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THE DIEM - ~~H~~INH DISPUTE

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the Geneva Accords in July of this year, the government of Vietnam has been inefficient, ineffective, and exceedingly unstable. This government, directed by Ngo dinh DIEM, President of the Council of Ministers (Premier), is faced with almost insurmountable national problems. Besides the difficult task of setting up an effective administration in a newly independent state, the DIEM government must cooperate with the International Commission and the Joint Commission in the implementation of the armistice agreement. The government also faces the problem of the absorption of over a million refugees and displaced persons. And above all, the government must prepare Free Vietnam for the referendum (scheduled for 1956) which is supposed to decide whether Vietnam will remain free or will become another satellite in the communist sphere.

This last task would burden the most experienced of governments. Free Vietnam, partly as the result of the Geneva agreement, is quickly being infiltrated by agents of the communist controlled Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In preparing for a referendum, the free government is at a psychological disadvantage. The people of Vietnam have as a whole come to distrust and hate the French, and to a certain extent this hatred is transferred to all white people. The capitalism the Vietnamese have witnessed, not the brand existing in the West today, is linked in their minds with detested colonialism. Since Vietnam is quite obviously supported by the West, the DIEM government is condemned by communist propaganda as being the puppet government of colonial powers. Since the Vietnamese governments of the past have been far from independent, Southern Vietnam will be relatively receptive to such propaganda.

The HO CHI MINH government in the North, on the other hand, does not have to bear the onus of colonialism. HO and his followers are Vietnamese. HO, although previously known under a different name - Nguyen ai QUOC - has, in the eyes of the people, been a legendary nationalist for over thirty years. He fought the Japanese as well as the French. His being a confirmed communist does not at all trouble the ordinary citizen. Vietminh soldiers, when captured by the French and told that HO is a communist, inevitably answered, "Then communism is good!"

It is therefore evident that the DIEM government must devote all its energies to the surmounting of these almost insurmountable difficulties. However, this has not been the case. Internal politics, intrigues, and jealousies have forced the operation of the government practically to a standstill. Since early September of this year, the internal political crisis has become such that most observers agree that civil war could break out at any time. The West is sincerely and justly worried. Every day the internal crisis is prolonged is a day gained by the communists. The crisis has created a situation in which the South is being split into factions with the result that many people long for stability and security. HO, in his propaganda, is promising just that; and already, many refugees who fled south to escape the communists are reportedly pleading to return.

II. PERSONALITIES

An understanding of the DIEM - ~~H~~INH dispute, which is focused on personalities, is facilitated by a survey of the principals involved. The material for this short study of personalities is based on Section 59,

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National Intelligence Survey. Although firm conclusions cannot be drawn as to the weight past actions play in the present dispute, some conjecture should certainly be allowable. The reader will note that the dispute becomes much more intelligible once the personality conflicts, aspirations, and prejudices are understood.

BAO DAI

This extremely intelligent man was born of royalty in 1913 and, after having received a thoroughly French education, served as Emperor of Annam from 1926 until 1945 when he abdicated and joined the Vietminh. A year later he exiled himself from the country, returning to serve as Chief of State in 1949 only after long negotiations with the French. On his return to Vietnam, he believed himself the mediator between all dissident groups, including the Vietminh. He was extremely disappointed to find himself called a "traitor" and a "French puppet" by the Vietminh - who privately admit he is neither - and he has come to visualize himself as the leader and symbol of non-communist Vietnam.

Vietnam has neither a constitution to define BAO DAI's power and privileges, nor a legislative assembly to curb them. Since all executive acts are issued as "imperial" ordinances, BAO DAI is the first authority in governmental decisions. He has successfully assumed the right to appoint the premier, members of the cabinet, and regional governors, and can exert terrific control over the civil service and most important political personnel. However, he prefers to rule as the traditional oriental monarch, making his influence felt only indirectly.

BAO DAI has much personal experience in dealing with the French and is determined not to be unduly influenced by them. He has worked consistently to make himself less susceptible to French influence, including the use of such tactics as amassing by unscrupulous means a large fortune and placing it abroad beyond French control. He is fully aware of - and shares - the aspirations of his people for unity and independence.

To maintain himself as the focal point of the noncommunist Vietnamese nationalist movement, BAO DAI has regularly eliminated from his government any political leaders who might challenge his dominant position. He has also discouraged any political innovations, such as a popularly elected legislative assembly, which might jeopardize his primacy as the sole legitimate source in Vietnam. His private life has been scandalous, and many qualified observers believe him incapable of making any personal sacrifice for his country. BAO DAI has exhibited little steadfastness of purpose and is easily swayed by stronger personalities. There seems to be no one whom he completely trusts.

For approximately the last six months, BAO DAI has been residing on the Riviera. In June of this year, yielding to great political pressure, he appointed Ngo dinh DIEM as premier, giving him the privilege of almost complete freedom of action in the government.

Ngo Dinh DIEM

Until June, Ngo dinh DIEM hadn't held office in Vietnam for over twenty years. Much of that time he spent outside the country. He still, however, enjoyed great popular prestige and was the most prominent Catholic lay and political leader in the three Kys.

DIEM was born in 1901 of devoutly Catholic parents. Before he was thirty years old, he served as governor of Quang Tri province. During the insurrections of 1930-31, he gained the hatred of the extreme-left nationalists by his harsh measures to suppress the uprisings. During World War II and after, he refused to associate with either the Japanese or the French regimes. He has hated the Vietminh, and in 1945 one of his brothers was killed by their agents. Until this year, DIEM has consistently refused offers to join the Vietnamese cabinet. Since 1951, he has been living in

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the United States and Belgium.

American officials interviewing him while he was in the United States concluded he was egocentric, prejudiced, and unrealistic. A brother, the respected Catholic bishop of Vinh Long (southern Vietnam) is believed to be stronger, more realistic, and probably the dominating personality - at least before DIEM became premier. DIEM, however, does not share the widely-held views about his popularity, prestige, administrative talents, or ability to rectify the current situation in Vietnam. He has continually disagreed with the course of events in Indochina and has disassociated himself from members of the previous governments. One of DIEM's aides has remarked, "He would be impossible to work for if you didn't like him."

DIEM has known BAO DAI for many years and neither has hidden his distaste for the other. In the past, DIEM sought out and offered his support to the late Prince CUONG DE, a pretender to the throne of Annam. In September 1950, the United States Embassy in Saigon expressed the opinion that DIEM should not be encouraged to return to Vietnam as his presence there was likely to do more damage than good. It is interesting to note that General GIAP, the extremely successful Vietminh military commander, at one time stated, "There are only two real leaders in Vietnam. One is HO CHI MINH. The other is Ngo dinh DIEM. There is no room in the country for both."

General Nguyen van HINH

HINH is the son of former Premier Nguyen van TAM whose government fell in January 1954. HINH himself was born in 1916, attended French military school, and fought with the Free French forces in Italy, France and Germany. The general is a French citizen - recently he has stated that he has given up his citizenship to be solely Vietnamese - and has always been sympathetic to French interests in Indochina. He has, however, occasionally taken strong stands on issues contrary to his father and to certain measures proposed by the French in respect to the Vietnamese army.

HINH is a close personal friend of BAO DAI. It has been said that it was at BAO DAI's insistence that the general was appointed to the position of Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese National Army in 1952. Many people consider HINH to be more forthright and ambitious than most Vietnamese.

Nguyen van XUAN

XUAN is a 64-year old military figure and a general in the French army. Since 1939 he has been a French citizen, and his military record in the French army has been outstanding.

During the Second World War, XUAN served as military officer in Indochina under the French Command until the Japanese coup d'etat in March 1945. At that time he refused an invitation to serve in the Japanese sponsored "independent" government. He evoked his position as a French military officer and spent the next six months in prison. Later in 1945 he refused to serve in the Vietminh government. Instead he acted as liaison officer between the French and the pro-French native troops. In June 1946, XUAN became Vice-President and Minister of National Defense in the first Provisional Government of Cochin China. He held these posts until December of the same year when he returned to France. In September 1947 he was elected President of the third Provisional Government of Cochin China, which was shortly thereafter renamed the provisional Government of south Vietnam.

After negotiations to bring about the creation of the first Central Provisional Government of Vietnam in May 1948, XUAN was unanimously elected its president. During this time he worked unceasingly for the return of BAO DAI. When BAO DAI did return in 1949, XUAN was disappointed to receive the lesser positions of Vice-Premier and Minister of Defense in the new government. XUAN then became involved in political intrigues and was suspected of engaging in illegal exchange transactions. By the end of the year he was implicated in a plot to replace BAO DAI and the High Commissioner. As the result, XUAN was completely discredited. He left Vietnam for France in

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1950 and did not return until 1953 when, upon renewing acquaintances and learning of the current political situation, he again seemed to become politically ambitious.

As a result of long association with the French, thoroughly Gallicized XUAN is favorably looked upon by certain powerful French political groups. However, although he has attracted many followers by his professional reputation and amiability, XUAN is vain and uncompromising as to the position he might occupy in the government. Also, the fact that he has forgotten most of his Vietnamese makes him highly unpopular in some nationalist circles.

III. THE DISPUTE

After less than six months in office, the Vietnamese premier, Prince BUU LOC, resigned on June 15, 1954. It was stated at the time that the resignation was prompted by feelings of inadequacy on the part of the Prince in face of the mounting internal problems that were challenging the tortured nation. This was the period of the Geneva Conference. Vietnam was unrealistically hoping that the country wouldn't be partitioned. However, it had become evident that none of the Western powers were inclined toward giving Free Vietnam any more than financial, diplomatic and verbal support in the struggle for an "honorable" peace. Morale was exceedingly low, and it was evident that a true nationalist, a man who was known to be anti-communist, efficient and honest, must be called upon to form the new government.

BAO DAI, the former Emperor of Annam and present Chief of State of Vietnam, answered the call from his Riviera castle. He appointed as Premier Ngo dinh DIEM. The new Premier was given extensive powers which almost amounted to a "blank check." DIEM was the first Vietnamese Premier to be granted such independence of action. Although DIEM hadn't held office for twenty years and had resided outside Vietnam for much of that time, he was a recognized nationalist who was both anti-communist and anti-French. He had a record of being incorruptible. Most of the world, including Vietnam, welcomed the new appointment. When DIEM arrived at Saigon airport, huge crowds were on hand to greet him.

However, DIEM was from Tonkin, North Indochina, and therefore did not know very many of the politicians of the South. Because of this, he formed a government of "technicians," many of whom were personal friends or relatives.

It has been stated that DIEM, upon forming the cabinet, felt himself and the government above political cliques and parties. He was forming an anti-communist government or "national union." Other reports, however, state that DIEM invited many political leaders to join his government and was rebuffed by all. The reasons for these reputed rebuffs were reported to be DIEM's anti-French attitude, his political ineptness, and, most of all, his disdainful attitude toward members of former governments.

The government as finally formed had as leaders men averaging forty years of age. The program which they pledged to follow consisted of six points: durable peace, complete democracy, social reforms, war against corruption, complete independence, and national unity.

Continuing to hold the post of Chief of Staff of the Vietnamese army, which he had held since 1952, was General Nguyen van HINH, a close personal friend of BAO DAI and many French military leaders. This man had on his record such feats as the rebuilding since 1952 of the 270,000 man Vietnamese army.

The government, however, was far from an efficient institution with full civil and military control over its territory. In the North and sections of the South the Vietminh held undisputed control. In the

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free areas there were a number of semi-religious and secular organizations that had no representation in the government. These organizations had their own armies and operated in a feudal manner, recognizing that the ultimate authority rested with BAO DAI and the central government only when it was advantageous to do so. Three of the most important of these sects were the Hoa Hao, the Cao Dai, and the Binh Xuyen. These three groups controlled virtually all major commercial activity in Free Vietnam.

The Cao Dai is a religious organization which has adopted what it considers the best aspects of the world's religions. It has a pope and a list of saints ranging from Confucius to Thomas Edison. It also has an army reputed to number about 20,000 troops with General Nguyen then PHUONG as its commander.

The Hoa Hao is a "reformed" Buddhist organization possessing about 15,000 troops. This sect is reputed to be more of the gangster variety which is not adverse to "highwaymen" tactics. The Hoa Hao is led by General Tran van SOAI.

It should be mentioned that neither the Cao Dai nor the Hoa Hao is completely unified. Each has dissident groups within its nominal authority. Moreover, neither sect has consistently aligned itself with a particular government; both seem exceedingly opportunistic. It is not unusual to find the two sects at loggerheads.

The third large semi-independent organization is the Binh Xuyen. This sect is led by Le van VIEN who runs the notorious gambling casino, the Grand Monde, in Saigon. VIEN's apologists state that he has acted in a "Robin Hood" fashion in his collecting of vast quantities of wealth. The Binh Xuyen controls the Saigon - Cholon police force.

Once his government was formed, DIEM's first major task was to fight at the Geneva Conference for the preservation of a unified Vietnam. He failed and as the result lost "face." Perhaps more important, the partition cost DIEM many supporters when DIEM's native Tonkin with its strong Catholic minority was lost to the Vietminh. The government, with a major part of the members coming from North Vietnam, found itself "ruling" the bewildered, politically disorganized, truncated South. DIEM had practically no control over the Saigon - Cholon police nor the private armies of the politico-religious sects which controlled much of the territory.

Information on the internal politics from July until early September 1954 is exceedingly sparse, even for Vietnam. It is probable that during this period BAO DAI's popularity and prestige waned considerably. DIEM, being no friend of BAO DAI, certainly did not bolster the latter's position. Each man believed that he alone knew how to guide the nation. On August 9, Cao Dai, General Nguyen then PHUONG declared that he no longer regarded BAO DAI as the head of the state. At approximately the same time a Hoa Hao general took five battalions of the Hoa Hao army into opposition to the DIEM government. These troops were taken approximately 80 miles south of Saigon where they remained fairly inactive until October.

At least partially because of the above situation, DIEM sent his resignation to BAO DAI. The Chief of State answered in two ways. He refused to accept DIEM's resignation, including in his message a reiteration of his trust in DIEM and a confirmation of the full political and military power bestowed on DIEM in June. Also BAO DAI declared that he was returning to Vietnam. This declaration came as a shock to most political leaders. The Chief of State had stated he was returning to face the storm. Some sources mentioned that he was actually warning the sects to support him or he would return and take strong measures against them. BAO DAI did not return to Vietnam.

Also during the month of August, and probably before, unrest was growing among the leaders of the army. The military leaders did not believe that the DIEM government was taking sufficiently strong measures to meet the

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threat of the Vietminh. DIEM found himself blamed for the partition of the country. Too, the army leaders probably not happy about being excluded from the high counsels of government. General HINH, being a personal friend of BAO DAI, might very well have been the instigator of some of the resentment against DIEM.

The crisis broke into the open in early September. The facts are not yet clear on what exactly happened. Contradictory statements have been continually issued since that time to "explain" the immediate causes of the crisis.

There seem to have been a meeting of the general staff officers on September 5 with General HINH probably present. Although the meeting was ostensibly for the purpose of discussing psychological warfare, the participants devoted much of their time to a discussion of how they would cope with the DIEM government in face of what they called a lack of vigorous policy. DIEM was quickly, officially or unofficially, informed of the sense of the meeting.

The next day there was another "psychological warfare" meeting, only this time it was presided over by the Secretary of State for National Defense, Mr. Le ngoc CHAN. While this meeting was in progress, at the instigation of CHAN, two officers of the general staff, Lt. Col. Tran dinh LAN and Capt. Phan Xuan GIAI, were arrested or detained on charges of conspiracy against the government. LAN, at least, was released after the intervention of HINH.

On September 7, CHAN invited Colonel LAN to visit him at the Ministry of Defense. The purpose was to question him about the meeting of September 5. At this encounter, CHAN again attempted to arrest LAN, but the soldiers ordered to make the arrest did not obey CHAN's orders. Presumably, LAN left the ministry still a free man.

That same evening, Premier DIEM evidently invited HINH to call on him and at that meeting asked HINH to punish LAN. HINH stated that LAN had already been ordered to thirty days confinement, and he, HINH, would order no further punishment. Either that evening or the next, HINH requested that DIEM drop the investigation of the alleged conspiracy as, stated HINH, there was no real plot fomented by military officers against the government. DIEM, however, insisted that the investigation be continued. According to the Premier's story after the fact, General HINH then requested to take leave for several months. The request was granted, and DIEM gave him orders to that effect. In return, DIEM, to conceal the scandal in the high echelons of the army, gave orders to release the two officers, LAN and GIAI.

On September 9 the foreign press correspondents were informed of the dispute between the government and the army. The "Voice of the Army" broadcasting station related the army's version of the news during its press review program. It is evident that if HINH had asked for a leave he had changed his mind, with or without advice from his cohorts.

The next day DIEM ordered HINH to France on a six months mission. General VY was asked to replace HINH as Chief of Staff. General VY refused. On September 11 DIEM sent HINH plane tickets for the next day. HINH stated that he couldn't leave as there was no one to whom he could transfer his command. At the same time Defense Secretary CHAN sent twelve military police to force the "Voice of the Army" to cease anti-government broadcasts. General HINH responded by sending troops to protect the building.

On September 13 another ticket, dated the 14th, was sent to HINH. CHAN went to HINH's headquarters to relieve him of his command. HINH said CHAN had no authority to relieve him and added that he, HINH, was responsible to BAO DAI, not DIEM. DIEM claims that at this time BAO DAI concurred with the orders the Premier was giving.

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For the first time DIEM's cabinet didn't draw its majority from the North. The Binh Xuyen was not included in the cabinet. This exclusion could have been for a number of reasons; for example, the United States dislike of VIEN, a disagreement on the proportion of cabinet positions to be allotted to the Binh Xuyen, or an order from BAO DAI. Just before the reshuffling of the cabinet, the long expected happened. General XUAN left the cabinet and clearly joined the HINH camp. Upon making the decision to join HINH, XUAN wired BAO DAI asking that a new Premier be appointed.

Therefore the alignments had changed. Previously it had been DIEM - with the theoretical support of XUAN - opposed by the Hoa Hao, the Cao Dai, the Binh Xuyen, and the army. By September 24, the alignment was DIEM, the Hoa Hai, and the Cao Dai against Binh Xuyen and the army which was now joined by General XUAN. The latter three generals, HINH, VIEN, and XUAN, have come to be known as the Triumvirate. Behind the scenes, BAO DAI appeared to be supporting HINH, the United States seemed to support DIEM, and France did not give any clear indications of whom it was supporting. If France and the United States had not been trying to agree on a common policy toward Indochina in Washington, France might very well have supported the generals, as the latter were extremely pro-French. There undoubtedly were international pressures being exerted on the Premier, but the extent and the importance of these pressures will not be known for some time, if ever.

On September 25 the crisis almost broke into open civil war. DIEM had called upon four companies of Cao Daists to advance into Saigon. The national army, with the approval of the French, threw roadblocks across the highway. After some hesitation, the Cao Daists returned north to Tay Ninh. The gravity of the situation impressed many leaders. HINH immediately made broadcasts calling for calm, discipline, and unity. In the meantime censorship became more and more stringent in Saigon. On the 25th, the largest Vietnamese morning newspaper, the Than Chung, was banned for trying to print an account of a HINH press conference.

During the last week in September the crisis began to unfold at a much slower rate. On the 28th the government announced that HINH could keep his position as Chief of Staff, or even get a better position, if he forgot the past and collaborated with the government. Meanwhile, the countryside bristled with the armed forces of the national army, the sects, and the French, each waiting for another to move. BAO DAI sent DIEM a telegram "begging" him to include the Triumvirate in the government. DIEM treated BAO DAI's request as a suggestion and bided his time. To prod DIEM into action, HINH stated in a press conference that he would be willing to work with the government if it were willing to take concrete action against the Vietminh menace.

DIEM waited quite successfully for foreign support. France and the United States finally agreed to strongly support DIEM. It was felt that if the Triumvirate were taken into the government, DIEM would become powerless. The United States ordered its ambassador to Vietnam, Mr. Donald Heath, to fly to France to confer with BAO DAI.

During the first two weeks in October, DIEM met with the Triumvirate several times to discuss the crisis. By October 9, the crisis appeared to be nearing its end. Mr. Heath had conferred with BAO DAI, who in turn sent a messenger to discuss the crisis with DIEM. Most observers expected that a new government including General XUAN as Vice Premier and Minister of Defense would be formed by the 11th or 12th. On the 10th, a bombshell spoiled everyone's hopes. DIEM refused to take XUAN into the cabinet. Several days later, XUAN stated that no member of the Triumvirate would join the government singly.

On October 14, DIEM received a great boost of support from the United States, support which might be an explanation for why he was so adamant against such formidable opposition. U.S. Senator Mansfield, who had just completed a visit to Indochina, reported to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that if the DIEM government should fall, all United States aid to Vietnam should cease pending a complete reappraisal of American policy

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By September 13 HINH had stationed a reinforced guard around his headquarters and had posted tanks to protect the approaches. DIEM reacted by mobilizing 800 police, and had a battalion of Catholic troops from Central Vietnam flown to Saigon. Fortunately, no fighting took place.

Both DIEM and HINH then began to bargain for support. A period of negotiations and realignments set in. At first DIEM appeared to be alone. Except for some Catholic refugees, all the politically conscious groups seemed to agree with HINH that the DIEM government was inept. HINH had the solid backing of the army and, by September 16, the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen sects. It was rumored that BAO DAI himself was supporting HINH, and some even said that the Chief of State had engineered the whole crisis. In the midst of this confusion, on September 16, France transferred all remaining sovereign rights to the government. Vietnam thus entered the community of nations.

The next day DIEM reshuffled his cabinet and brought in General Nguyen van XUAN as Vice-Premier and Defense Minister. Since XUAN was a good friend of BAO DAI and also a three-star general in the French army, the move was interpreted as an effort to gain the support of the army, high official government circles, and France. However, XUAN's first order of the day praised HINH highly. Also, at the same time, talks were taking place in Washington between the State Department and M. Guy LACHAMBRE, the French Minister of Associated States. DIEM obviously was seeking the support of foreign powers. The army's reaction to XUAN's appointment was one of reserve. The military leaders had great respect for former premier XUAN, and they sensed a trick.

On the 19th, General HINH, "on behalf of all his officers and men," sent a telegram calling BAO DAI's attention to the seriousness of the crisis. The telegram stressed that the DIEM government had procrastinated with respect to countering communism and had acted arbitrarily towards the people of Vietnam and the army. Once the telegram was sent, HINH, for the first time in the dispute, held a press conference. The war of press conferences was on, and it continues at the time of this writing.

As was expected, the next day DIEM held a press conference in which he labeled HINH a rebel guilty of acts unworthy of an officer. DIEM continued his counter-attack by censoring all newspapers which gave HINH's explanation of the dispute. At first, the newspapers, upon being censored, left the censored columns blank. The readers therefore realized the extent of the censorship. The leaving of blank columns was soon forbidden, however.

While DIEM was playing for popular support, Le van VIEN, the leader of the Binh Xuyen sect, arrived in Saigon on a plane from the Riviera after extensive consultations with BAO DAI. Immediately, VIEN was regarded as a "front man" for the Chief of State. Vien carried what he described as "very precise instructions."

On the 20th of September it was announced that in the near future the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao would be given posts in a new cabinet. The next day nine of the fifteen cabinet ministers resigned. Their resignations were not accepted immediately, however. In the hours preceding the resignations, the Minister of Health disappeared - he returned late in October without explanation of his actions - and unknown would-be assassins attempted to take the life of the Vietnamese Propaganda Director.

The next few days were spotted with press conferences by both sides and orders of the day from the generals. In the conferences, each side claimed that it was following the wishes of BAO DAI. But while HINH was quoting telegrams from BAO DAI which illustrated vividly that the Chief of State was supporting him, DIEM was making public no telegrams from BAO DAI. It was rumored, however, that BAO DAI had told DIEM that he was on his own, a clear invitation for DIEM to resign. DIEM's only visible support was coming from Catholic refugees who staged noisy demonstrations in Saigon.

During these confused days, Le van VIEN was carrying on secret talks with DIEM for the inclusion of the sects in the government. Finally, on August 24, DIEM gave four cabinet positions each to the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao.

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toward that nation. The Senator stated that DIEM was a virtual prisoner in his residence and a victim of an incredible campaign of subversion and intrigue. He continued by saying that the national army was about to become a private army at the services of HINH and his staff to enable them to seize power by force. The Senator concluded with the statement that if DIEM should fall, the new government would be a military dictatorship.

This statement by an influential American brought forth a loud retort from the Triumvirate which said that HINH had been appointed by BAO DAI, had been upheld by BAO DAI, and had never acted against the legitimate authority [of BAO DAI]. HINH declared that if Mansfield had made his statement while he was in Vietnam, he would have been brought before a court martial on charges of attempting to lower the morale of the army. Naturally, Mansfield's statement was picked up by the communist propaganda organs which are now using it as an example of American "imperialism" and as "proof" that the DIEM "gang" is nothing but a puppet front for the Americans.

While the notables were bargaining and publically vying for support, approximately 80 miles south of Saigon in the Plaine de Jones area that was rapidly being evacuated by the Vietminh, dissident elements of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao sects clashed in a localized battle. About fifty casualties were sustained on each side. Presumably, the quarrel was over feudal prerogatives, but information as to the true nature of the fighting is not available. The fighting took place on October 11, but due to government censorship, the world was not informed until two weeks later. Rumors that finally came to light ranged from a statement that each dissident group was supported militarily by its parent sect, to an allegation that the Hoa Hao group was aligned with the army, and both the army through the Hoa Hao group and the government through the Cao Dai group were testing their strength. Whatever the reason, the fact that the fighting took place was an indication of the feeble control that the government has over the politico-religious sects that support it. The whole internal situation had deteriorated to a dangerous point. The DIEM - HINH dispute had reached an impasse; only the Vietminh were gaining.

Censorship was becoming more strict. By October 22, three of the eight daily papers and four of the eight weeklies had been banned for refusing to follow government instructions. These drastic measures were causing general discontent among the influential newspapermen. Vietminh propaganda was exploiting to the utmost this restriction on freedom of the press.

The final ten days of October brought forth a number of new developments. First there was the leaflet episode. Thousands of leaflets calling for a coup d'etat and allegedly signed by the three generals were found throughout Saigon. The Triumvirate loudly proclaimed that the leaflets were fraud. It is possible that the leaflets were "black" propaganda intended to injure the position of the generals. Each leaflet made vague mention of the fact that the generals had married French women, and also stated that the Triumvirate once in power would close all gambling and "red light" districts.

Next came the first loud mention that BAO DAI should return home. The general, by cable, pleaded with the Chief of State to that effect. Soon other organizations and parties took up the cry. More and more, both Vietnamese and foreign circles were stating that only BAO DAI could settle the crisis. On October 24, the Chief of State remarked that he would soon return. This, however, is not the first time he has made that promise.

The big news of the week came from the United States. Ambassador Heath handed DIEM a personal letter from President Eisenhower announcing that the United States will increase its economic aid to Vietnam, but in return the United States expects the government to carry out vital reforms. The letter also asked for assurances as to the standards of performance it [Vietnamese government] would be able to maintain in event of such aid being supplied. The actual provisions of the proposed aid have not been made public, but it is assumed that the stress is on non-military assistance.

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The United States was clearly supporting DIEM.

An international repercussion became evident on October 27. The New York Times has reported that the French colonial officers in Vietnam were secretly working against Ngo dinh DIEM and supporting the "military clique." The State Department, commenting on the report, said, "We intend and are confident the French government also intends to adhere to the course of action in which we agreed, and we do not question the good faith of the French government." The State Department was quite clearly perturbed by the action of the French officials. Although the good faith of the French government is not questioned, the State Department quite obviously remembers that often in the past the French government has found itself faced with a fait accompli engineered by the overseas French administrators.

October ended with a plea by General HINH for calm and discipline. He called on all to leave the problem of resolving the dispute to the leader actually involved. The army was asked to continue its mission normally no matter what the government and despite internal dissensions.

On November 4 the United States officially took sides in the dispute. It was announced that General J. Lawton Collins was being sent to Vietnam with the rank of ambassador. Ambassador Heath was being recalled after four and one-half years service in Saigon. One of the purposes stated for the Collins mission was to give a "psychological boost" to the DIEM government. This objective was placed with those of "exploring how U.S. aid can best be used to safeguard" that state against the Vietminh, and the coordination of all U.S. agencies in Vietnam concerned with military, economic, and diplomatic affairs. The conflict that began as a purely local affair has evolved to an extent where the United States is put in the dangerous position of officially supporting one anti-communist government against an equally anti-communist group which is seeking to replace this government.

IV. CONCLUSION

The dispute between Ngo dinh DIEM and General Nguyen van HINH has continued for approximately two months. It ostensibly began as a dispute over the method of dealing with the crisis arising from the partition. There followed a period of open violent crisis in which HINH refused to follow DIEM's orders. Troops were called on both sides, and the threat of immediate and open civil war was always present. Next came the period of bargaining and changing cabinets. Lastly, there is a period of waiting: each side trying to outmaneuver the other, while the issues of the dispute are being argued by the great powers of the world.

In the background, but extremely important to the dispute, were the politico-religious sects exercising feudal prerogatives of maintaining armed forces theoretically under the central government, but actually completely at the service of the sects. Each group and sub-group appears to place self-interest above the interests of the nation as a whole.

Also extremely important in the dispute was the conflict of personalities which is so vital in newly independent nations, especially in the Far East. For example, BAO DAI, the ex-Emperor and present Chief of State, had learned long ago how to bow to superior power. In June he appointed DIEM to be Premier. In making this appointment, BAO DAI was bowing to great internal and international pressure. However, the Chief of State has made no indication that he has stopped considering himself the true leader of Free Vietnam. He has always believed that only under his direct guidance can Vietnam achieve ultimate sovereignty over its entire territory. When, during the past summer, BAO DAI's popularity began to wane and he discovered that the nation might well be successful under a strong man like DIEM, it is very possible that he reacted by playing a major part in the engineering of the present dispute. The fact that DIEM and BAO DAI dislike each other, while the three generals, HINH, XUAN, and VIEN, are extremely friendly with BAO Dai, should not be overlooked. The inclusion of the generals in the cabinet would completely hamstring DIEM, the only true

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