about myself, so you will know where I fit in the study of Vietnam.

In 1967 and 1968 I was a student in Vietnam under the auspices of a State Department funded program, and returned after that year to study at the University of Washington, where I finished a Ph. D. in 1972. From 1972 to 1973 I was in Vietnam once again under the auspices of the Ford Foundation, and also served as a visiting professor at Saigon University Faculty of Letters.

In my work on Vietnam over a period stretching just about a decade now, my specialty has been Vietnamese Communist affairs. Of all of the aspects of Vietnam that I have studied, incidentally, human rights is not one, and this reflects my feeling that of the things that are really critical to understand about Vietnam, human rights is important but not the fundamental issue. This is something that we should watch, but that I do not think that people who are concerned on a daily basis with studying Vietnamese affairs find it worthy of intense study, and I will not pretend to be an expert on this particular issue, though I will present myself as something of an expert on Vietnamese communism in general. My remarks therefore will be directed more toward the context. the historical background, and so forth.

My reason for this is not merely because of what I know and don't know, but rather because much of the discussion we have heard so far about human rights in Vietnam has concentrated on what are purported to be the facts and very little discussion about what they mean, and I should like here to offer some observations as to how we might interpret what we hear.

To begin, let me put aside one thing which I think sometimes is an obstacle to our understanding the nature of the Vietnamese Communist regime, and this is an assumption that many of us make, that the Soviet Union and China and Korea give us accurate models of what is happening in Vietnam.

Without going into detail as to why it is not so, I shall assert it is not so, and if you want to ask me in more detail why it is so I shall be glad to answer. Suffice it to say that the Vietnamese have demonstrated a great deal of independence, not only in their relations with the Soviets and Chinese, but have also been very selective about the foreign models that they have attempted to apply on their own soil. So, we should not expect what happened in the Soviet Union in the 1930's or what happened in China during land reform should happen inevitably in Vietnam.

Vietnam is a different case. Let's try and set that image of Asian Communist regimes aside.

Looking at the record of human rights in Vietnam, I would like very briefly to summarize some of the key aspects of the regime as it first took shape in 1954 in the north. One of the first problems that they

faced was with respect to the ethnic minorities which inhabit the border of China and Laos and comprise approximately 15 percent of the population in northern Vietnam.

Many of these minorities had fought on the side of the Viet Minh during the war with France, and partly because of this intimate experience with them, the Vietnamese leadership was more flexible in its treatment of the ethnic minorities than either the Soviets or the Chinese have been. The exception to this was the Thai people, who lived in the northwest, who had gone into resistance on the side of the French, and who went into rebellion after 1954, and there was a rather messy mopup conducted by the Vietnamese Army in 1954 and 1955. The details of it, we truly don't know what they are. The details we have are the details that they have provided. Under the guise of bandit suppression some 5,200 members of these forces were rounded up. What happened to them after that we don't know. As so often is the case, we don't have the facts, much less know how to interpret the few we do have.

Another group that might have been a target for systematic repression was Catholics, who at that time constituted somewhere between 10 and 15 percent of the northern population, and now at this time it is 5.8 percent—as of 1964. Now it is probably about 6 percent. These were a group, that at the beginning of the war with France, had mixed political sentiments. They began certainly giving their support to the cause of national uprising, but thereafter moved over into support of the French-supported government of Bao Dai, and bad blood developed between the Catholics and the Communists, to put it in short terms. My study of this period, the 1954–56 period, suggests that the Government, given its propensity to consider the Catholics as basically hostile to their rule, did, I think, a very decent job of trying to come to terms with a potentially disruptive minority, a group that did in fact express its willingness to undertake arms in the uprising in Nghe An Province in the end of 1956.

They did indeed present themselves as a real cause of insecurity in Vietnam, and subsequently they have been handled somewhat sternly but, I think, judiciously. Freedom of worship is observed, but the church works under financial constraint.

Turning to land reform, this is an issue which has been entertained in some other setting here several years ago, and I won't go over it again in any detail but only cite the most recent findings of what I think is the most dispassionate study of the results of land reform in North Vietnam, which concluded that the total number of people executed was probably in the area of about 5,000, and almost certainly between 3,000 and 15,000, those are your upper and lower limits of people executed in this time, and the slaughter of tens of thousands of innocent victims never took place.

Now, subsequently, the government did hold many of these executions to have been carried out in error, and did do what it could to rectify them. Some people have said that this was cynically planned in advance. All of the study that I have done on that period suggests that this is not so, that they genuinely felt that things had gotten out of hand. People were punished, in some cases executed that should not have been, and I think that they have learned much from that lesson.

When we look at the south now, not only is land reform being undertaken in very gradual steps, but there is so far no evidence of the kind of organizational techniques that were the cause of problems in 1955 and 1956.

Last, there was the role of the intellectuals in northern Vietnam. Here is something I wish we had better information about. The only evidence we have there to suggest what the Vietnamese original orientation was toward the role of intellectuals concerned the so-called Hundred Flowers campaign, which was not a Vietnamese application of a Chinese campaign. It was inspired by it, but not by the Vietnamese Government.

The intellectuals in Vietnam heard what was going on in China and said we ought to do that, too, and the Government let it go on, because they didn't want to antagonize their larger northern neighbor, and weren't too sure how to handle this ferment among a very substantial proportion of the intellectuals that had given them their support during the war.

However, it reached such a proportion that the party leadership evidently felt threatened, and we can only call their handling of it subsequently an example of suppression of free expression.

What had happened to the individuals involved, nobody really knows. The best evidence suggests that they have not been penalized physically, but certainly they have not been heard from in public since that time.

Well, turning now to the situation in the south, I would like first to make a couple of observations about the nature of the information we have. It is largely based on information of foreign observers, which tends to be contradictory. You have an example here before you at this moment. It often comes from correspondence with friends and relatives, and this is a source also which tends to be tainted by personal preferences and perception.

There are a lot of rumors which are passed around among the refugees living here. In this environment the Government press is probably just about as good a source as any, and of course it also is partial.

In this situation, I think we have to be very skeptical about any categorical assertions as to what is really happening, and especially I think we should be careful about extrapolating from specific instances or observations to a general conclusion.

Well, looking at reeducation, what we know about the facts, frankly, I don't know. The best evidence would suggest that the number of people that are still held in camps undergoing "reeducation" is in the vicinity of 10,000 to 30,000. This is admittedly based on Vietnamese sources themselves. I have seen nothing of any substance to contradict them. However, some of these individuals must be considered culpable for acts that they did commit under the previous regime, and therefore would not qualify as political prisoners. Others, however, I think, clearly are. How many fall into each group, there is no way of knowing, and I think in some cases you and I would probably have a great deal of difficulty making up our minds about former national policemen, for example, who may have committed misuse of office or done all sorts of dastardly deeds.

Turning to the ethnic and religious minorities, again, we have a lot of contradictory evidence, and I am not too sure how to process it. Let me just lump them all into one group and say, if you look at the evidence, one hears about Catholics, the Hoa Hao, the Cao Dai, and so forth, suggesting that there is some government repression. We must ask whether the incidents we are hearing about are instances of unjustified government repression or government action against groups that have shown a propensity in the past to resist central government control, often by violent means, in which case the government is quite entitled and in fact has a responsibility to maintain order on behalf of the rest of the citizens.

Now, I wouldn't want to push that argument very far. There are obviously exceptions to it, and one of them would appear to be with respect to the ethnic minorities. The distinguished anthropologist, Gerry Hickey, has done some study on this, and has concluded that there is a systematic pattern at least of clumsy handling of the minorities in the central highlands, and this violates a promise that was initially made by the Communists as early as 1946 to give them a measure of autonomy should the Communists come to power.

Now, there is reasonable evidence to suggest that the leaders of FulRo, which was the organization of minorities sponsored in part or assisted by ourselves from 1964 onward, leaders of that group that joined the Communist side in the latter stages of the spring offensive of 1975 now have been put in the camps, and there certainly would seem to be no justification for this if they in fact fought on the side of the Vietnamese Army, the North Vietnamese Army.

I think what we are seeing here is a government that is perhaps overly anxious about the security of its mountain border areas and acting in a way that is a bit heavy-handed.

Well, in all of these cases, we owe it to ourselves and the Vietnamese to ask to what extent this evidence is suggestive of acts justified under the state's need to protect itself and other citizens as well. I do not wish to make this remark as an apology for everything that has happened or may happen. The SRV is not a paragon of liberal democratic virtue. They still maintain this distinction between genuine Socialist freedom at the expense of bourgeois liberties, but in relation to the problems that it is facing, by comparison with a number of other governments that we call our friends, the SRV's record on human rights does not deserve to be an important consideration in our policy toward it at the present time. It may become so, but right now I do not think that the evidence mounts up to such a case against it. It merits close watching, I would say.

Finally, any appraisal of human rights in Vietnam or any other country must take into account what effect our actions in respect of them might have in that country itself, and in this regard there is probably no country on Earth where an American protestation about human rights is less likely to modify the behavior of the leaders.

In their considered opinion, the first right is that of national liberty, and the nation that they have fought most for the longest time in defense of that right in recent history is ourselves. Whether that is a justified observation I am not asking at this point. In their view,

that is the case, and so long as that is held by them and a pretty substantial share of their population, our positions on their human rights are not going to be heard sympathetically.

If there is any one other outstanding issue of human rights which I have not heard addressed thus far here, and not very much in the press, it is that of the right to migrate from one's country and reunite with your family. On this point the SRV expressed a willingness to the Woodcock mission to greet generously any request by ourselves for coming to an agreement on reunification of families.

So far as I know, our Government has not been responsive to this offer by them, and of course, as you all are aware, most of the international covenants on human rights do recognize free movement across borders as well as within borders as a human right.

[Dr. Turley's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM S. TURLEY, PH. D., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Intelligent discussion of human rights in Vietnam requires a foundation of both fact and interpretation. Since a great deal already has been said about the facts, such as they are known, I should like to accent the neglected question of their meaning. For this purpose it is necessary to make a few brief observations about the nature of Vietnamese Communism and the social context in which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) came into being.

First, one obstacle to rational discussion must be cleared away, namely, the propensity to view Vietnam filtered through our images of Soviet, Chinese, and Korean Communism. This propensity leads to hasty conclusions about prospects for human rights in Vietnam and inhibits development of realistic policies. While the Vietnamese owe an enormous debt to the Soviet and Chinese models, they have been steadfast in their determination to shape their revolution as they see fit. Vietnam neither takes orders from its more powerful allies nor conforms to the popular stereotype of Asian Communism in its domestic affairs. One reason for this is that the founders of the Indochinese Communist Party, as the party was called from 1930 to 1951, at the beginning of their revolutionary careers viewed Marxism-Leninism as an instrument for achieving liberation from colonial rule. Obstinate independence and a flexible, pragmatic, orientation toward the guidance offered by other Communist parties has been characteristic of this leadership's behavior ever since.

Without citing the litany of policies and programs, suffice it to say that the Vietnamese Communists grew increasingly confident over the years in the rectitude of their desire to adapt foreign models to Vietnam's particular conditions. They committed their greatest errors, in their own estimation, when they followed foreign models too closely, such as in the land reform campaign of 1953–56. At present their 5-year plan envisions development of heavy industry but on the basis of balanced development of agriculture and light industry to meet consumer needs and produce exports to finance development as much as possible self-sufficiently. In foreign affairs, the Vietnamese right now have better relations with the Soviet Union than with China but have been more consistently neutral in the Sino-Soviet dispute than any other Communist state. Many more examples of the fundamental independence of the Vietnamese Communists could be cited. There are of course very important parallels between the SRV and other Communist states—and bases for affinity—stemming from common ideology and similarity of institutions but it should not be presumed that the experiences of the Soviet Union, China or any other Communist state inevitably must recur in Vietnam.

Let us now turn to the actual record of human rights in Vietnam, looking first at what occurred after the Communists achieved power in the North in 1954. In doing so it is important to keep in mind that the new government confronted a decimated economy, a chaotic political situation created by the departure of some 900,000 persons (mainly Catholics) for the South, and incontrovertible evidence that the United States intended to consolidate an anti-Communist regime in the South in violation of sections of the Geneva Agreements pertaining to reunification and foreign military advisers. Leaders also believed that the

long-range purpose of the Treaty of Manila, signed in September 1954, was to subvert the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) as one step in a general campaign against communism in Asia. The DRV itself was not perfectly innocent of provocation (e.g., posting military advisers to the Pathet Lao and leaving a clandestine organization in the South), but as later events proved these perceptions were hardly paranoid delusions. Both internal and external forces seemed to threaten the country. On the other hand the DRV was spared having to deal with the demobilized army of its former enemy, most of these forces having followed the French to the South.

One of the first problems with possible consequences for human rights, a problem with direct implications for the South today, was the treatment of the ethnic minorities that comprised about 15 percent of the North's population. Many of these minorities, particularly the Tay and Nung tribes straddling the Chinese border, had participated in the war on the Communist side. Party leaders themselves had lived among these groups, learned their languages, and gained a great deal of personal insight into their societies. This experience was partly responsible for their commitment to making the highland minorities equal to the lowland Vietnamese in respect of political rights and economic and cultural development. In practice, this commitment translated into opportunities for education, recruitment of minorities into the party, army and state cadre structures, and gradual transformation of minority lifeways so as to integrate, if not assimilate, them into the dominant society. However some minority groups mainly of Thai extraction clearly preferred separate development; for this reason they supported the French and received French weapons and training. At war's end, remnants of these forces in Lao Cai and Ha Giang provinces continued in rebellion. In December 1955 the government announced, under the guise of "bandit suppression," that it had rounded up 5,200 of these forces and over 4,000 firearms. There is no evidence as to what subsequently became of these former supporters of the French among the minorities. However the Thai tribes appear to have received the same treatment as minorities in other areas with somewhat less sympathy by the government for their desire to retain a measue of autonomy. On the one hand their cultures have been respected, even protected, and economic and political opportunities have been created for them; on the other, the party has undercut the authority of the traditional tribal elites, ethnic Vietnamese have been moved into the highlands in large numbers, and a combination of positive and negative incentives has induced minorities to adopt settlement patterns and lifestyles much like those of the Vietnamese. It is the policy of a government seeking to increase security along sensitive borders while attempting not to provoke inordinate minority resentment.

The Catholics, constituting between 10 and 15 percent of northern population in 1954 (less than 6 percent now), presented another situation in which persecution of a minority group might arise. During the war against France, many Catholics had moved from support for independence and even participation in the Viet Minh to collaboration with the French or support for the French-supported government of Bao Dai to combat what they had come to believe was a Communist threat to religious practice and the autonomy of their enclaves. After the war, spurred by their leaders and a campaign of scare propaganda sponsored by the United States, roughly two-thirds of the entire Catholic community fled to the South. Contrary to the widespread belief that DRV leaders were secretly happy to see the Catholics leave, they viewed the departure of many of the North's best educated people as a net loss. They launched a campaign of counter-propaganda to induce the Catholics to stay in the North, and I personally have interviewed individuals who participated in efforts at that time to stem the exodus. Clear violations of rights however did occur in numerous places where local authorities obstructed individuals seeking permits to leave as provided under article 14(d) of the Geneva Agreements. It was such incidents that were partly to blame for the uprising of Catholics in Quynh Luu district, Nghe An Province, in November 1956. One of the Catholic concerns also was the "Decree on the Problem of Religion" which guaranteed freedom of religious practice but provided for partial confiscation of church-owned lands on which maintenance of schools and other independent institutions depended. Under this Decree the DRV has permitted the Catholics, along with other faiths, to hold religious observances and to maintain churches and temples but has substantially reduced their financial bases and political autonomy. (In 1973 I interviewed a young Catholic from [deleted] who had entered the South as a soldier in the People's Army who