



UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE

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FOREIGN SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION Following is a USIS dispatch filed yesterday from Saigon on the reports of unrest and revolt in Northern Vietnam.

SAIGON, Nov. 19 -- (USIS) -- This capital of Free Vietnam smothered today with rumors of unrest and revolt in communist North Vietnam, while a curtain of secrecy was drawn swiftly over the "disturbances" by the Communist regime which had first announced them.

Monitors in Saigon, tuned to Radio Hanoi, the official Viet Minh government radio station, said that by late afternoon Monday not one further mention had been made in Hanoi broadcasts since 11:40 a.m. (local time) Friday, when the Hanoi station carried, both in Vietnamese voice broadcasts directed at the local population, and in slower Morse code newscast to all of Southeast Asia, the news of "disturbances" in four villages.

Western and Vietnamese observers alike wondered why the Communist regime announced the disturbances in the first place. It was concluded that they were already so widely known among the North Vietnamese people -- and perhaps not confined to the district mentioned -- that the regime believed it best to acknowledge, and thus minimize, the uprisings.

Hanoi's failure to mention further developments led also to speculation that the disturbance might still be continuing, on the assumption that otherwise the Communist Government would have been quickly on the air with optimistic accounts of its ending.

Hard news, however, was hard to come by in Saigon. Neutrals arriving from Hanoi Sunday confirmed that several days previous to the Hanoi broadcast they had heard rumors of "trouble" in the district mentioned -- Quynh Luu, in the province of Nghe An, about halfway between the 17th Parallel and Hanoi. Other rumors came to their ears, they said, concerning similar disturbances in widely scattered districts elsewhere in North Vietnam, particularly among strongly Catholic communities.

These officials, members of the International Armistice Commission which has been stationed in North and South Vietnam since the Geneva Accords of 1954, emphasized, however, that these rumors were vague and insubstantial, and could not be confirmed.

The Hanoi announcement specified that the people of Quynh Yen, Quynh Than, Quynh Ba and Quynh Lam villages first manhandled communist civilian cadres and troops and stole their arms. The villagers then set up road blocks and resisted Viet Minh troop reinforcements that were summoned, leading to gunfire and several deaths, including some Viet Minh soldiers. The broadcast claimed that order eventually was restored and the "saboteurs" arrested.

Rumors circulated along the 17th Parallel, among recent refugees, that the revolt was led by a secret Vietnamese resistance organization of considerable strength, that a full division of Viet Minh troops was required to quell it, and that four additional villages, Quynh Luu, Quynh Lac, Hoang Mai and Cau Giat, also joined the uprising.

According to these accounts, the Viet Minh troops opened fire on the villagers and "women, children and old people were massacred in great quantity." The resistance forces, short of ammunition, were forced to withdraw to the mountains where they pledged to continue guerilla operations against the Viet Minh, these reports stated.

It was not clear, however, how refugees could have traveled nearly 350 miles along guarded routes and have evaded communist border guards on the Parallel, in only three days from the events they described. It is a five-day journey normally, even with fast motor transport. Saigon authorities accordingly were skeptical of such circumstantial accounts, although it was conceded that the information grapevine in North Vietnam is amazingly fast and has often proved extremely accurate.

Of great interest also to news analysts in Saigon was an obscurely worded statement in the original Hanoi pronouncement to the effect that "furthermore, in a number of other regions, saboteur elements disturbed the peace and created confusion among the population."

How widely spread and how serious these other disturbances were, and whether they heralded a general uprising, was not known. It was recalled, however, that increasingly in recent months refugees crossing into Free Vietnam have described peasant resistance to Communist tax-collection and "land reform", including occasions when Viet Minh cadres were driven out by violence.

Saigon officials generally discounted press speculation that the arrival of Red Chinese Premier Chou En Lai in Hanoi Sunday had been prompted by the unrest. Chou's visit was announced several weeks ago as part of a general tour to seven Asian countries. He is due to go on to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, later in the week.

It was reasonably certain, however, that the topic of popular resistance to communist land reform measures would be high on the agenda of Chou's conversations with President Ho Chi Minh and other high Viet Minh officials. The same sort of incidents have been reported of late in parts of China, and in any case the two Communist leaders naturally would discuss the recent events in Poland and Hungary, which sprang from similar causes.

The role of Red Chinese soldiers or civil officials in the uprising in Nghe An province was obscure. Western observers discounted talk that Red Chinese troops would be used to quell such discontent. So far as is known, Chinese are present in considerable numbers in the Viet Minh army, but only as advisors, technicians and instructors, and not as fighting units.

Any sizable body of Chinese troops intervening in the dispute would have to come across the border from neighboring Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces, an eventuality which would cause great international repercussions and in which the United Nations presumably would take interest.

THANKSGIVING DAY MASS

A Mass of thanksgiving will be said on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday November 22 at 0900 hours in the chapel Cite Marie Paul, located on rue Mayer near Pierre Flandin.

HELP WANTED

Cook and general servant for bachelor. Some French or English required. Previous service with an American desirable. Haney - MSUG - Tel. 22022.

HELP AVAILABLE

Nurse maid available November 15. Honest. Clean. With Mrs. Ray Nichols two years. Call Al Switzer, USOM.

Boyesse. Chinese. Excellent. Recommended in all ways. Can cook. Lives in. Warren Griffin, 60 Mossard, Apt. 1.

Want to place after December 1, the following Vietnamese servants:

Boyesses- good cleaner.

Boy - excellent for serving, good for laundry, also does plain cooking.

Boy - very competent as general house boy, can also do laundry and yard work. Mrs. Redick, 95 Passage d'Arfeuilles, 23-846.

USIS FILM THEATER (35 Gia Long)

SPECIAL SHOWING Thursday, Nov. 22 and Friday Nov. 23.

Through the efforts of Metro Goldwyn Mayer, USIS has been able to obtain an old favorite film in the hope that many will enjoy seeing it again:

"A Night at the Opera"
with
The Marx brothers

ALHAMBRA THEATER

For American and British official community and their guests only.
(Adults 25 cents, children 15 cents, American currency)

Tuesday, Nov. 20

"Nightmare Alley" (Reissue)
Tyrone Power Joan Blondell
