

A second thing we attempted to point to in the testimony was that we perceived in Vietnam a gradual transition taking place rather than an abrupt or sharp one, as in China or Cuba, which meant that there is probably not as harsh or as abrasive a change for people as might have occurred in other places. And that might speak to the issue to some degree of human rights.

Mr. GOODLING. I have no problem with any of that.

Mr. McCLEARY. Fine.

Mr. GOODLING. The problem was that the three of you came on so strong as if this is it.

Mr. McCLEARY. We certainly didn't mean to communicate in our testimony that all was all right. We were only attempting to record in terms of the resettlement camp that we saw and hope that that would assist you in terms of the larger picture.

But I would simply like to say that I think in terms of the situation with Vietnam, there are two factors we hope you will keep in mind. That is, in the relatively near future, 10, 15, 20 years, as you look at Indochina and Southeast Asia, Vietnam will play a very significant role in Indochina.

Hence, I think the quicker we are in a position to restore relationships with them, open up dialog with them, the greater probability we will have of influencing them.

The second thing in regard to that is that in terms of getting that information, the quicker we do restore relations, the better.

Hence, the better knowledge, the more accuracy of input we will have in order to make the kinds of decisions we will have to make.

So I would simply affirm the need for normalization of relationships with Vietnam on the basis of survival. They will play a significant role in Southeast Asia and we ought to be a part of that and not isolate ourselves.

Mr. FRASER. I take it you would say—I don't necessarily think we will get more information. There are an awful lot of countries where we have diplomatic relations where it's very, very difficult to get any information whatsoever, even though we have diplomatic relations.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Doctor, this trio involved in this last trip, have you, sir, ever been to Vietnam before?

Mr. McCLEARY. No. I have not. Neither has Ms. Meinertz, but Dr. Haines was making his 12th trip to Vietnam.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I assume that he has been to North and South Vietnam.

Ms. MEINERTZ. Eleven times to the South and once to the North prior to the end of the war.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I see.

Ms. MEINERTZ. May I just add one statement to what Dr. McCleary said, particularly to Mr. Goodling about his assumptions about political bias in our presentation.

One other piece which I think is important in terms of Church World Service in Vietnam is that we are one of the major agencies involved in refugee resettlements and we are one of the five primary agencies involved in resettling all of the Vietnamese who have come here so far. We currently have two staff people assigned to the boat case problem, one in Malaysia, one in Bangkok. So in terms of the

larger picture, I think we do try to get all kinds of input. We thought we were asked here today to give some very specific information.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Mr. Luce, you are an expert, I gather, on Vietnam.

[Pause]

Mr. LUCE. Yes.

Mr. Col. I would like to express some idea about the problem of religion in Vietnam.

First of all, in Hanoi itself, after 30 years of Communist rule, all of the city of Hanoi only has one church left, and that church's name is Bach Mai Church. But nowadays, the Communists use that Church as a hospital and the so-called Bach Mai Church was moved to a small house in an alley. I got the information from a very close relative, Nguyen Hoang Phuong, who was invited to Hanoi for a 2-week visit. Phuong now lives with me in Pittsburgh.

As to the churches in Saigon, actually, all the churches around Saigon were closed down. The only church that the Communists left open was the one called Our Lady's Church in the center of Saigon. The reason for which the Communists let this church be open was that they want to show foreign visitors that they did give religious freedom to the Vietnamese people.

Actually, because they are living in such difficult circumstances, a number of Vietnamese people tried their best to go to church in order to pray, because that is the ultimate consolation for them in their lives since there is nothing else left.

But I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the people who went to this church come from the area surrounding Saigon, because their churches were closed. So they come to the only church that is still open. The people who went to church got into difficulties with the Communist authorities. This is the reason why I would like to make a statement in front of you, that in Vietnam today, freedom of religion no longer exists.

I would like to stop here.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Thank you. We are getting—I don't suppose it is contradictory information so much as information depending upon one's vantage point.

But Mr. Luce, are you familiar with a gentleman—I will spell the name rather than pronounce it. My pronunciation would be Win Con Wan, but it is spelled Nguyen Cong Hoan.

He was an antigovernment spokesman, I understand, in South Vietnam at one time. Does that register with you at all?

Mr. LUCE. I did not know him as an outspoken antigovernment figure there. He may have been but it was not the same grouping of people as as Ngo Cong Duc, or some of the others. But he may have been within the same group but he wasn't one of the same group leaders, but I know who you are referring to.

Mr. DERWINSKI. You do know the name?

Mr. LUCE. Yes.

Mr. DERWINSKI. In an article that was published in a Japanese newspaper at the same time, early May of 1977, while you were in Vietnam, I am now reading quotes from this article. He was quoted as saying:

In Vietnam today, that fundamental human rights are not guaranteed. No freedom of religion, speech, or movement. In a word, there is no freedom at all except the freedom to obey the orders of the Communist Party.

He went on in the article to say :

Re-education would be simply to be in prison. All religious publications have been stopped. In former Catholic schools in the South, all teachers must present Marxist-Leninist lectures.

And he described a film called "Holy Day," distributed in the South. It reportedly shows Christian women who visit churches being raped by the priest. Admission to universities and technical schools is reserved strictly for students whose parents did not serve the Saigon government in any capacity and there are a number of other points.

Now since those statements were made, at the time you were in Vietnam, would you care to comment on their validity?

Mr. LUCE. Some of them are not true. Religious materials are being published in South Vietnam. I saw some of the materials. It is being produced. They have just done an edition of the Bible, for example.

I would also point out, just in terms of the testimony here, that I believe Mr. Coi said there was only one church in Hanoi. I was in two different churches in Hanoi. There were several there. He said there was only one in Saigon, which was Our Lady's Church, which was in the center of Saigon.

I saw that one with people going into it and so on. I did not go into it this time, but I went to another one in Tan Dinh.

So there are several churches which are operating and I was in them and saw them functioning with parishioners.

So that there are a lot of things that I don't know how get started, and I don't know why, but they are just not true.

In terms of the general impression, it is not the same as the impression I got from Vietnamese friends and from people that I talked to in the marketplace. And I did have the freedom to go to people's homes and talk to them in their homes. I talked with journalists that I have known for many years. I went to one of the newspaper offices and drank coconut juice and just talked with some of the writers, and then went out and walked around with one of the writers.

So I did not find these things true.

Mr. DERWINSKI. All through the period of the conflict, you, I believe, from time to time, met with officials of the Viet Cong, in places like Canada, Paris and so on.

Did you? Did you have constant contact with spokesmen for the North?

Mr. LUCE. Not all through the conflict because during much of the conflict, I supported U.S. policy in Vietnam. Beginning in 1967, I did become opposed to U.S. policy. Prior to that I supported it. I have met with Vietnamese officials. I was in North Vietnam in 1972, 1973, and 1974, as a journalist with one of the television networks. But I do not think I was spending a lot of time traveling. I am not even sure I have been to all of the specific places you mentioned.

Mr. DERWINSKI. You were the organizer—correct me if I am wrong—one of the organizers of an organization called "Medical Aid for North Vietnam"?

Mr. LUCE. No; that is not true.

Mr. DERWINSKI. What was that group? Did you not participate in a group that raised funds for medical supplies in North Vietnam?

Mr. LUCE. When I have spoken, I have urged people to contribute medical supplies for Vietnam. I saw Bach Mai Hospital right after

it was bombed and I thought it was important to get medical supplies there. But I was not either one of the founders or on the board or any part of Medical Aid to Vietnam.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Didn't you put it with Ms. Weiss, is it of Women's Strike for Peace, organizing projects for North Vietnam?

Mr. LUCE. Yes; Ms. Weiss became a board member of Clergy and Laity Concerned in approximately either later 1974 or early 1975, which was essentially at the end of the war, and I did travel to Vietnam in the same trip with her in 1973. But I was not a part of the Women's Strike for Peace. [Pause.]

May I make one request? I got caught when I was talking with you and I never specifically answered your question, Mr. Goodling, because the discussion got shifted. I would like to just briefly answer it, if I could.

Mr. GOODLING. As to the philosophy?

Mr. LUCE. As to the philosophy of Clergy and Laity Concerned, and I would just like to briefly state that Clergy and Laity Concerned is an ecumenical organization which is made up primarily of people from both the Christian religion and from the Jewish faith. Our particular concern is justice and we have emphasized justice in the international arena.

We have four specific programs that we work on. One is hunger and our particular emphasis has been on challenging the way that our Government has often used hunger or food for political power, and how the corporations have often used food for profit.

The second program is a human rights program, where we have been particularly concerned about how American money has often been used to imprison people in other countries, such as training, providing small arms, building prisons, that sort of thing.

Mr. GOODLING. I assume you people run for offices and get behind candidates and offer financial support, et cetera, et cetera?

Mr. LUCE. No; No, that is not true.

The third program is the program on militarism. We have been particularly concerned about the B-1 bomber, which we feel is designed specifically to bomb thatched hutches and that it is more of a threat to peace than it is any kind of deterrent to war.

The four program is a program on Vietnam, which is, right now, particularly two areas. One is reconstruction of Vietnam, trying to get reconstruction aid to Vietnam; and second, reconciliation.

And as I mentioned earlier, we have been particularly concerned about getting a Vietnamese religious delegation from Vietnam to the United States.

Mr. GOODLING. You don't then believe in strength as far as United States is concerned to prevent—

Mr. LUCE. I am sorry. I believe in terms of the question of strength that something like the B-1 bomber, rather than strength, actually weakens the United States. It is something that will cost two-thirds as much as the whole Vietnam war did.

I do not see it as a weapon that strengthens our country. I personally believe, and I think my organization believes, that the greatest threat to America right now is the emphasis, the tremendous amount of resources that we are putting into our military machine at the expense

of social programs, and the alienation among our people that this is causing and the whole division within the country that it is causing.

Mr. GOODLING. Of course, in the overall budget, your argument does not hold because it is going just the opposite direction.

Mr. LUCE. I think a \$110 billion budget, or whatever it is, is a tremendous amount of money, most of which could be far better spent in helping people.

Mr. GOODLING. That is great if all countries in the world believed as we believed.

Mr. DERWINSKI. Mr. Jacqueney, you have some very practical suggestions as to how to deal with this so-called government in Vietnam.

I take it that you frown upon negotiating in the headlines, that you feel that what we work out with them, if it is practical and beneficial in nature, for example, as we see our role in foreign policy, it is far better that this be done in proper diplomatic style, rather than in headlines telling of confrontation or breakdowns in talk or over-exaggerated embraces.

Mr. JACQUENEY. Well, Congressman, I was talking specifically about the situation of Vietnam. I was not referring to what might be a proper tactic with regard to, say, the Soviet Union. I have a number of friends who were leaders of the Soviet dissident movement who seem to feel that President Carter's now open approach is very helpful.

So in the Soviet Union it may be a useful approach. I think I know a little bit about Vietnam and I think that the kind of approach I was suggesting on Vietnam, given our background in Vietnam and all of that, is the most likely to help people who deserve help. And that is why I suggested this kind of approach.

So I was, as you say, trying to be practical.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I guess our problem would be how we could be assured that if our first step is humanitarian aid, that, in fact, the aid is reaching the needy recipients, the recipients that we intend to help.

Mr. JACQUENEY. It is the problem and I cannot sit here with a quick solution to the problem. I think if—

The other day I was reading a newspaper article and it had to do with a milk program to Cuba. As some of you may know, I recently went to Cuba. Among other things, I wrote a number of articles about Cuban political prisoners and I became very interested in Cuba. This article talked about a massive U.N. milk assistance program which shipped a lot of powdered milk to Cuba. Apparently, what the Cuban Government did was to turn it into reconstituted milk, and are you ready for this? Sold it to Jamaica at a multimillion-dollar profit.

I just bet—I don't know for a fact—but I just bet right now that the money for that powdered milk came somewhere along the line from us.

I'd sure like not to see that happen in Vietnam, but how do you do it? The answer to that I don't really know. I think there are some kinds of suggestions that I would really like to try to make privately about what you could try to do to try to insure that aid got to people rather than maybe misused by a government.

I think it is better even to have those kinds of suggestions offered privately than to try to do those publicly, and I would be happy to discuss that with you if you like.

Mr. DERWINSKI. The hour is late. Everyone has been patient, especially you, Mr. Fraser.

Thank you.

Mr. FRASER. I have just one or two more questions. Mr. Luce, on the question of press freedom, you indicated you had brought back a couple of newspapers. The number of newspapers published in Saigon, I gather, is reduced.

Mr. LUCE. That is right.

Mr. FRASER. Is it also fair to say that those who do now publish do not feel free to attack the government?

Mr. LUCE. That I can't answer. I don't know. I mean I know that—actually, I can't speak to that directly because I know that there have been attacks on bureaucracy within government. There was, for example—

Mr. FRASER. That is usually acceptable. Supposing they had said, well, the new government is fouling things up badly. It is time to have another election—

Mr. LUCE. Then I won't know, to my knowledge. The government, I mean when I ask my friends who were journalists about can you write what you want, they said yes.

Now how far they can go, I won't know, but it is not a point at issue right now, for them anyway.

Mr. FRASER. That is a little hard to read because they, obviously, would understand the environment in which they are operating.

Mr. Coi, how do you know how many churches are open in Saigon? What is your source of information?

Mr. COI. I know because the Communists, after they have taken over, they have used those churches for places where they teach the people to learn about patriotism and politics. The fact that I know that there was only one church, which is Our Lady's Church in the center of Saigon which is still open, is that I have seen with my own eyes a number of people actually went there to worship.

A point that would make it even clearer, every time that a religious group celebrates some religious occasion somewhere, the Communists would let them, press and information people, make propaganda about it.

So I read the newspaper in Saigon and I heard the various communication—news diffusion media say that in Saigon there was only Our Lady's Church which was celebrating services.

I also would like to point out a statement by Mr. Luce, that he saw two churches open himself. I would like to remind him that be careful that the second church he saw could not be celebrating services, religious services, but that church might be gathering people in order for the government agents to teach them about politics.

I am afraid that you, being a foreigner, you could not understand the inside story of it. Whenever you see people gathering in a church or in a pagoda, you would think that they are coming for worship.

I think that this is a very great mistake. The priests are obligated to teach Marxism in churches.

It's the new religion now. The visit of Mr. Luce is a big event. The authorities staged shows for him, "show" services, "show" camps, "show" people to talk to him in order that he can report back in the United States. Thank you.

Mr. LUCE. I would just comment on that, that I did stay through much of the service and I can get the lesson from the Bible and so on, if the committee is interested, but it was a church service.

Mr. FRASER. Mr. Coi, I understand that Mr. Luce speaks Vietnamese fluently.

Mr. COI. Mr. Chairman, when I present the situation to you this way and Mr. Luce presents it that way, to make the problem clearer, I would ask you to invite more Vietnamese witnesses, those who were inside the Hanoi Government and those Vietnamese would testify to you about the problem we are discussing today. Then you would see the truth for yourself.

Mr. FRASER. Mr. Coi, do you understand or do you know if there is a shortage of food in South Vietnam today?

Mr. COI. Yes; I do.

Mr. FRASER. Do you think that the United States should provide any food?

Mr. COI. As I have presented to you before, I am speaking here on behalf of millions of suffering Vietnamese people. They are suffering hunger and cold. They don't have medicines when they are ill.

I do think that any help you could give would be a very great necessity because I could not bear the sight of my countrymen suffering.

But before coming to the decision of giving aid to Vietnam, please, demand from the authorities in Saigon to humanely treat the prisoners, the soldiers who are prisoners in Vietnam. Also, to humanely treat all their countrymen and please be sure to check that all the gifts that you will be giving would reach the hands of the people who are meant to receive them.

I am very uncertain, I am very anxious, to think that maybe the gifts that you are going to send will not reach the hands of the people because reality has shown that even the personal property of the people, the Communist authorities have taken away from them. So how can we speak about free gifts being brought to those people?

Thank you.

Ms. MEINERTZ. May I just add something?

Mr. FRASER. Yes.

Ms. MEINERTZ. Because Church World Service is programmatically involved in Vietnam, both north and south, we inquired extensively on the distribution system of rice and other food stuffs, and at this moment there appears to be a considerable food shortage, but donated rice is available without charge. It is not rice that goes into the Government ration stores. It is rice provided in schools, hospitals, or whatever, and is related to the source.

Government level aid is differently handled.

I might just say that I would hope that one thing the subcommittee could do is look into the need and the various ways it would be possible not only to provide humanitarian assistance, but to provide it responsibly in terms of followup to the needy. (And there are many needy outside of the reeducation camps.) Traditionally, the U.S. Government has felt that that could be done to the PVO's and through, for instance, agencies like the world food program.

A very specific action required prior to that possibility would be the repeal of section 411 out of the Public Law 480 bill. It is something

that we just have provided half a million dollars' worth of rice, which is not enough rice to feed Hanoi for 1 day. But we could not use American rice and we have rice here that could be available. Because of the embargo restriction and because of cost in shipping it from here, and the facilitation of other humanitarian responses that the Government ordinarily provides are not available to the PVO's in response to Vietnam at this time.

Additionally, we were assured in terms of accountability, that not only on projects where we have provided equipment, we have not provided direct funds to Vietnam since the change, but where equipment or food has been provided, these sites have all been visited fairly frequently, photographed, documented. We are engaged in a process of providing equipment for an agricultural repair workshop and they are encouraging us to have visits at least two, three times a year, stay as long as necessary—1 month, 2 months at a time.

So we feel that in terms of our constituency, we can be accountable about assuring the end use of donated gifts and I would encourage the subcommittee to explore ways where humanitarian assistance on a government level might be implemented.

Mr. FRASER. Well, I apologize for the length of this hearing. It was far longer than I am sure any of you intended. I guess we have not settled all of the issues, but I think we have at least illuminated some of the problems that we have with understanding what is happening in Vietnam.

I suspect our subcommittee will try to pursue this as we are able to.

Well, if no one has any last statement to make—

Mr. McCLEARY. Might I add one word, and that is in regard to the issue of the religious community in Vietnam.

The National Council of Churches did extend an invitation to the religious leadership of Vietnam to visit the United States, but that first must receive approval from the State Department. And if it would be desired to have additional information from the religious community itself, we might encourage the subcommittee to assist us in getting such clearance from the State Department for that visit to take place. That would be a very significant way—

Mr. FRASER. Are you having a problem with the Department now?

Mr. McCLEARY. That is right.

Mr. LUCE. I called Barbara Watson, who I believe is the Assistant Secretary of State for Security and Consular Affairs. I just talked to her aide prior to our departure for Vietnam. The procedure which she outlined to me on the phone is that a Vietnamese religious leader would have to go to a country that had a U.S. Embassy, such as Hong Kong, make the application, wait several days—she said probably at least 2 weeks—to find out whether they would be able to come to the United States or not, which is hardly a warm welcome. And it is hard to ask, for example, a bishop to go to another country and wait 2 weeks. It would be helpful if, for example, they could fill in their applications in Vietnam and mail them to the United States rather than that. It would be helpful if we could get some assurance that the U.S. Government would be receptive to such applications.

Mr. FRASER. Can't we use some other embassy in Saigon?

Mr. LUCE. I think it would be very good if you could talk with Barbara Watson and talk that out.

Mr. FRASER. Let me ask you one question. Are foreign publications available in Saigon?

Mr. LUCE. Some are, yes, and I carried lots of them.

Mr. FRASER. The French, *Le Monde*?

Mr. LUCE. I didn't see it there. There are a lot of books. It is mostly books and magazines available.

Mr. FRASER. But newspapers are not?

Mr. LUCE. No.

Mr. FRASER. Mr. Jacquency?

Mr. JACQUENEY. I would like to just comment briefly on the question of, I believe it is seven religious leaders that Don Luce and his colleagues would like to invite to the United States.

I, and many people who are working with me on the kinds of human rights issues we are trying to raise, feel that this is a splendid idea. We endorse wholeheartedly the idea that proper, legitimate religious leaders whom Hanoi wants to send here ought to be invited to come.

However, we also suggest that some of the imprisoned religious leaders, some of the imprisoned Buddhists and Catholics and Hoa Hao also be invited to come to the United States, to provide humanitarian help that could free them and at the very least, to let Vietnam know that there is humanitarian concern for these people in the democracies.

So I would hope that my friends at this table who are interested in inviting these seven Vietnamese Government-approved religious leaders to come would join with us in also inviting some of the people who are in prison to come as well. [Pause.]

I don't seem to be overwhelmed with a response.

Mr. FRASER. Mr. Coi.

Mr. COI. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, once more I wish to thank you for having given me the opportunity to come to speak today. Because of the limitation of time, I cannot tell you everything that I wish I could tell you. But what I have said is a few things I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears.

In my 18-page statement, I hope that you would give me the happiness of please reading it carefully one more time, and then give a few minutes to think over and ponder what I have said.

I wish also to express the feeling of the people of South Vietnam that they are suffering victims under the yoke of the Communist domination.

Please try to help them and please do not help the Communists to have more means to restrict the Vietnamese people in South Vietnam.

Thank you.

Mr. FRASER. Well, thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 6:45 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned, to reconvene on Tuesday, July 26, 1977 at 2 p.m.]

HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 1977

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

The subcommittee met at 2:05 p.m. in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Donald M. Fraser (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. FRASER. Today the subcommittee begins its third hearing on human rights in Vietnam. During the two previous hearings held last month on this subject, the testimony assessing the situation in Vietnam was wide ranging, most of it from witnesses who have recently visited Vietnam. Although we have no political and commercial relations with Vietnam, in light of the steps taken toward normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam, it is important that we remain informed of the situation.

Our witness today is Mr. Nguyen Cong Hoan, one of the few South Vietnamese who served as a member of the National Assembly in Hanoi. He represented the South Vietnamese province of Phu Khanh in the Assembly. As a member of the Hanoi Assembly Mr. Hoan served on its Cultural and Educational Committee.

Previously, under the Thieu regime, Mr. Hoan was a member of the Saigon Assembly and was known for his opposition to Thieu's government.

In March of this year Mr. Hoan fled Vietnam from Nha Trang in the southern part of the country and went to Japan. He arrived in the United States a few days ago.

Mr. Hoan, the subcommittee is happy to see you here today. I understand that you have a prepared statement.

Mr. TRAN. Your honor, my name is George Tran and I am serving as interpreter for Mr. Hoan. I will now read the statement in English so that the audience can understand it.

Mr. FRASER. That's fine, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF NGUYEN CONG HOAN, FORMER MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTING PHU KHANH PROVINCE¹

Mr. HOAN. First, let me express my sincere appreciation and thanks to this committee for giving me the opportunity to bring my testimony here today. It was to bring this testimony to the outside world that I

¹ Mr. Hoan's statement was given through an interpreter, Mr. George Tran.

have escaped from Vietnam, leaving behind my family to considerable hardship, possible death. But the suffering of my family is nothing in comparison to the suffering of millions of my countrymen.

The U.S. consulate in Japan notified me of my departure for the United States only in the evening of Friday, July 22, 1977, therefore leaving me very little time for rest and preparation for the testimony. Moreover, in this 15-minute opening statement, I cannot elaborate on any subject. I just mention the subjects and shall be glad to the best of my knowledge to give information on any subjects mentioned or not mentioned here. Please ask questions.

I was, as you all know, a member of the new Unified Assembly and a member of its Subcommittee on Culture and Education, therefore a member of the new ruling class with all the prerogatives attached to it. I lived better than under Mr. Thieu. I would not trade the security of this position against the dangers and hazards of an escape by fishing boat if I did not feel strongly enough about what I saw and heard in Vietnam for 2 years, both in North and South Vietnam. I saw it from both the ruling class point of view and from the people's point of view. I decided I must go.

Today, although South Vietnam has fallen under Communist rule, the ideal of liberty still remains well alive in the hearts of our people. Given the new rule, many like myself come to better appreciate the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Popular dissatisfaction has gained every strata of Vietnamese society. I firmly believe that our people will succeed in our struggle to liberate ourselves and to recuperate our lost freedom and human rights if the United States and other free world nations will only refrain themselves from giving the Communist government additional weapons to oppress and exterminate those who are still struggling.

Gentlemen, our people have a traditional attachment to their country. No Vietnamese would willingly leave home, homeland and ancestors' graves. During the most oppressive French colonial rule and Japanese domination, no one escaped by boat at great risk to their lives. Yet you see that my countrymen by the thousands and from all walks of life, including a number of disillusioned Vietcongs, continue to escape from Vietnam; 6 out of 10 never made it and for those who are fortunate to make it, they are not allowed to land.

Our people so much hate war and are so exhausted by war, yet as unbelievable as it may seem they are ready to continue the struggle for many more years to liberate themselves from the most inhuman and oppressive regime they have ever known.

The reason for this determination is because they can no longer endure the total suppression of human rights and see no future for their children. My case is an example.

I come here to convey to you the real situation in Vietnam. On the heads of my mother, my wife, and four children I swear to tell only the truth as I see it.

I would be happier if I could freely talk to my people but as you well know the Communists do not allow opposition, do not permit anyone to criticize the state policies even in a timid manner and with constructive intent.

In Vietnam today it is the dictatorship of the Communist Party.

The Government can arrest, execute, deport, expropriate, tax, withdraw rice allowance, fire from employment, ban from schools, forbid traveling and do many more things to the people without specific charges or explanation.

All the basic rights are suppressed.

The right to run for public office: Each candidate must be presented by the party.

Freedom of expression: All the mass media, TV, radio, newspapers, publishing houses are controlled by the Government. Each newspaper article is carefully censored before printing.

Freedom of thought: No one has the right to express any thought, idea, misgivings that are contrary to the official line. Whoever does will be considered "reactionary" and will be sent to reeducation camp.

Liberty of residence: The ordinary citizen does not have the right to change his place of residence. Destitute malaria-infected "new economic areas" are used to send families of the officials and officers of the former regime while their urban homes are being occupied by the cadres or Bo-Doi.

All the four religions of Vietnam—Buddhism, Catholicism, Cao-Dai and Hoa-Hao Buddhism—are considered reactionary, "the opium of the people" and are under intense persecution. The persecution is subtle and perfidious.

Individuals and political parties once involved in the preservation of democratic liberties in South Vietnam, even those closely allied with the National Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government are behind bars; some are the target of revenge and retaliation. Most will be kept indefinitely in reeducation camps and many are deported to the North.

Reeducation camp inmates are prisoners, not students. (I have an official document to this effect.)

Gentlemen, I attended a number of top policy meetings in Hanoi during my several months stay there. Communist Vietnam has not renounced their aggressive intent toward its neighbors. It sends weapons not only to Laos but also to Communist insurgents in Thailand, Malaysia. Vietnam also sells arms worth some \$2 billion to other nations.

In spite of peace, the Government keeps its whole army in active duty.

Under a plan of general mobilization, all abled-bodied men and women between the age of 18 and 25 must register for active military duty.

During my stay in the North I heard news about MIA's. I was also given the opportunity to understand the Government's policy in dealing with the United States on this issue.

Gentlemen, I appreciate your concern in seeking the truth about Vietnam. Regarding other witnesses, visiting journalists and dignitaries who toured Vietnam for a few days or weeks and give a rosy picture of Vietnam, I would like to present what I know about it.

The Government never allows any foreign individuals or organization or any independent observers to come to Vietnam and see the truth for themselves.

When a foreign visitor is about to visit Vietnam the authorities will arrange the places he will visit, the scenes he will see, the contacts he will talk to. Even if he meets someone in the streets and talks to him, the encounter has been prearranged. No Vietnamese dares to talk to a foreigner unless he is given permission to do so. The Government needs aid for reconstruction and uses those visits and visitors to press for aid back in the States. These PR activities are being given top priorities in Hanoi.

The Government maintains a few show camps, model work site and a number of contacts on hand for this purpose. No one is allowed to say anything to a foreign visitor without clearing it first with the authorities. Whoever says anything that will be judged detrimental to the new régime will be severely punished.

Any investigation of conditions inside so-called reeducation camps, if ever permitted, would have to take into account the police atmosphere and the workings behind the bamboo curtain. The personal safety of the witnesses must be guaranteed if the investigator is to find any truth at all.

I escaped to Japan with three companions, two of whom are congressmen from the former South Vietnam Assembly. Like myself, all of them have left their families in Vietnam. They are still in Japan, confined to the fishing village where we lived during the past months.

May I appeal to you to help them gain admittance to the United States? This is an appeal from an elected representative to elected representatives on behalf of elected representatives.

Once more, may I express my gratitude to the subcommittee for the invitation, particularly to the chairman and Representative Derwinski for his sympathy and support.

Thank you.

[Mr. Hoan's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NGUYEN CONG HOAN, FORMER MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTING PHU KHANH PROVINCE

First, let me start by stating a few facts about myself. My name is Nguyen Cong Hoan, 34 years of age, born in 1943 in the province of Phu Yen, Central Vietnam. By profession I was a high school teacher of physics and chemistry since 1967 when I graduated from college with a B.A. in Physical Sciences. I have never belonged to a political party nor have I ever served in an executive branch position in Vietnam, before or after the fall of South Vietnam. In 1971 I ran for the first time as candidate for a National Assembly seat representing Phu Yen, my native province, and won to become a member of the Opposition Bloc led by Representative-Lawyer Tran Van Tuyen. In 1973 because of my past association with the Buddhist youth peace movement (while still a student) I was appointed Commissioner for Buddhist University Student Affairs in Charge of Central Vietnam, working under Venerable Thich Giac Duc, the then Commissioner-General for Youth Affairs, Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam. In 1974, I joined the National Reconciliation Force headed by Senator Vu Van Mau in an attempt to set up a viable Third Force that would play a central role in a neutral postwar Vietnam.

After the fall of Saigon I went back to teaching. In the spring of 1976 the Front nominated me to stand as a candidate representing Phu Khanh (a combination of two former provinces, Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa) and subsequently on April 26, 1976 I was elected to the first unified National Assembly of Vietnam with 94.99 percent of the votes. Since then I have participated in two sessions of the National Assembly in Hanoi, one in June 1976 and one in January 1977. As a member of the Committee on Culture and Education I have also participated in

three sessions of this committee, twice in Hanoi and once in Saigon. Because of this and extensive travel in the North (which included Nghe An, Son Tay, Hai Hung, Nam Dinh, and of course Hanoi) I can say with a measure of confidence that I am aware of the situation both north and south of the 17th Parallel. Because of my legislator's duties I was privileged to travel widely in my province, which exposed me to much public contact both before and after April 30, 1975. And because of my legislative work I had access to many reports and discussions dealing with national objectives, longterm projections and official policies of the government.

A PERPETUAL THREAT TO LIFE

Based on these experiences I can categorically say that the present government of Vietnam is a dictatorship run by the Communist Party of Vietnam. In such a regime the common person lives in a situation of perpetual threat to his life. Although no bloodbath has taken place in Saigon or the major cities of the South as it had been widely feared, based on the Tet 1968 experience in Hue, in the provinces where there are no observers eliminations and killings have occurred on a widespread scale and under many forms, some so subtle that no outside observers can possibly detect.

For instance, in a typical province which I know well since it is my own, Phu Yen, directly after the Communist takeover around 500 people were killed en masse in a forested area of Hoa Quang Village, Tuy Hoa District, Phu Yen Province, around 15 kilometers west of Tuy Hoa town. The victims of this mass execution were Dai Viet party members, police, intelligence and Phoenix officers, people with an anti-Communist record, and hoi chanh's. Some 200 other people have been eliminated in the days that followed and in the last two years. No one dares to reveal about the death of his loved ones, and no one dares either to complain about such deaths.

In the rest of Central Vietnam, as far as I can determine the same thing has also been happening. There is no such thing as the rights of habeas corpus. And if the government is entirely in the hands of one party, with no independent press, with the executive, legislative and judiciary all lumped into one, then what can a person do to proclaim an injustice done to him in the present situation of total isolation from the outside world?

Among those personally known to me who have fallen victim to the authorities' policy of revenge are:

Le Van A, former ARVN captain, who used to live on Tran Hung Dao Street, Tuy Hoa, in front of the Phu Yen Hospital. A was a very close friend of mine.

Venerable Thich Dieu Bon, Deputy Representative of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Phu Yen Province, was suspected of being a CIA agent simply because he had in his possession a certificate of appreciation from the U.S. Consulate for his assistance in the search for MIA's. He was killed.

Mr. Tran Pho, a teacher in Song Can, the paternal uncle of Tran Quang Hiep, my private secretary, was killed with a machete at Le Uyen.

Mr. Nguyen Huu Tri, a Dai Viet party member formerly of Song Cau, was buried alive.

Mr. Truong Tu Thien, a Dai Viet party leader, was arrested in January 1976 in Saigon, then brought back to Nha Trang to be eliminated after extremely atrocious tortures.

Many others died in concentration camps, the victims of overwork, malnutrition, extremely unhealthy sanitary conditions, a near total lack of water and medicine. Tens of thousands of people in the southern part of the country have also fallen, and their relatives, I am sure, would be more than willing to divulge the information if only they be guaranteed from reprisal.

THE LOSS OF FREEDOMS

1. The rights to vote and to run for public office do not exist for the simple reason that, be it the National Assembly election of April 25, 1976, or any other since, nobody has the right to volunteer his candidacy. The very first prerequisite is that one be proposed and nominated by the Front, i.e. the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam in the South or the Fatherland Front in the North. The right to vote, too, is a caricature since one is forced to do so when one knows for certain that the results have all been predetermined. It is true that a number of former so-called Third Force elements were voted into the National Assembly, for instance, Mrs. Ngo Ba Thanh or Professor Ly Chanh Trung, but these were

elected more to deceive world public opinion rather than anything else. All these elements do not in any case amount to more than five percent, and it is easy to see that they are totally helpless in a situation when more than 95 percent are staunch Party members taking always the party line.

2. The freedom of the press and of publication is reduced to the existence of two official dailies in North Vietnam, *Nhan Dan* (The People) and *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* (People's Army), and two official or near official daily organs in the South, *Saigon Giai Phong* (Liberated Saigon) and *Tin Sang* (Morning News). Not a single independent Vietnamese or foreign journalist is allowed free circulation in the country, including those coming from communist countries.

All publication rights belong to the state which manages all printing presses and other printing supplies like paper, ink, etc. All publications that are not published by the government are banned, including religious texts and science textbooks.

3. The freedom of expression is unknown. Even though I was a National Assembly representative, I had no right to express myself at such a forum nor can I refuse to read a report there if I am assigned to read one. The report usually is one written beforehand or even when it is written by one, it is usually written under the supervision of the head of the delegation. After each National Assembly session, the various delegations are expected to report back to their electorates but only in strict accordance with the guidelines already written up by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly. Even representatives to the National Assembly are not supposed to talk to foreign journalists unless they have the green light from the head of their delegations. We were reminded that all foreign journalists are potential spies, including those who came from communist countries.

As far as the people are concerned, any meeting involving more than two or three persons outside the family is immediately suspect and those involved can be requested by public security officers to give a report of what they have talked about. Should there be a discrepancy between the reports, they can be immediately arrested for further investigation.

All large family gatherings for purposes of a wedding or funeral must have the previous permission of the authorities who would send public security officers to be present at the scene.

4. The freedom of thought is totally circumscribed. The Communist Party believes that "in order to build socialism it is necessary to have a new-type socialist man and to build this new-type socialist man one must carry out a cultural and ideological revolution." And so, in the name of this revolution, the authorities force the population into an unbreathable mold including:

Daily doses of indoctrination meant to inculcate into the population the basic tenets of communism. In this regard all other thoughts that deviate from Marxism-Leninism are branded reactionary or counterrevolutionary, and the communist cadres are the final arbiters as to how far one deviates from the party line so as to determine the proper sanction. Here there are no laws that apply or courts that one can appeal to.

Writers who have been published in the past are considered reactionary and therefore have to undergo long term indoctrination. This is the case of Duyen Anh, Vu Hoang Chuong, Nha Ca, Nguyen Manh Con, and many, many others. Those not sent to reeducation camps are subjected to another form of treatment no less cruel, that is mutual recrimination and criticism. They are forced to come out with denunciations of one another and at each stage, a few would be singled out as targets for all the others to point their barbs at. This form of treatment has caused several former writers and artists to become crazy, such as the case of Nguyen Thi Hoang, the famed woman author of *Vong Tay Hoc Tro* ("In A Student's Arms") who is now living in Nha Trang.

As far as the fate of the performing artists are concerned, a number have been arrested, others forbidden to perform, while the rest are allowed to do so but only under the strict guidance of communist cadres.

All the songs created by composers other than the officially approved communist ones are banned, including those that deal with the love of the country or the love of peace. The pretext given for such banning is that these songs encourage a mood of wistful yearning for the past, i.e. the previous regime.

But the crucial importance is attached by the communists to the field of education. All the lessons taught in class have to be approved beforehand and they must include what is called the "ideological content." This applies even in the

case of such fields as mathematics, physics and chemistry. The teachers are expressly forbidden to teach anything that would fall outside the purview of officially approved textbooks. Official textbooks, it is said, are considered to be the law. To such an extent that a theorem or definition may be misrepresented and the teacher would still not be allowed to make the correction. To do so would be considered a gross misdemeanor, a tampering with the law.

All the teachers and students, whether at university or high school level, have to attend the political and indoctrination sessions organized by the party, at the end of which they are expected to put down what they have learned.

5. The freedom of religion in a communist society of course is a contradiction in terms. With its slogan, "Everything for the edification of socialism," the Communist Party of Vietnam looks at religions as the main obstacles to such an end, which therefore determines the extreme repression they are subjected to.

In my travels in North Vietnam I had a mind to find out about the religious situation there after thirty years of communist rule. What I found is that there is almost no religious life left in the country. Even in such areas as Quynh Luu District, Nghe An Province, which boasts of a $\frac{1}{4}$ population of Catholics the state of Catholicism there is extremely sad. Most of the churches have been destroyed or requisitioned by the state and the few that are still standing are attended on Sunday by only a few older people. As for the situation of Buddhism in North Vietnam, most of the better known temples are now kept as sightseeing places. Not a single young monk is found therein, only a few and very old priests are still practicing the religion which is in clear danger of disappearance the moment these last priests will also have died.

In the South the training to become monk or priest is expressly forbidden. It is claimed that "to practice the profession of monk or priest is to betray the nation" and that "monks and priests are crooks disguised as proletarians." This quotation comes directly from a speech given by Mr. Nguyen Xuan Huu, Central Committee member, Party Secretary for the province of Phu Khanh, at the National Liberation Front meeting of June 15, 1976.

Every religious library has been confiscated and the contents burned. All religion-affiliated establishments such as the denominational schools, orphanages, community centers, hospitals and social work centers, have been taken over by the government.

Many of the more prestigious religious leaders have been arrested including:

The An Quang Buddhist leaders Thich Tri Quang, Thich Quang Do, Thich Huyen Quang, Thich Thien Minh, Thich Quang Lien, Thich Thong Buu, Thich Thong Hue, Thich Thuyen An, Thich Thanh The, etc.

Such Catholic leaders as Monsignor Nguyen Van Thuan, Deputy to the Archbishop of Saigon, Father Tran Huu Thanh, leader of the Anti-Corruption Movement, etc.

Hoa Hao leaders such as Mr. Luong Trong Tuong (74 years old), etc.

Cao Dai leaders such as Mr. Tran Quang Vinh (73 years old), etc.

The Coconut Monk Mr. Nguyen Thanh Nam and others.

Of these a number have died in prison or been killed such as Father Hoang Quynh, etc.

Even the temples and churches do not escape defacings or deliberate acts of offense such as the throwing to the ground of Buddha's images or Christ's statues. According to their plans, these will be replaced by busts of Ho Chi-Minh. All religious mass organizations are proclaimed to be illegal and forbidden to meet or carry out activities. All the great religious holidays are no longer considered to be national holidays.

The propaganda machinery of the government is ordered to attack and slander openly the major faiths of Vietnam. A film entitled, "A Holy Day" (Ngay Le Thanh), which was realized after the communist takeover of South Vietnam, is a scurrilous attack on Christianity which depicts in one scene a rape committed by a Catholic father on one of his parishioners on the occasion of the "holy" day. The theater is also enlisted in a vast and ongoing effort to discredit religion. In January 1977 I saw along with the entire body of National Assembly representatives attending that session a *cai luong* ("renovated theater") piece played by the Central *Cai-Luong* Troupe, the main thrust of which was aimed at the "perversions" of religion. A novel entitled *Ruoi Trau* ("Gnats") is also played up as portraying an enlightened view of religion.

While independent religious publications are forbidden and mass organizations made illegal, the government creates others run by communist cadres such

as the publications *Cong Giao va Dan Toc* ("The Catholic and the Nation"), *Giao Ngo* ("Enlightenment"), and the so-called "Patriotic" Buddhists and "Patriotic" Catholic, etc.

In 1963 Venerable Thich Quang Duc burned himself to death to protest the repressions of the Ngo Dinh Diem government, causing worldwide repercussions. On November 2, 1965, twelve Buddhist priests and nuns burned themselves to death in Can Tho to protest the repression of the communists and yet the world remained indifferent. It is precisely because of such reactions that the communists have felt themselves encouraged in their repressive ways.

6. The freedom of residence is also taken away from the Vietnamese people. To control them, the government has invented what they call the "household management" system ("quan ly ho khau") which calls for an extremely detailed revelation of one's background, which in turn would determine one's place of residence. Thereafter, one is not allowed to change one's residence unless one chooses to go to the so-called New Economic Zones. Many families are ordered to the New Economic Zones, the vast majority of which are people associated in one way or another with the former regime.

The authorities have many ways to force one to move. For instance, one can be threatened to be sent to a reeducation camp or drafted in a labor gang. Essential commodities such as cloth, sugar, medicine, etc. can also be denied one if one refuses compliance. Or again, the children cannot be sent to school if one stays.

In actuality, the New Economic Zones are no better than prison camps, all located in remote and insalubrious areas where one must work in collective gangs, where one will want everything and thus become totally dependent on the whims of government personnel. It should be realized that under the regimes of President Ngo Dinh Diem and President Nguyen Van Thieu there were also "agrovilles," "New Life Hamlets," etc. but people were never afraid to go there even during the war where there was still a good measure of insecurity involved. But the New Economic Zones are lands of exile that no one in his right mind would choose to go unless forced to do so.

THE REEDUCATION AND LABOR REFORM POLICY OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement forbade reprisals and discriminating treatment towards individuals or groups that have cooperated with this or that side. Nonetheless, after the takeover of South Vietnam, the communist authorities ordered everyone belonging to the former government, army and parties to come out and register for reeducation and labor reform.

This policy was applied differently depending on the localities since there did not seem to have been a "standard operation procedure." But in general one can distinguish two types of reeducation, a longterm kind and a short term kind.

Longterm reeducation is indefinite and does not bear a cutting off date. It is reserved for:

Former ARVN officers.

Former cadres and personnel in the fields of intelligence, public security, the Phoenix and the Chieu Hoi programs.

Former members of political parties in the South

Those defined as owing a "blood debt" to the people.

As for the short term kind of reeducation, then there is a cutoff date and it is reserved for the remaining military personnel and government officials, including even those already in retirement.

The camps reserved for the longterm reeducation people are all located in remote areas of the country, usually in the wooded or mountainous back country. This only leaves out those that are undergoing interrogation and therefore are being detained in the former prisons of the Republic of Vietnam. All the people in camp, however, are called and labelled prisoners on their internal documents but they enjoy none of the privileges and guarantees that still go with the condition of prisoners.

At the end of 1976, the communists published an eight-point policy dealing with this group of people, according to which the amount of time stipulated for spending in camp is three years in the case of those who show progress. Unfortunately, how that progress is going to be measured is not defined. This shows still another form of deception and control practiced by the communists.

According to the reports of those who have been released and also according to my own observations during visits to these camps, the prisoners' spirits

undergo very trying and excruciating experiences. Sometimes I no longer had the feeling they were human. This is the result of extreme physical deprivation. Not only that, they were ill-treated in many ways and under innumerable forms: forced labor, hand detection of mines, filling in of bomb craters, etc.

A few prominent personalities are left out of the camps such as former General Duong Van Minh, former Senators Vu Van Mau and Nguyen Van Huyen, a couple of former oppositionists in the National Assembly, but these exceptions were mostly meant for propaganda purpose (to throw sand on people's eyes). At any rate, they do not amount to many.

Just to take the case of Phu Yen Province alone, there are seven main prison camps, not to mention the smaller detention camps that are established almost everywhere in order to keep the suspects. The seven camps are:

The central jail of Tuy Hoa. This was the former provincial jail located in the town of Tuy Hoa.

Camp A30 in Lac Chi Hamlet, Hoa Thanh Village, Hieu Xuong District, which contains about 3000 political prisoners.

Camp A20 located at Dong Tre, Xuan Phuoc Village, Dong Xuan District, which contains about 1000 persons who came back to Vietnam on the Viet Nam Thuong Tin boat.

The camp complex number 5 that is made up of four separate camps T51, T52, T53, and T54, located in Ngan Dien Hamlet, Son Ha Village, Son Hoa District, contains around 2000 former army officers.

Now my province has a population of 300,000 people and over 6000 people are in jail. Therefore it is easy to project and see that the total number of political prisoners in South Vietnam must come to no less than 200,000 at the minimum.

A number of officers from the ranks of captain and major up and high-ranking civilian cadres in the intelligence, public security and police, *chieuhoi*, administrative and political party categories, have been sent to the North. Their fate so far is unknown. Many others have also been openly executed simply as "examples" for the others. This was the case of former ARVN captain Huynh Van Luc, for instance, in camp T54. Many more have died as a result of illnesses or diseases, overwork or simply an accident, yet their next-of-kin are almost never notified, nor are they allowed to recover the body for a decent burial.

Many famous politicians have simply disappeared since the day they reported for reeducation. This was the case of Messrs. Vu Hong Khanh, Le Dinh Duyen (former Vietnamese Nationalist Party leaders), Phan Thiep, Nguyen Mau, Doan Mai, etc. Mr. Tran Van Tuyen, President of the Bar Association of Vietnam, who headed the Opposition Bloc in the Lower House, National Assembly of the Republic of Vietnam, is believed to have died in jail.

It is thus apparent that the Communists in Vietnam are not only trampling human rights underfoot, they have absolutely no regard for even the prisoners code universally recognized as a standard of humanity in warfare.

CONCLUSIONS

The above should give one a fair idea of what the Communists are doing to Vietnam and the Vietnamese people in terms of human rights.

Mr. FRASER. Thank you very much, Mr. Hoan.

Do you have any knowledge of English?

Mr. HOAN. Very little, sir.

Mr. FRASER. Do you understand some of it?

Mr. HOAN. Very little, sir.

Mr. FRASER. As I understand it, you were in the National Assembly in Hanoi but before that you were also in the Assembly in Saigon.

Mr. HOAN. That is right, sir.

Mr. FRASER. When were you first elected to the Assembly in Saigon?

Mr. HOAN. It was in October 1971, sir.

Mr. FRASER. What district did you represent then?

Mr. HOAN. At that time it was in Phu Khanh.

Mr. FRASER. Was that your home?

Mr. HOAN. It is my home, sir.

Mr. FRASER. Could I ask how old you were when you were first elected?

Mr. HOAN. I was 28 years old since I was born in 1943.

Mr. FRASER. Had you served in the military of the South Vietnamese Government or Saigon Government?

Mr. HOAN. I never served in the army, sir.

Mr. FRASER. Were you active politically before you ran for the Assembly in October 1971?

Mr. HOAN. At that time mostly I was active on the social field. Some of those activities are against the corruption in the former Thieu regime. I was mostly involved in activities for peace.

Mr. FRASER. With whom did you work in your efforts against corruption and in support of peace?

Mr. HOAN. Mostly in student milieu, among students.

Mr. FRASER. What were you doing for a living at that time?

Mr. HOAN. I was a teacher, sir.

Mr. FRASER. Of what subject?

Mr. HOAN. Physical sciences.

Mr. FRASER. Where were you teaching?

Mr. HOAN. Taberd Institution which is a Catholic institution and Van-Hanh Institution which is a Buddhist institution.

Mr. FRASER. Both in Saigon?

Mr. HOAN. Both in Saigon, sir.

Mr. FRASER. How did you escape your requirement of serving in the military?

Mr. HOAN. According to the law in Vietnam, in 1967 I graduated from the university and I had a B.A. degree. That is why I got the permission to postpone the enrollment for 3 years so that I can prepare a doctorate degree.

Mr. FRASER. What happened at the end of 3 years?

Mr. HOAN. After those 3 years I benefitted from the law which gave me another postponement because I have an old mother of 70 years old that I must support.

Mr. FRASER. Prior to the fall of the Saigon government, did you have any contact with the Liberation Front or the Vietcong?

Mr. HOAN. Before the Vietcong Communists seized Saigon—they seized my province 1 month before they seized Saigon. That is why I happened to know them when they seized my province.

Mr. FRASER. How far is your province from Saigon?

Mr. HOAN. 500 kilometers to the north.

Mr. FRASER. Were you teaching at this time in Saigon?

Mr. HOAN. When I was elected to the congress I did not have the right to teach any more, holding outside work, and at that time I happened to be in my province because the congress—I mean the National Assembly—was out of session in Saigon.

Mr. FRASER. Is that the province where your mother lives?

Mr. HOAN. That is right, sir.

Mr. FRASER. You had been critical of the Thieu government prior to the fall of the Saigon government? You had been critical of President Thieu?

Mr. HOAN. That is right, sir.

Mr. FRASER. So at the time that the Liberation Front or the Vietcong took over in the south, did you look forward to that as an improvement or what was your attitude?

Mr. HOAN. I was hoping for an improvement under the regime because I thought that when peace returned to Vietnam we would have more opportunity to work for the country and the condition would be more favorable.

Mr. FRASER. When did you run for the Assembly in Hanoi?

Mr. HOAN. It was in the elections of April 25, 1976, sir.

Mr. FRASER. At that time were you a member of the party?

Mr. HOAN. No, sir.

Mr. FRASER. I think you told us, but what district did you represent at that time when you ran for the Hanoi Assembly?

Mr. HOAN. I was running for the province of Phu Khanh because the Communists combined the two former provinces of Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa into one.

Mr. FRASER. So that the new district you ran from represented two former provinces, one of which you had represented in the Saigon Assembly?

Mr. HOAN. That is correct, sir.

Mr. FRASER. Did anybody else run in the same election in which you were elected? In other words, did anybody run for that same seat?

Mr. HOAN. The number of seats in the Phu Khanh province to be elected were 11 and the Communists chose 12 candidates. Eleven were elected and one was defeated.

Mr. FRASER. How many of the 12 candidates were members of the Communist Party?

Mr. HOAN. Among those 12, 10 are members of the Communist Party.

Mr. FRASER. So you were the only one who was elected who was not a member of the Communist Party. Is that correct?

Mr. HOAN. That is correct, sir.

Mr. FRASER. Did you subsequently join the party?

Mr. HOAN. No, sir.

Mr. FRASER. So you didn't attend the fourth party congress held in November-December of 1976?

Mr. HOAN. No, sir.

Mr. FRASER. How many months then did you serve until you left Vietnam?

Mr. HOAN. From April 25, 1976, until March 29, 1977, so it is almost 1 year, sir.

Mr. FRASER. That was approximately 1 year.

Mr. HOAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. FRASER. For what part of the year was the Assembly in Hanoi meeting?

Mr. HOAN. They have two sessions every year, one in January and one in June.

Mr. FRASER. How long does each of those sessions last?

Mr. HOAN. In the January session when we discussed about budgeting and the 5-year plan we met only for 1 week. In June we had another session for another 1 week.