

(UNDATED)--THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES ARE IN A POSITION "FROM WHICH THEY CAN WIN" A JUST PEACE AND MAINTAIN AN INDEPENDENT, NON-COMMUNIST SOUTH VIETNAM, ACCORDING TO A BRITISH GUERRILLA EXPERT.

THE OBSERVATION MADE BY SIR ROBERT THOMPSON CONTRASTS WITH A VIEW HE TOOK ONE YEAR AGO WHEN HE CONCLUDED THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS ENTRAPPED AND THAT NEITHER MILITARY MIGHT NOR NEGOTIATION COULD END THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.

THE MOST RECENT ASSESSMENT WAS MADE BY SIR ROBERT AFTER PRESIDENT NIXON ASKED HIM TO RETURN TO SOUTH VIETNAM AND "GIVE ME A FIRST HAND, CANDID AND COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT REPORT ON THE SITUATION THERE." THE VISIT WAS MADE IN NOVEMBER AND SIR ROBERT DESCRIBES THE IMPROVEMENT HE SAW AS "INCONCEIVABLE."

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I SAW IN THE VILLAGE AND HAMLETS THIS TIME WAS WHAT I DID NOT RPT NOT SEE: ANY VILLAGERS DIGGING BUNKERS IN OR AROUND THEIR HOUSES." THE PEOPLE, HE EXPLAINED, NOW FELT SECURE.

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MR. THOMPSON HELPED DESIGN THE BRITISH STRATEGY TO RID MALAYA OF COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS IN THE 1950S AND WAS HEAD OF THE BRITISH ADVISORY MISSION IN VIETNAM FROM 1961 TO 1965. HE HAS VISITED SOUTH VIETNAM THREE TIMES SINCE AS AN ADVISER TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

HIS BOOK, "NO RPT NO EXIT FROM VIETNAM," WRITTEN LAST YEAR, WAS HIGHLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ALLIED CHANCES FOR A SATISFACTORY END TO THE CONFLICT.

HIS MOST RECENT VISIT, HOWEVER, AT THE REQUEST OF PRESIDENT NIXON, RESULTED IN A HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC REPORT. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH WASHINGTON POST WRITER ALFRED FRIENDLY IN LONDON, SIR ROBERT DECLINED TO DISCLOSE WHAT HIS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT WERE. "BUT THE ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION AS HE SAW IT MADE IT CERTAIN THAT HE WAS URGING A COURSE VERY SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND THE AMERICAN MILITARY COMMAND HAVE ALREADY TAKEN," MR. FRIENDLY REPORTED.

"SIR ROBERT SAID THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO RPT NO MORE CONCESSIONS FROM THE AMERICAN-SOUTH VIETNAM SIDE IN ANY PEACE TALKS, BUT RATHER A CONTINUED VIETNAMIZATION OF THE MILITARY AND PACIFICATION EFFORT, AND A FIRM ADHERENCE TO THE CLEAR-AND-HOLD STRATEGY THAT HAS REPLACED THE FORMER AND IN HIS OPINION DISASTROUS -- SEARCH AND DESTROY PATTERN," MR. FRIENDLY SAID.

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THE COMMUNIST FORCES HAVE BEEN BADLY HURT. "WE -- MEANING THE WEST -- HAVE NOT RPT NOT UNDERSTOOD HOW BADLY THEY HAVE BEEN HURT," SIR ROBERT SAID. HE ESTIMATED COMMUNIST LOSSES AT NEARLY 750,000 AND DESCRIBED THEIR TET OFFENSIVE IN 1968 AS SUICIDAL.

ALTHOUGH SIR ROBERT BELIEVES THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE NOT RPT NOT CHANGED THEIR INTENTIONS -- THEY STILL WANT TO CONQUER THE SOUTH -- HE SAID THEY HAVE LOST THEIR EFFECTIVE ASSAULT CAPABILITIES. THE LOSSES, HE SAID, "WERE THE CREAM" OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY.

THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOUTH CONCERNS NOT RPT NOT ONLY THE MILITARY, BUT ALSO THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND PACIFICATION SITUATION, HE INDICATED.

"HIS FORECAST FOR A RELATIVELY PEACEFUL COUNTRY," MR. FRIENDLY REPORTED. "THREE YEARS FROM NOW...TOOK INTO ACCOUNT AMERICAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL ON WHAT HE SURMISES IS PRESIDENT NIXON'S TIMETABLE. HE SAID HE AGREED WITH MR. NIXON, HOWEVER, THAT THOSE WITHDRAWALS WOULD HAVE TO BE CARRIED OUT WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PACE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE REINFORCEMENTS." ITEM

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HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM