

NOV 15 1960

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Cincinnati, Ohio, Post & Times Star  
Circ. D. 267,672

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In two cases, American officials were victims. Saigon, the capital, was almost isolated and discontent with Diem's authoritarian rule was rising among his people, though they remained anti-Communist.

The leaders of the short-lived revolt made clear that they were against both Communism and corruption, explaining that President Diem had not been fighting properly and that he was making his family a dictatorship.

Indianapolis, Ind., Times  
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ANNEX E

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MEMPHIS, TENN., PRESS-SCIMITAR  
Circ. D. 147,762

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## Failure of a Coup

The past few days have been tumultuous and dangerous ones in two of the small but strategic free nations of Southeast Asia. The already confused and perilous situation in Laos became even more complex as the military commander in the royal capital, Luang Prabang, threw in his lot with the Rightist forces headed by Gen. Phoumi Nosavan. But how this will affect the equilibrium of forces among the Rightists, the neutralist Government of Prince Souvanna Phouma, and the Communist Pathet Lao group remains to be seen. In South Vietnam it seemed for a few hours as though the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem had been overthrown by the paratroop coup in Saigon, but now armed forces loyal to the President appear to have gained the upper hand.

The obvious political instability in these two countries must cause concern throughout the free world, and especially in the United States. Both Laos and South Vietnam exist in the shadow of the Communist power based in mainland China and North Vietnam. The continued independence of both nations has been made possible up to now by large infusions of American economic and military aid. But political stability has obviously not yet been obtained.

Though the leaders of the unsuccessful Saigon coup claimed to be anti-Communists, the Communist world greeted their revolt with glee. Moscow obviously thought that the pattern of South Korea and Turkey was about to repeat itself. We are happy that President Ngo Dinh Diem has survived this major test of his power. He has proved himself not only a staunch anti-Communist, but, through his land-reform program, has been attempting to cure some of his country's basic ills. But it would be unwise for the President or his friends here to ignore the warnings of discontent which have been heard in South Vietnam for months now, long before this coup. With Communist armed subversion being stepped up in South Vietnam and with anti-Communists complaining ever more bitterly of repressive rule, nepotism and corruption in the Diem regime, the President is between two fires, either of which could yet consume him and his regime. Much obviously now depends upon what reforms he now decides to make to meet such justifiable grievances as may exist among his people.

Washington Post Nov. 12, 1960

## Now Viet-Nam

The military revolt that threatened the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in Viet-Nam illustrates a classic dilemma of American policy. President Ngo is unquestionably a patriot, and it was his determination in the dark days of 1954 and 1955 which provided a rallying point for the forces that saved South Viet-Nam from Communist absorption. In recent months, however, there has been mounting dissatisfaction with the increased autocracy of Ngo's rule, the inadequate social and economic measures in rural areas, the widespread corruption in the political apparatus of the country and the relative ineffectiveness of Ngo's efforts to combat the Communist guerilla incursions from the north.

Time and again American diplomats sought to persuade President Ngo to broaden his regime and move against the corruption. But he remained adamant. His tendency to trust only members of his own family, long one of his foremost traits, if anything became more pronounced. He became intolerant of any whisper of criticism, let alone of loyal opposition. Meanwhile, the Communist hit-and-run raids grew in severity.

The dilemma lies in the fact that the massive military and economic support which the United States has provided for Viet-Nam is inevitably associated with support for President Ngo's policies. This country is tagged with his failures, just as it can claim partial credit for some impressive economic and social accomplishments. The question is whether it is possible to prevent American aid designed for the defense and extension of freedom from being distorted by repressive influences. This seems to have been the case under the Rhee regime in Korea and to some extent under the Menderes regime in Turkey.

At the same time, the extensive American training given the Vietnamese armed forces may have played a part in implanting the desire for reform. The army paratroopers led by Col. Nguyen Van Thy demand a more effective stand against Communist invasions along with clean and more representative government. It would be premature to hazard even a guess about whether an improved regime will emerge. The Vietnamese army is an efficient and anti-Communist force, though in the past there has been perhaps too much concentration on large units and insufficient attention to anti-guerilla training. The political structure of Viet-Nam, however, is very weak indeed.

As in neighboring Laos, which is rent by similar dissensions, any division in Viet-Nam is serious. For the Communist enemy is very real and very near, and it exploits every evidence of instability or disunity.

## Editorials

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1960

## Viet Nam: Progress sans Democracy

As a letter on this page asserts, all is not well in South Viet Nam. In fact, the situation in that country bears more than a superficial resemblance to that of another divided nation, South Korea during the waning rule of Syngman Rhee.

Like Dr. Rhee, Ngo Dinh Diem is justly entitled to credit as a kind of modern "father of his country." He has energetically and single-mindedly pushed, pulled, and manipulated to save his people from the alien Communist threat. But, like Dr. Rhee, he has permitted rigged elections, government-by-privilege, and attempted political thought control as the means to his worthy end.

President Diem is to be credited with installing needed machinery for genuine democratic rule in a colonially stunted, war-threatened half-nation. He took an area inundated with refugees, infiltrated with Viet Cong agitators, divided among squabbling politico-religious sects; and held it together by personal perseverance and liberal applications of American economic aid.

He gave it elections and a parliament. He gave it relative prosperity. But he stymied the growth of genuine popular government.

Mr. Diem's oligarchy developed a number of political processes which thwarted the very central democratic institutions he had grafted on to the village-centered life of Viet Nam. It established "political re-education camps," originally to convert Communist sympathizers, but used in too many cases for detention of political opponents without trial. Soldiers voted, wherever the government

might station them, under conditions which destroyed the secrecy of the ballot. Opposition leaders were refused party registration, banned from running by strange technicalities, or debarred from being seated in the National Assembly (as Dr. Phan Quang Dan found out after being elected by a large majority).

Obviously this stifling of any Loyal Opposition was what turned such patriotic, anti-Communist leaders as Harvard-trained Dr. Dan into the disloyal opposition of the recent abortive coup d'état. They had no other way open.

It would be naïve to chide President Diem for smothering national democracy. None existed before him. It would be incorrect to say that South Viet Nam has not progressed under him. It has moved from chaos to something approximating safety and has begun to have a modern economic base.

But Mr. Diem can legitimately be warned about isolating himself from political reality in the same way that Dr. Rhee did. The Viet Nameese President has given his people better living standards; he has not given them a sense of participation in governing themselves. Their central government is still something to be regarded with suspicion rather than support. It issues slogans and goes through sham elections. But it does not listen.

Until the people are listened to, Mr. Diem's rule will continue to rest on a shaky base. One channel for their being heard is a genuine democratic opposition. Dr. Diem would serve himself and his country better if opponents like Dr. Dan sat in the Assembly rather than in jail.

## The Reader Writes

## Opposition in Viet Nam

TO THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR:

As it cannot call the leaders of the recent unsuccessful coup Communists, the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in South Viet Nam calls them "reactionaries and tools of French colonialism."

Name-calling is the last refuge of desperate men who know that their days are numbered. If Nationalist insurgents could not topple them the Communists will. But can we afford to let South Viet Nam slip day-by-day into the Soviet orbit? It is vital to American prestige and interests in Southeast Asia that the record should be set straight before President Diem's lobbyists in this country distort it beyond recognition.

Phan Quang Dan, the political leader of the uprising who was reported captured by Mr. Diem's men, is no "reactionary and tool of French colonialism." He is widely known and respected as an American-trained physician who worked among Saigon's poor. It is no secret that he could have carved out a comfortable, dollar-lined niche for himself within the South Viet Nameese administration if he had been willing to join the relatives, the yes-men, and the crypto-Communists who throng around Mr. Diem.

Dr. Dan was morally justified in attempting to overthrow the South Viet Nameese regime. Despite Mr. Diem's orders to his secret police to intimidate voters, Dr. Dan had been elected to the rubber-stamp National Assembly by an overwhelming margin instead of the official candidate, but he had been denied his seat on transparently false charges, a fact acknowledged by American observers in Saigon. Against lawlessness disguised as government there is no redress but force. The fact that the Budapest freedom-fighters failed in their revolt did not make it any less legitimate. And the free America we know today was founded by rebels and revolutionists, not by law-abiding sheep.

I wish to point out that I have no political affiliations with Dr. Dan, and do not necessarily agree with all his views and actions. But at a time when he may be fighting for his life, and Viet Nam and the free world are in danger of losing someone like him, I feel it my duty, as a Viet Nameese nationalist and friend of the United States, to pay a public tribute to the courage and integrity of the man.

With some 200 million dollars given him each year by the American people, Ngo Dinh Diem has been able to buy droves of supporters, including mercenary soldiers who did not hesitate to fire upon unarmed demonstrators and students, and Madison Avenue hidden persuaders who created the Diem myth in this country.

But there are Viet Nameese whom neither dollars, nor francs, nor rubles can buy. Phan Quang Dan is one of them. For the sake of human freedom and dignity in Viet Nam and throughout the world, I wish him well.

HUYNH SANH TRUNG

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New Haven, Conn.

NOV 12 1960

## TROUBLE IN VIETNAM AS THE RED THREAT INCREASES

**I**NCREASING Communist pressure apparently triggered the unsuccessful military coup in South Vietnam. The failed attempt to come off and, according to the latest reports, was quickly suppressed, does not solve the basic difficulties. South Vietnam is a country under siege. Part of the army and numerous political leaders have sought a change of government to deal with the threat from the North.

In South Vietnam, the position of President Ngo Dinh Diem may be only temporarily secure. His critics have accused him of establishing a family dictatorship, of not giving the people any freedom and of being unable to cope with the enlarging danger from Communist invaders.

Yet Diem has been a strong and, in many ways, a highly effective leader. South Vietnam was in chaos when Diem took charge of its government six years ago. It was a new country salvaged from the Communist sweep into Indo China. Rival sects and private armies were fighting for power. Diem gradually overcame this opposition and established order. One of his most impressive achievements was the resettlement of 800,000 refugees who fled from Communist North Vietnam in 1954-55.

**T**HE United States gambled that Diem could keep South Vietnam out of the Communist bloc. A large U. S. military mission helped organize and train an army of 150,000. American economic and defense aid has been channeled into the country at the rate of 200 million dollars a year. All in all, the gamble has turned out to be a good investment. By Asian standards, South Vietnam has made excellent progress for a new nation.

But Diem has had to use authoritarian methods in a difficult situation. He has created the form of a republic but not a democracy. And he has not broadened the base of his government. Communists, based in North Vietnam and supported by Red China, have increasingly infiltrated South Vietnam by way of Laos. Civil war and confusion in Laos have worked to the advantage of the Communists.

Both Laos and South Vietnam have stood in the way of Communist expansion. The West hopes that at least Vietnam will continue to block the Reds. But reforms in the present government seem necessary if its anti-Communist program is to be effective. As of now, President Diem is challenged to deal with a divided army and to work for national unity.

NOV 17 1960

## We Must Encourage Reform

Two of the three "free" nations carved out of former Indo-China and sustained as anti-Communist countries by massive United States assistance are in trouble.

Laos, the northernmost country, is split between Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and forces loyal to his right wing foe, Gen. Thoudi Nosavan. Complicating matters is the presence of the Pathet Lao, Communist directed rebels, against which the government has been fighting for several years.

Vietnam, under President Ngo Dinh Diem, was beset by revolt last year when paratroopers tried to take over the government. But Diem put down the revolution and is back in control. He is a strong president and popular to some degree, but there is great dissatisfaction over the fact that the government is almost dictatorial and Diem's family has too much voice in it.

Both nations represent the dilemma the United States is in with its program of what has been called "baby sitting" in southeast Asia.

We have armed and given heavy amounts of aid to Laos and Vietnam to form what our diplomats like to call "Asian bastions" against communism. This is done in the name of democracy. As a result, as the Daily Telegraph of London points out, dictatorial governments have been set up which resist not

only communism but reform and democracy itself.

As was true in South Korea, reform is opposed by leaders who insist that democracy cannot be sought while there is need to be strongly armed against communism. They argue that their dictatorships are temporary while Communist takeover would bring permanent dictatorship. And there may be something to this.

But people can't be promised increased freedom and higher standards of living over and over and not be shown some moves toward achieving them. The leaders have a duty to start reforms. If they don't they face the danger of being overthrown forcefully—and that overthrow might quickly bring Communist leadership to the fore.

The United States, while assisting defense against communism, must use its aid as leverage to bring improvements in government and living standards as well.

1960

## Tension in Viet Nam

While cause and effect of the uprising in Viet Nam are not entirely clear, what is increasingly clear is the instability of the former French colony of Indochina. Laos has been in ferment for years; Cambodia undergoes periodic political spasms; divided Viet Nam the third of the old Indochina states and the largest by far, has been under increasing pressure from the Ho Chi Minh Communists who control the northern part of the country from their capital at Hanoi.

Indications are that the rebels who attempted to overthrow the United States-backed regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem were not led by Communists but were critical of Diem's efforts to end Communist subversion and of what they termed nepotism, political corruption and undue political influence on the 140,000-man army. There well may be truth in the charges of the rebel leaders insofar as the appointment of relatives and family friends is concerned, but Diem has been making for several years an intensive effort to end the Communist threat.

This is no small task. Perhaps more can be done, perhaps not. The Communists are disciplined and well-led. They took northern Viet Nam in the campaign that ended with the fall of Dien Bien Phu six years ago by a long process of guerrilla fighting, terrorism and subversion. They had anti-French Vietnamese fanatics on their side. The considerations that led to the Communist victory in the north have had their counterparts in the south. Diem is not a great popular leader, moreover. But he does have stature among Asians and United States policy in supporting him has been generally successful. Viet Nam is growing in economic health.

FREEMONT ILL. JOURNAL STANDARD  
Circ D 17 652

1960

## Government Overturn in Viet Nam

The five-year-old regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem of Viet Nam (South) seems to have defeated the army coup which asserted intent of setting up a real anti-Communist government. Viet Nam, like Laos and Cambodia, is precluded from anything but neutrality under the terms of the Geneva treaty which ended the French rule in Indo-China. Nevertheless, North Viet Nam, created by the same treaty, has been openly and aggressively pro-Communist and the other states have been defending them-

selves against outright attack or at least infiltration.

The United States, which has invested a billion dollars in saving South Viet Nam, is confronted in that state as it has been also in Laos, by the serious problem of whether to cease the aid and create a vacuum into which Communism will rush, or to go on supplying it and encourage an anti-Communist government, not all of whose measures we fully approve or consider either democratic or likely to accomplish their purpose.

Sporadic violence has been reported in the southern capital of Saigon and the surrounding areas for many months. Last January, 36 men were killed in a surprise Communist attack in Saigon. But for the most part, isolated terroristic acts have been committed by roving bands. Last spring the Communists loosed at least several thousand armed terrorists to assassinate rural officials, raid local defense posts, burn bridges and block highways at night.

As a counter-measure to the Communist tactics Diem entered upon a large-scale regrouping of the rural population. Peasant families were moved from scattered hamlets into new rural towns called agrovilles, each with a population of about 10,000. The theory was that in this way police could more easily exercise surveillance to thwart Communist agents, and that the peasants would be protected in the agrovilles from night-prowling groups of murderers.

There are marks of the police state in the Diem regime's strategy, but it is difficult to see how this can be avoided under the circumstances. What seems to have happened in South Viet Nam is that the northern Communists were content with a campaign of subversion and propaganda as long as they thought they could undermine Diem by those means. But when they saw last year that the country was making progress toward stability, they renewed their tactics of violence.

If this is correct, it indicates once again the relentlessness of the Communist drive. In some areas economic aid alone is not enough, and the United States can only hope that a judicious combination of military and economic assistance will enable people like the Vietnamese to remain free. The United States should do what it can to insure as much democracy as possible in Viet Nam, and the United Nations should keep a close watch on the situation. Indochina is important enough in itself, but it is only a stepping-stone to further Communist expansion in Asia.

NOV 15 1960

## Military Aid Isn't Enough

IT all seems as if the United States is in the business of training Asian soldiers to take over their own governments.

The paratroopers' plot in Viet Nam was another event in a Southeast Asia series of small scale revolutions, bloodless power grabs and attempts at same. Frequently, as in Laos, the emerging rulers are military officers who have benefited from U. S. military aid programs.

Recent history does not suggest that military aid is wrong and should be curtailed or eliminated. What it does suggest is that Washington too frequently closes its official eyes to misgovernment, all in the name of anti-communism.

This is not to say that the Vietnamese

regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem is particularly corrupt, although there have been charges to that effect. Neither can it be said that the paratroopers who futilely stormed the palace at Saigon are any less anti-Communist than the government.

But American goals in Southeast Asia involve, or should involve, something more than merely repelling communism. Our diplomacy must concern itself with helping to insure stable, responsible government for the peoples of the small nations within our sphere of influence.

This cannot be done by ignoring dictatorial tendencies in a regime simply because the ruling clique has professed to be on the free world's side. Communism often flourishes in the freedom-suffocating darkness of despotic, right-wing rule.

WILMINGTON, DEL. NEWS  
Circ. D. 30,216

NOV. 15 1960

## Good News From Vietnam

It is very good news that the revolt in South Vietnam, which initially seemed successful, has failed in its attempt to overthrow President Ngo Dinh Diem. But the abortive revolt should serve as a warning both to the Ngo regime and to American policy-makers.

President Ngo is an incorruptible patriot and it is no overstatement to say that he is the nation's savior. One of the wisest decisions our State Department has made was to back him with political, economic, and technical help at a time when South Vietnam seemed a sure bet to disappear behind the Communist curtain. Ngo has brought order out of unbelievable chaos, promoted social reform, and united the country. He has fought corruption and sharply reduced its scope.

But President Ngo, like former President Syngman Rhee of South Korea, has tightened his grip with the passing of time. While it is true that the easy-going personal freedoms we enjoy in the United States would be impractical at this time in menaced South Vietnam, Ngo should have been able to move gradually toward greater political democracy. In-

stead, he has moved like Rhee in the other direction.

He has always been a man who trusted nobody, and this may even have been one of the reasons for his success in a country whose officials were ranked high in venality and low in loyalty. But he has built a sort of dynasty, whose trusted members are his relatives. Some of them, apparently, have played palace politics and profited by corruption.

It's an old story, and often a tragic one, for the national hero who has saved his country to drift into dictatorial practices and to tighten his grip when he should be loosening it. But Ngo is now shaking up his cabinet, which could permit him to ease his grip without losing face by admitting that he was wrong. If he can profit from the mistakes of Syngman Rhee, he can avoid Rhee's fate.

To the extent that he fails to read the lessons of the revolt, it will be the task of American diplomacy, using American aid as its hole card, to bring them home to him. Our diplomacy has done very well indeed in Vietnam, but nothing stands still. It is now challenged to do even better.

NOV 25 1960

## MR. NGO OF VIETNAM

**F**OR FIVE YEARS now President Ngo Dinh Diem has been hanging on in South Vietnam in the face of recurring crises and the gloomiest prediction of the world outside. His authority within his own country has been challenged repeatedly by the "sects" and by the Communists. In the last six months the terrorist activities of the latter have been severely stepped up. Mr. Ngo has found it necessary to set up his own brand of farm communes: isolated farmers, who are vulnerable to terrorist raids, have gone to live in agricultural communities in which neighbors band together for their common self-defense.

Mr. Ngo, with the help of American aid, has met a baffling accumulation of economic, financial, social, political and military problems. He has made his decisions in his own way. And now he has

again demonstrated his great personal courage during the latest attempt at a military coup in Saigon. With most key points in the national capital taken over and his palace besieged by paratroops, the Vietnamese President refused to surrender. He engaged the leaders of the attacking force in such lengthy negotiations that the loyal troops he had summoned by radio from outside the city were able to reach the scene and put down the revolt.

Just as Mr. Ngo's bravery is without question, so are his patriotism, his unyielding anti-Communism and his unsullied personal integrity. But in recent months there has been growing restiveness under his authoritarian rule. His suppression of all political opposition and denial of democratic liberties, on the grounds of necessity, and the tight hold which he and his family exercise over all governmental matters, have intensified popular opposition. The latest revolt may have enabled President Ngo temporarily to consolidate his rule still further, but it might also give him pause. His country's resistance to Communism is dependent upon wholehearted public support for the Vietnamese government. The latest crisis appears to supply an unparalleled opportunity for Mr. Ngo's friendly American advisers vehemently to urge upon him some real concessions to the popular will.

NOV 12 1960

## Revolt in Saigon

The revolution which has just toppled, or nearly toppled, South Viet Nam's President Ngo Dinh Diem has been expected for several months. The only question was whether it would come from the left or the right.

Col. Nguyen Chanh Thi and his rebel paratroopers apparently are rightists or anti-Communists, which is a relief, but it is too early to tell what the result of their take-over will be.

Diem's failure to rally his country behind him in this crisis is tragic but understandable. By most standards the President has been doing a good job. He is honest, idealistic, and devoted to his country's welfare. He established his authority early by disarming the religious sects and slapping down the Communists. He introduced land reforms and raised the living standards of his crowded little country. He has persuaded the United States to give Viet Nam upward of \$1 billion in aid.

But he is no democrat. Viet Nam, in his opinion, is not ready for political freedom, and he has ruled with an authoritarian hand. He has brooked no political opposition and no public criticism. His family, whom he trusts, have been preferred to high positions. He himself has remained aloof and unapproachable.

The result has been widespread dissatisfaction among intellectuals and ordinary people as well. The Communists have encouraged the malcontents and reinfilitrated the country despite the government's best efforts. Acts of terrorism have increased. And Diem's "tough" regime has not proved tough enough to handle the situation.

Colonel Thi says his aim is to strengthen the government against Communism, make it more democratic, and oust the family of President Diem from power, all of which would apparently please the Viet Nameese. But the Colonel himself is an unknown quantity. It is not at all certain that he can hold the country together as well as Diem has.

As this is written Diem is still holding out in the Presidential palace, although the rest of Saigon is in rebel hands. A compromise may yet be worked out. The rebels may get their reforms without forcing Diem to resign. This perhaps would be the best outcome.

The thing that no one can afford is a protracted civil war in Viet Nam, which would open the way for a Communist take-over. The West should not interfere unless it has to. But the stakes are high. We must watch this free world bastion carefully.