

The original documents are located in Box D20, folder “GOP Dinner, Danville, IL, May 20, 1966” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M.
FRIDAY, MAY 20, 1966

SPEECH EXCERPTS--BY REP. FORD, R-MICH., AT DANVILLE, ILLINOIS, GOP DINNER.

The internal situation in South Vietnam has degenerated to the point where the great sacrifices we have made there may all go for naught. It would be tragic, indeed, if all the American blood shed in Vietnam shall have been shed in vain.

For the third week, more American casualties than South Vietnamese have been recorded in the war although their forces are nearly three times as large as ours. With the South Vietnamese fighting among themselves, their war seems to be turning into our war.

It did not begin thus. It was not meant to be thus.

We made a commitment to help a legitimate government in Saigon thwart Communist aggression. We were to help them do this, not do it alone.

We provided the South Vietnamese with the finest American weapons. They were to use them to fight the Communist aggressor. Now they are using them against each other. And the Communists are offering the anti-government forces their help.

I want desperately to see a legitimate government come to power in Vietnam, a government which has the support of the people. This is the only kind of government which can vigorously prosecute the war and again restore balance to the war effort. The Vietnam War must again become South Vietnam's war, not ours.

The Johnson Administration reportedly is doing its utmost to restore peace among South Vietnam's anti-Communist elements. U.S. Embassy officials are said to have told Premier Ky he should do nothing to delay the constitutional assembly election supposedly scheduled for September. And Ky is reported to be extremely angry about such statements.

This is the same Premier Ky that President Johnson embraced so heartily last February at Honolulu in a demonstration of support that triggered Buddhist charges that Ky is an "American puppet."

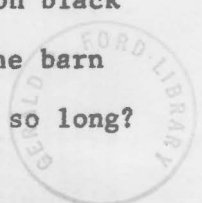
I hope with all my heart that civil peace is restored in Vietnam and that the jeopardy to the American commitment there can be removed. But I am still firmly convinced that the fuss Mr. Johnson made over Premier Ky at Honolulu lies back of the political strife which threatens to make a mockery of our sacrifices in Vietnam.

I am happy to see the Defense and Treasury Departments cracking down on black market activity in South Vietnam, but coming at this time it is like locking the barn door after the horse has been stolen. Why has it been allowed to flourish for so long?

(MORE)

Their "war"

Blackmarket



SPEECH EXCERPTS

We cannot know the exact extent to which American goods have found their way into Vietcong hands via the black market but indications are it is staggering. This is the revolting difference between the Vietnam black market and that which was rampant during World War II. The Vietnam black market aids the enemy.

An American newsman in Saigon recently charged that the Vietcong was getting more of its supplies from the black market and other South Vietnam sources than through the famous Ho Chi Minh Trail.

A House Government Operations subcommittee just returned from Vietnam has found that it is American AID dollars which make it possible for the black market in Saigon to operate in such high style.

Sen. Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.), who was appointed to fill a Senate vacancy while taking part in the House Government Operations subcommittee investigation in Vietnam, brought back this report: "Due to incompetent administration and a lack of effective controls, AID's Commodity Import Program for South Vietnam has fed the flames of the Saigon black market, has made the rich richer and the poor poorer, and shockingly enough, has even resulted in the diversion of certain American supplies to the enemy."

Griffin tells me that the subcommittee found American steel had been used to enforce Vietcong bunkers; American steel had been used by the Vietcong to fashion homemade mortars; small machine equipment, medicines and other items have been stolen from the Saigon docks and transferred to the Vietcong; rice imported from Texas and Louisiana has been smuggled from Vietnam into Cambodia.

Mr. Johnson announced a Great Society blueprint for Southeast Asia during his Honolulu conference with Premier Ky. We were going to win the socio-economic war in Vietnam while helping to force the Communists to abandon their designs on South Vietnam.

Yet Stanley Andrews, an authority who had served for years in Vietnam as an adviser and consultant, recently said that perhaps no more than 10 to 20 per cent of American economic aid has benefited the South Vietnam peasant in a way related to either our government or that of South Vietnam. Most of the aid, Andrews said, has gone to South Vietnam's elite and urban middle class.

Winning the socio-economic war in South Vietnam is vital to success in the other war being waged there. But the evidence is we have mismanaged a large part of the economic war and have fed corruption and greed.

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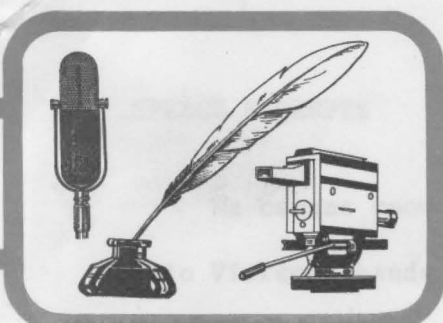
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SAIGON CIVIL WAR



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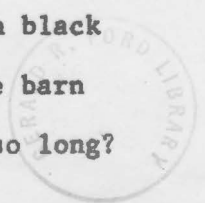
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