During the period imports had increased substantially, amounting to about US$750 million in 1972. In order to finance the resulting huge trade deficits, Viet-Nam has relied heavily on external aid, almost all of which consisted of commodity aid from the United States (under the Commercial Import Program (CIP) and the P.L. 480 program) and the purchases of local currency by the growing U.S. military forces.

Since 1972, there have been some significant changes in the balance of payments. With the gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops, purchases of piastres by the United States have been declining rapidly from VN$403 million in 1971 to VN$100 million in 1973. Second, exports have expanded rapidly, from US$75 million in 1971 to US$24 million in 1972 and US$56 million in 1973. The main exports were timber, fishery products, rubber, and scrap metals. However, their level in 1973 still accounted for only 7 per cent of total imports. Third, with imports continuing to increase, there was a pronounced fall in external reserves during the year, estimated at US$70 million. At the end of 1973, the level of reserves was about US$200 million, or three months of imports during that year. Even though aid levels are estimated to be maintained in 1974, the sharply higher import prices of petroleum products and continued large reliance on imports of essentials will no doubt put severe pressures on the balance of payments. The 1973 imports of petroleum products amounted to US$55 million or 12 per cent of total imports.

EXCHANGE SYSTEM REFORM

Over recent years, the operation of the trade and payments system has remained liberal. The authorities have also applied a managed flexible exchange rate policy, with the exchange rate being adjusted at frequent intervals. Despite substantial simplifications since 1971, the exchange system of Viet-Nam had remained complex. Until recently, there were two basic rates for the sale of foreign exchange: (1) the official rate which applied to all import payments financed with Viet-Nam's own foreign exchange resources, to most imports under the P.L. 480 program of the United States, and to all invisible and capital payments and transfers; and (2) the special rate which applied to imports financed by U.S. aid under the Commercial Import Program (CIP) and to P.L. 480 imports of raw cotton and wheat. The special exchange rate aimed at facilitating the absorption of imports under the tied commodity aid program (CIP) from the United States. With various exchange taxes applied to sales of exchange for import payments, there were at least eight effective selling exchange rates. Furthermore, almost all exports enjoyed general and special export subsidies paid in connection with the surrender of export proceeds which resulted in several additional effective selling exchange rates. The exchange system had become so complicated over time as to constitute a serious obstacle to effective balance of payments management. Accordingly, in early 1974 the Government undertook comprehensive exchange reform which was approved by the Executive Board of the Fund on January 28, 1974.

Under the reform, all forms of export subsidies constituting multiple currency practices were abolished. Secondly, all exchange taxes on import payments have been eliminated and replaced by ad valorem import surcharges, which are collected at the time of customs clearance of the imports in addition to the existing statutory tariffs. As a result, the total customs levies (consisting of the tariff and the import surcharge) amount to 100 per cent ad valorem on most of the importations. The preferential exchange rate for certain tied commodity aid imports from the United States (the special exchange rate) has been abolished and replaced by a system of subsidies outside the scope of the exchange system. A uniform rate of 20 per US$1 is applied to all exchange transactions without exception.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The Vietnamese authorities are in the process of formulating rehabilitation and development plans for the years to come. For the short term, the main emphasis of policies is placed on (1) relief and resettlement of refugees, (2) repair of war damages and essential infrastructural construction, and (3) fostering agricultural production through provision of adequate inputs and credit facilities. The emphasis placed on agricultural development is of particular importance, as rapid increases in agricultural output will not only help to provide employment opportunities but also will reduce pressures on prices and on the balance of payments through lower food imports.

In recent years unemployment had been limited due partly to military manpower requirements. Alternative employment opportunities are now needed for demobilized personnel, for some 600,000 refugees who are at present in temporary
camps, as well as for the excess labor force previously employed in the service sector. In addition, about 200,000 young men enter the labor force each year.

The necessary transition of the economy to peacetime conditions and to a stepping up of development will rely on substantial economic aid from donor countries in the coming years. This is especially true for 1974, as the balance of payments is estimated to come under pressure because of continued substantial import needs, including the sharp increase in the import bill for petroleum products, and the still small export base. Up to now, more than 90 per cent of total foreign aid was provided by the United States. In 1974, however, the sources of aid will be broadened, with about 20 per cent of the aid coming from non-U.S. sources. The main donors other than the United States are expected to be France, Japan, and the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the Asian Development Bank.

Although the economy of Viet-Nam is at present confronted with a number of difficult problems, there seems to be every reason to believe that prospects for developing a strong economy are good. Viet-Nam is endowed with rich natural resources. Substantial infrastructure built for military purposes is left to be utilized, and the population is hard-working, literate, and disciplined. There exists ample land to bring into cultivation, and potential agricultural production is enormous.

**VIETNAM'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[In millions of U.S. dollars]</th>
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<tr>
<td>I. Trade balance</td>
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<td>-623</td>
<td>-766</td>
<td>-788</td>
<td>-719</td>
<td>-739</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
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<td>-658</td>
<td>-779</td>
<td>-802</td>
<td>-743</td>
<td>-785</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Services, transfers, miscellaneous capital and net errors and omissions</td>
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<td>311</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>133</td>
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<td>III. Official aid (net)</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>536</td>
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<td>IV. Total (I plus II plus III)</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Allocation of SDR's</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total (IV plus V)</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>-70</td>
</tr>
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APPENDIX 3

NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE: "VAST AID FROM U.S. BACKS SAIGON IN CONTINUING WAR" (FEBRUARY 25, 1974), BY DAVID K. SHIPLER

SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM, February 16.—Ray Harris of Ponca City, Okla., has come back to Vietnam. This time he is not behind the machine gun of an Army helicopter but behind a workbench at the Bien Hoa air base, sitting next to South Vietnamese Air Force men and repairing jet fighter engines.

Mr. Harris is a civilian now, safer and better paid. But his changed role in the continuing Vietnam war has scarcely diminished his importance, for as a 27-year-old jet-engine mechanic he remains as vital to the South Vietnamese military as he was in 1966 as a 19-year-old helicopter gunner.

He is among 2,800 American civilians without whose skills South Vietnam’s most sophisticated weapons would fall into disrepair. Employed by private companies under contract to the United States Defense Department, these men constitute one facet of a vast program of American military aid that continues to set the course of the war more than a year after the signing of the Paris peace agreements and the final withdrawal of American troops.

Whether the United States is breaking the letter of the agreements could probably be argued either way. But certainly the aid directly supports South Vietnamese violations and so breaks the spirit of the accords.

The United States, far from phasing out its military involvement in South Vietnam, has descended from a peak of warfare to a high plateau of substantial support, dispatching not only huge quantities of weapons and ammunition but also large numbers of American citizens who have become integral parts of the South Vietnamese supply, transport and intelligence systems.

These include not just the Vietnam-based mechanics and technicians but also the Pentagon-based generals who tour airfields to ascertain the needs of the South Vietnamese Air Force, the "liaison men" who reportedly give military advice from time to time, the civilian Defense Department employees who make two-to-three-week visits to provide highly specialized technical help, and the Central Intelligence Agency officials who continue to advise South Vietnam’s national police on intelligence matters.

The total budgeted cost of military aid to South Vietnam is $813-million in this fiscal year, and the Pentagon has asked Congress for $1.45-billion next year, with most of the increase probably going for ammunition, which the South Vietnamese forces have expended at a high rate.

TRUE COST EVEN HIGHER

The true cost of the military support probably rise considerably above the official figures. Some of the aid, for example, comes in through economic programs that dump millions in cash into the Saigon Government’s defense budget. And other costs—salaries of Pentagon technicians who make special visits, for example—are hidden in the vast budgets of the United States Air Force, Army and Navy and are not labeled "Vietnam."

These valuable military goods and services have a sharp political impact. They are indispensable to the South Vietnamese Government’s policy of resistance to any accommodation with the Communists. Militarily, the extensive aid has enabled President Nguyen Van Thieu to take the offensive at times, launching intensive attacks with artillery and jet fighters against Vietcong-held territory.

Furthermore, the American-financed military shield has provided Mr. Thieu with the muscle to forestall a political settlement. He has rejected the Paris agreements’ provision for general elections, in which the Communists would be given access to the press, permission to run candidates and freedom to rally support openly and without interference from the police.

(28)
Mr. Thieu has offered elections, but without the freedoms. The Vietcong, refusing to participate unless the freedoms are guaranteed, have maintained military pressure throughout the country, mostly with artillery and rocket attacks on Government outposts and, from time to time, with devastating ground assaults against Government-held positions.

United States intelligence officials contend that continuing American aerial reconnaissance as well as prisoner interrogation and radio monitoring, shows that the North Vietnamese have sent thousands of troops and hundreds of tanks and artillery pieces south in violation of the Paris agreements. They have also refurbished a dozen captured airfields and built a large network of roads that threatened to cut South Vietnam in two.

Yet in battle the Communists appear more frugal with ammunition than the Government troops, who have been seen recently by Western correspondents spraying artillery across wide areas under Vietcong control as if there was no end to the supply of shells. This difference has bolstered the view of some diplomats that China and the Soviet Union, unwilling to support an all-out offensive now, have placed limits on the rate of resupply to Hanoi.

Amid the political stalemate, then, the inconclusive war continues.

KEEPING JETS IN THE AIR

Ray Harris is at his workbench in the huge engine shop at the Bien Hoa air base just north of Saigon. He works for General Electric, which manufactures the jet engine that drives the Northrop F-5 fighter, the mainstay of Saigon's air force.

He hunches over a circular fuser assembly, the last part of the engine before the afterburner. The assembly is invisibly cracked, and Mr. Harris is using a machine about the size of a dentist's drill to grind down the metal so the crack can be welded.

There are Americans everywhere in the shop, which is devoted to repairing and overhauling fighter and helicopter engines. There is virtually no workroom or machine on assembly line where Americans are anything less than essential parts of the process. Although a few are training Vietnamese to take over the work eventually, most are simply doing the work, especially the highly technical jobs, themselves.

The line where rebuilt jet engines are finally assembled, for example, looks more like a factory somewhere in the United States than a shop belonging to the Vietnamese Air Force. Eight or 10 Americans work on several engines, and not a Vietnamese is in sight.

There are 25 Vietnamese assigned here, a technician says with a shrug, but he adds, "I never see them."

OUTPUT IS KEPT HIGH

Ken Martin of G.E. is crouching with another American beside a jet engine that he has just assembled himself in four 12-hour days. Without the American technicians, he says, the shop could produce no more than 40 percent of what it does; Another American, asked what would happen if he and his colleagues pulled out, replied, "This would turn into a big Honda repair shop."

As self-serving and exaggerated as these assessments seem, they underscore the long-term military role that American civilians will have to play if the South Vietnamese are to have continued use of their complex weapons.

Without long training, mechanics in any modern air force probably could not match the skills of the American technicians, most of whom are not young Vietnam war veterans, like Mr. Harris, but seasoned experts who have been building and rebuilding engines for years on bases here and in the United States.

"Most of our people—this is the only work they've ever done," said Glenn Miller, the 47-year-old G.E. supervisor at the shop. Mr. Miller has 22 years experience with the company, all on jet engines.

His men are so vital that they—and those working on helicopters for Lycoming Aircraft—were all placed on 12-hour shifts last month during the week before Tet, the Lunar New Year holiday. Their objective was to get as many aircraft flying as possible, Mr. Miller explained, to be ready for any Communist offensive.
$1,000 IN A LONG WEEK

Mr. Miller figures that with overtime and other bonuses, some of the men made $1,000 a piece that week.

High pay is cited by many of the civilians as the main reason for their choice of Vietnam as a place of work. After a year on the job G.E. employees get double their base salaries, bringing the average pay to $20,000 or more, plus $16 a day for food and lodging—an annual total in excess of $25,000.

Since living costs are low by American standards, and since the employees do not have to pay any Federal income tax on $20,000 a year if they are off American soil for at least 18 months, many say they save a good deal of money. Some add that the money has become a silent source of resentment among the Vietnamese Air Force men, who earn only $10 to $85 a month.

This, plus profound war-weariness, has made many Vietnamese men difficult to teach, the contractors say. "They are only kids, all of them—they don't want to be in the military to begin with," said Elmer Adams, a former United States Air Force man who works for Lycoming supervising helicopter repairs.

"It's a lack of desire," said a technician for Cessna Aircraft working at the Da Nang air base. "They've been under so much pressure for so long they just want peace. They're peace-minded."

CRITICISM OF AMERICANS

It was said sympathetically, and the Cessna man went on: "All they know is that Americans came over here and tore up their country, uprooted their villages and now they're looking for food."

Gilbert Walker, another technician, who asked that his company not be identified, observed: "The people I talk to in town care very little about the form of government they have. I guess I don't feel much different. I don't feel too much admiration for the present Government."

In that case, he was asked, why is he helping the South Vietnamese carry on the war? "I work for my company and I try to keep the aircraft flying," he replied.

"I'm working on helicopters, that's all I know. Sometimes I sit back and think, What's it all for, what's the good of it all? It seems like an exercise in futility, what I'm doing."

Futile or not, the Americans' work has carried some of them to positions of considerable authority in the South Vietnamese military supply system. The South Vietnamese still call many of them "Co Van," which means "advisers," and the American office at the Da Nang base has a big sign over the door that reads, "Co Van."

The Americans often come to identify closely with their jobs, perhaps taking more responsibility than their contracts call for. In a revealing slip of the tongue, Mr. Adams, of Lycoming, looked around the Bien Hoa engine shop and remarked, "We're in the process—they're in the process, rather—of reorganizing the shop."

MANY STILL ON PAYROLL

The fact is that supply and transportation have remained an American operation. "We Vietnamized the fighting, but we never Vietnamized logistics," said a Defense Department official based in Saigon.

That is reportedly the principal reason the United States Defense Attache's Office—or originally scheduled to be dismantled early this year—still contains about 1,800 people, of whom 60 are military men, according to official figures.

In addition, the reduction in the number of Americans working for private defense contractors has halted, allowing the figure to level off at approximately 2,600, down 4,000 since July, according to a spokesman of the Defense Attache's office.

The logistics effort—provide maintenance, ammunition, weapons, trucks, fuel, electronics parts and the like—is now the basis for the Americans' most pervasive and intimate contacts with the South Vietnamese military. Depending on how such terms as "advisers" and "advisers" are defined, there is evidence that the contacts occasionally cross into areas of relationship prohibited by the Paris agreements.

"The United States will not continue its military involvement or intervene in the internal affairs of South Vietnam," Article 2 of the cease-fire agreement declares.
Article 5 says: "Within 60 days of the signing of this agreement, there will be a total withdrawal from South Vietnam of troops, military advisers and military personnel, including technical military personnel and military personnel associated with the pacification program, armaments, munitions and war material of the United States and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3(a). Advisers from the above-mentioned countries to all para-military organizations and the police force will also be withdrawn within the same period of time."

According to both American and South Vietnamese officials, the American civilians—both employees of private companies and those of the Defense Department—who help with supply activities not only see that the South Vietnamese get the equipment and ammunition they ask for but also advise them on what to ask for.

Some of these activities came to light as a result of the capture by the Chinese last month of a former United States Army Special Forces captain, Gerald E. Kosh, who was aboard a South Vietnamese naval vessel during a two-day battle with Chinese forces in the Paracel Islands, in the South China Sea.

Mr. Kosh, who was taken prisoner and later released, was described by a spokesman for the United States Embassy as a "liaison officer" with the South Vietnamese military whose job was to observe the efficiency of various army, navy and air force units and report to the Pentagon.

American officials steadfastly refused to provide further details of Mr. Kosh’s job. They would not say exactly what he was supposed to observe or whether his reports were ultimately shared with the South Vietnamese. They did say that there were 12 such liaison men based in various parts of Vietnam.

**EXTENT OF ROLE UNCLEAR**

What is not clear is whether they confine their observations to such matters as the condition of equipment and the rate of ammunition expenditure, or whether they evaluate military tactics and strategies and go so far as to suggest alternatives.

What is fairly certain is that their reports end up in the hands of the South Vietnamese, perhaps providing indirect advice of one sort or another.

A South Vietnamese officer in a position to know said recently that normal procedure called for an American and a South Vietnamese to make an inspection or auditing tour of a military unit together. Then they write up their reports, sometimes separately, sometimes together. The reports, he said, are forwarded up the chain of command in the United States Defense Attaché’s Office, which then relays copies of them to Lieut. Gen. Dong Van Khuyen, head of the Logistic Command, for the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff.

Some say, direct, overt advice is sometimes given by American military personnel. An embassy official reported recently that an American based in one province boasted to him about a successful military operation: "I told them to clear the Communists out of there."

Actually, South Vietnamese military men do not seem anxious for such guidance, noting with some pain that their country has suffered for years under American advice. What they want from the United States is military aid.

**SIX GENERALS PAY A VISIT**

Clearly, the Pentagon continues to attach high priority to the success of the South Vietnamese military. Last fall a group of six Air Force generals based in the Pentagon visited the Da Nang air base to find out what equipment and aid were needed, according to the base commander, Lieut. Col. Nguyen Tan Dinh. He said they were scheduled to come again this month.

A few weeks ago two civilian employees of the Air Force—one based in Hawaii and the other in Texas—were flown to Vietnam for a short stay so they could give advice on the repair and upkeep of plants that manufacture oxygen for jet fighters. One said he had been in and out of Vietnam frequently on similar missions since 1964, the other since 1962.

Although the Paris agreements explicitly rule out advisers to the police force the South Vietnamese National Police continue to receive regular advice from Americans.

In a recent conversation with this correspondent, two high-ranking officers said they and their staffs met frequently with the Saigon station chief of the C.I.A. and his staff. Sometimes, they said, the C.I.A. chief asks the police to gather intelligence for him, and often they meet to help each other analyze the data collected.
A police official confirmed that in some provinces, "American liaison men" who work with the police remain on the job. "There are still some, but not so many," he said.

**EPISODE IN POLICE STATION**

Local policemen still refer to "American police advisers," according to James M. Markham, Saigon bureau chief of The New York Times, who was detained by the police late in January after a visit to a Vietcong-held area.

Mr. Markham said that in both Qui Nhon, where he was held overnight, and Phan Thiet, where he was detained briefly while being transferred to Saigon, policemen, talking among themselves, referred to the "police adviser." In Phan Thiet, he reported, a policeman was overhead saying, "Let's get the American police adviser over here."

In the last six weeks The New York Times has made repeated attempts to interview officials in the United States Agency for International Development who are responsible for American aid to the police. Although the officials appeared ready to discuss the subject, they were ordered by the United States Ambassador, Graham A. Martin, to say nothing.

In the absence of official United States figures, the best information on police aid comes from Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who calculated that as of last June 30 the Agency for International Development and the Defense Department has spent $131.7-million over the years for police and prisons in South Vietnam. Despite a Congressional ban on such assistance enacted last December, such support has continued, according to American officials, but they say that no decision has yet been made on how to phase out the programs.

Section 112 of the new foreign aid bill reads: "None of the funds appropriated or made available pursuant to this act and no local currencies generated as a result of assistance furnished under this act may be used for the support of police or prison construction and administration within South Vietnam, for training, including computer training, of South Vietnamese with respect to police, criminal or prison matters, or for computers, or computer parts for use for South Vietnam with respect to police, criminal or prison matters."

**TRAINING IN WASHINGTON**

South Vietnamese policemen are reportedly still being trained at the International Police Academy in Washington, and technical contracts with private companies that provide computer services and communication equipment have not been terminated.

Senator Kennedy reported that the Nixon Administration had requested $869,000 for the current fiscal year for police computer training, $256,000 for direct training of policemen, $1.5-million for police communications and $8.8-million for police equipment, presumably weapons and ammunition, from the Defense Department.

Although these figures are not normally included in the totals for military aid, the police here have military functions, and engage in infiltration, arrest, interrogation and torture of Communists and political dissidents.

This activity violates the cease-fire agreement, which states in Article 11: "Immediately after the cease-fire, the two South Vietnamese parties will . . . prohibit all acts of reprisal and discrimination against individuals or organizations that have collaborated with one side or the other, insure . . . freedom to organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of belief."

**INTERVIEWS ARE REFUSED**

Not only has Ambassador Martin ordered American officials to remain silent on the subjects of military and police aid; both he and the Defense Attaché, Maj. Gen. John E. Murray, refused requests by The New York Times for interviews. Furthermore, the embassy told at least two private companies—Lear-Siegler, which employs a large force of aircraft mechanics here, and Computer Science Corporation, which works on military and police computer systems—to say nothing publicly about their work, according to company executives.

The official nervousness is attributed by an embassy employee to the Nixon Administration's apprehension about the inclination of Congress to cut aid to South Vietnam. The Ambassador has repeatedly told several non-Government visitors recently that South Vietnam is in a crucial period and that he sees his role as an unyielding support to build up and preserve a non-Communist regime.
He is reported to have pressed Washington to provide new weapons for Saigon to counteract the infiltration of troops, tanks and artillery from North Vietnam since the cease-fire. For example, plans have been made for the delivery of F-5E fighter planes to replace the slower, less maneuverable and less heavily armed F-5's, many of which were rushed to South Vietnam in the weeks before the cease-fire.

**VIOLATION IS CHARGED**

Privately, officers in the International Commission of Control and Supervision scoff at the American contention that supply of the planes does not violate the Paris agreements, which permit only one-for-one replacement of weapons "of the same characteristics and properties." A high-ranking official of one of the non-Communist delegations, asked recently if he thought the United States was faithfully observing the one-for-one rule, replied, "Of course not."

There is nothing the commission can do about it without permission from both the South Vietnamese Government and the Vietcong to investigate, and permission is unlikely to be forthcoming from the Saigon side. Similarly, the commission has been unable to audit other incoming weapons and ammunition for both sides. During the first year after the cease-fire, the United States provided South Vietnam with $5.4-million worth of ammunition a week, apparently unaccompanied by pressure to restrain military activities.

Several weeks ago Elbridge Durbrow, who was Ambassador to South Vietnam from 1957 to 1961, came to Saigon and met with Ambassador Martin and General Murray. Mr. Durbrow, who denounced the Paris agreements and who declares, "I am a domino-theory man," was asked by newsmen whether the American officials had indicated that they were trying to keep South Vietnam from violating the cease-fire.

"Not from anybody did we hear that," he replied. Then, referring to General Murray, he said: "He's not that kind of man at all—just the opposite. If you are not going to defend yourself you might as well give up and let Hanoi take over."
APPENDIX 4

TELEGRAM NO. 2978 FROM AMERICAN EMBASSY, SAIGON TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE (COMMENTING ON NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON U.S. ROLE IN VIETNAM)

Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., priority.
Unclassified Saigon 2978.
Reference: State 037727, Saigon 2548.

1. As a preliminary to detailed discussion of Shipler New York Times article datelined Saigon Feb. 16, it is necessary to record that Embassy has long been aware of decisions taken last fall in Hanoi to mount all-out campaign this winter and spring to persuade the Congress to drastically reduce the magnitude of both economic and military aid to the Government of Vietnam. The Stockholm Conference was to be used as the main coordinating mechanism, and the PRG delegation in Paris was to be the principal channel using the remnants of the American “peace movement” to bring influence to bear on selective susceptible, but influential, elements of American communications media and, particularly, on susceptible Congressional staffers. The timing preferred was to begin with insertion of as much material as possible in the Congressional Record, hopefully to secure condemnation of the GVN in formal reports of Congressional subcommittees, which could then be followed up and given wide circulation by “investigative reporting” which would tend to confirm and if possible to expand on the distortion they had been able to have inserted in the Congressional subcommittee formal reports.

2. Looking at the Shipler article, paragraph by paragraph, the US Mission has the following observations:

4. Par. 1-3—Ray Harris is a General Electric employee at Bien Hoa Air Base. His job is classified as a cleaner of parts and equipment. Shipler’s figure of 2,800 DAO civilian contractors is essentially correct. The current count is 2,762, a figure provided by DAO. Shipler does not bother to record at this point that the number has been reduced within the past year from some 5,000. He does, however, mention a reduction in paragraph 37 of his article, saying accurately that 2,200 have left since July. He does not record fact available to him that Harris is part of a group of contract employees whose function is to teach the South Vietnamese how to service properly military equipment turned over to the GVN as well as maintain it until the training process is completed. Nor does Shipler record the fact known to him that contract personnel are continuously withdrawn when training is finished. The “program of military aid” does not “set the course of the war,” as Shipler put it. The course is set by the continuous and continuing communist buildup and efforts of the GVN to protect the population, land and resources under GVN control at time of the cease-fire from actual military attacks mounted by the other side, which is not mentioned in the article.

5. Par. 4—This is a classic. Shipler categorically postulates “South Vietnamese violations” without presenting a shred of evidence, and alleges American military aid “directly supports” such violations, which thereby “breaks the spirit of the accords.” He does reluctantly concede that “whether the United States is breaking the letter of the accord or not” could be argued either way. It is quite true that to Hanoi, “the spirit of the accords” was the Americans would deliver South Vietnam bound hand and foot into their hands. Fortunately only a handful of Americans would accept that interpretation of the “spirit of the accords.”

6. Par. 5 and 6—No Americans, contractors, or government employees, are “integral parts” of the RVNAF military system. They provide limited and temporary technical assistance only to help the Vietnamese become self-sufficient. To describe American-based contractors as “integral parts of the South Vietnamese military, transport and intelligence systems” obviously distorts the meaning of the word “integral” to the breaking point. American
Generals visit not only Vietnam but other friendly nations throughout Southeast Asia. They also observe the use being made of military aid. (End-use inspection by U.S. personnel is required by the Security Assistance Act.)

The term "liaison men" presumably refers to DAC's Regional Liaison Officers. It is simply untrue that they give "advice," as Shipler reports, again without producing the slightest scrap of evidence. Even if permissible, none of the RLCs is qualified. They are civilians who, if they had previous military experience, were enlisted men or junior officers with little or no battle management training. It is unlikely that ARVN officers would heed their advice even if they offered it. And it is simply a falsehood that the CIA gives any "advice" to the National Police.

7. Pars. 7 and 8—Total budget cost of military aid to the GVN in FY-74 is 1059.2 million. Of the proposed 390.8 million increase, it is understood that about one-third is attributable to ammunition. Ammunition is expended at a rate of 20 to 50 percent less than during the last year of the war, due to US-imposed constraints and RVNAF self-imposed management controls. The US does not "dump millions in cash into the Saigon government’s defense budget." The US puts goods into the economy which are sold for piasters and then assigned for Vietnamese Government's policy of resistance to any accommodation with the communists. The implication is glaringly obvious, although unstated, that the GVN should do so. Beyond doubt, that is Hanoi's position. In the next sentence, Shipler states that "militarily, the extensive aid has enabled President Nguyen Van Thieu to take the offensive at times, launching intensive attacks with artillery and jet fighters against Viet Cong held territory." Shipler does not think it important to inform the readers of his paper that the "at times" in the above sentence were retaliatory strikes such as the ones made after the communists shelled the Bien Hoa Air Base and later destroyed the Nha Be petroleum storage-tanks, and that the GVN has a publicly announced policy of taking retaliatory action whenever the NVA/VC forces so attack GVN installations. Since there is no mention of the thousands of NVA/VC violations of the cease fire, the only assumption is that Shipler considers it a violation of the Paris Agreement only when the GVN responds to those attacks.

8. Par. 9—This paragraph is another classic example of disguising propaganda under the protective rubric of "investigative reporting." Shipler now alleges that U.S. military aid is indispensable to what is categorically described as "the South Vietnamese Government's policy of resistance to any accommodation with the communists." The implication is glaringly obvious, although unstated, that the GVN should do so. Beyond doubt, that is Hanoi's position. In the next sentence, Shipler states that "militarily, the extensive aid has enabled President Nguyen Van Thieu to take the offensive at times, launching intensive attacks with artillery and jet fighters against Viet Cong held territory." Shipler does not think it important to inform the readers of his paper that the "at times" in the above sentence were retaliatory strikes such as the ones made after the communists shelled the Bien Hoa Air Base and later destroyed the Nha Be petroleum storage-tanks, and that the GVN has a publicly announced policy of taking retaliatory action whenever the NVA/VC forces so attack GVN installations. Since there is no mention of the thousands of NVA/VC violations of the cease fire, the only assumption is that Shipler considers it a violation of the Paris Agreement only when the GVN responds to these attacks.

9. Pars. 10 and 11—In these paragraphs, the bias of the article becomes grossly obvious. Shipler contends that American aid permits President Thieu "to forestall a political settlement," stating that he has "rejected the Paris Agreement’s provision for general elections, in which the communists would be given access to the press, permission to run candidates and freedom to rally support openly and without interference from the police. Mr. Thieu has offered the elections, but without the freedoms." This statement is a complete reversal of the facts. The Paris Agreement called for a cease-fire. Then was to come, the delineation of the areas of control, the formation of the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord, which would prepare for elections under internationally supervised control. The last thing the NVA/VC forces would ever accept is the holding of elections, for under true, impartial international controls they could not possibly receive more than ten percent of the vote. So they have never observed the cease fire. They have never permitted the beginning of even discussion of the delineation of the "areas of control," both of which are necessary preliminaries to formation of the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord, which was to prepare for the elections. Their tactic has been to insist on the items enumerated by Shipler—particularly access to the press.

President Thieu has never "rejected the Paris Agreement’s provision for general elections." He has, on the contrary, repeatedly proposed definite dates for elections. If the NVA/VC forces would accept definitively a specific date and international supervision, elections could be agreed upon immediately with all the freedoms covered in the Paris Agreement. Although these are the facts, Shipler implies that it is the reverse of these facts which excuse the NVA/VC attacks throughout the country "mostly with artillery and rocket attacks." Shipler does not think the readers of the New York Times would be interested in the fact that these NVA/VC artillery and rocket attacks often have the populace—children and unarmed civilians—as their main targets.

10. Par. 12—Shipler implies skepticism when he reports that "US intelligence officials contend that . . . the North Vietnamese have sent thousands of tanks and artillery pieces south in violation of the Paris Agreements." Best intelligence estimates indicate that since the cease-fire, North Vietnam has sent into South...
Vietnam at least 450 tanks and about 265 122 mm and 130 mm guns, according to DAC figures. (The GVN often charges that North Vietnam has sent 600 tanks and armored vehicles south since the cease-fire.) Shipler's use of the word “thousands” gives the intended impression that the US has exaggerated the infiltration of NVA weaponry. Shipler follows use of the word “contends” with a further attack on credibility of the extent of military buildup by powerful NVA/VC forces by pointing out that “communists appear more frugal in battle with ammunition.”

11. Par. 13—Military experts believe that any restraint on NVA ammunition expenditure is a matter of tactics rather than real or expected shortages. The fact remains that the NVA has enough ammo in the south to support a country-wide offensive at the 1972 level for at least one year. Another factor which Shipler conveniently ignores is that ARVN positions are fixed to defend bases and populated areas. Their location is known to the enemy. Therefore, few rounds are needed for effective fire. The enemy still hits and runs. His permanent bases are outside ARVN artillery range and ARVN gunners must search for targets, register and then fire for effect, all of which requires more ammunition.

12. Par. 14—The C-5 F-5A is not the “mainstay of the VNAF.” South Vietnam’s work-horses are the A-1 and A-37. General Electric, which is mentioned in those paragraphs, provides technicians who assist the VNAF with repair and maintenance of GE-built jet engines. This is normal practice; GE provides the same service to the USAF. Some jet components are of such complexity that only the manufacturer has the expertise to repair them. The GE contract is not typical of DAC contracts. It is true that it is mainly an American work-situation with less emphasis on Vietnamese training. Nonetheless, considerable training programs are conducted by GE at Bien Hoa. The shop which Shipler visited has a normal complement of 302 Vietnamese and about 50 Americans.

13. Par. 17—The implication in these paragraphs is that the Vietnamese are not serious about learning or are incapable of learning. Neither implication is true. According to the American manager, approximately 200 Vietnamese were normally assigned for duty on the day Shipler visited the shop. It should be noted that Shipler arrived there the afternoon before TET, January 21, the most important Vietnamese holiday, which was also a Vietnamese payday. It is likely that many Vietnamese had taken time off, but according to the shop manager, it is preposterous to state that not a Vietnamese was in sight.

14. Par. 20—Shipler quotes an American contract employee as saying the maintenance shop where he works “would turn into a big Honda repair shop” without the Americans. Even Shipler recognizes such a statement to be self-serving and exaggerated, which it was, but implies that an American presence will have to continue indefinitely “if the South Vietnamese are to have continued use of their complex weapons.” Expert opinion holds a precisely opposite view—that within a very short time frame—American instructors can and will be wholly withdrawn. It is Hanoi’s purpose to have them withdrawn immediately, before the American logistical training program can bring the South Vietnamese to the same standards of proficiency as the Soviet and Chinese training teams, which started years ago, gave to their proteges in the north with infinitely more complex systems, such as SAM missiles. It is of course true, as the “Cessna Aircraft” technician is quoted as saying in Danang, that the South Vietnamese are “peace minded,” but not the peace of the grave or total dictatorship which they know.

15. Par. 31—Shipler quotes the personal opinions of contractor personnel on Vietnamese attitudes. This is not difficult for a reporter to do when searching for quotes to help him slant an article. It is comparatively easy to find an unfriendly American who will observe that the Vietnamese don’t care what kind of government they have. Current history does not support this attitude. The fact remains that the vast majority of South Vietnamese prefer the protection of the GVN to economic and political conditions under the PRG. The PRG has been singularly unsuccessful in luring Vietnamese into VC areas, where only three to five percent of South Vietnam’s current population now lives. According to the Kennedy Committee, 10 million have voted with their feet, preferring to accept refugee status rather than live under NVA/VC control. Shipler seems oblivious to the confirmation of the nonmilitary logistic training mission in which the American civilians are engaged when he quotes a technician as saying “I work for my company and I try to keep the aircraft flying. I’m working on helicopters, that’s all I know.” Whereupon Shipler draws him out on the higher meaning of it all and gets the obvious response.
16. Pars. 33-35—Shipler states that the Americans’ work has carried some to positions of considerable authority in the South Vietnamese supply system. Use of the term “in” is questionable, contractor personnel are instructed to work “with” and not “in” RVNAF units. No American has any authority in the RVNAF system. It is true, but of no significance, that the RVNAF continue to use the term “Co Van” which is translated as “collaborator.” But this does not mean that Americans to whom Vietnamese apply the title are doing the same jobs as earlier Americans who were called “Co Van.” After nearly 20 years of working alongside US military personnel, the Vietnamese are accustomed to using the term “Co Van” for Americans with whom they work closely. The Vietnamese are making the decisions, however, and not the Americans. Shipler quotes Adams, a contractor employee, as saying “we” when referring to reorganizing the shop at Bien Hoa. Shipler calls this a “revealing slip of the tongue.” It is natural to become so identified with your job that you say “we” even when referring to management decisions outside your authority. Any US Mission employee might well say “we” when speaking of a decision made by the Department or the Pentagon. Shipler quotes an unnamed Defense Department official as saying “we Vietnamized the fighting, but we never Vietnamized logistics.” That is a correct statement although the inferences subsequently drawn by Shipler are totally unfounded.

He states in paragraph 38 of his article that “there is evidence that the contacts occasionally cross into areas of relationship prohibited by the Paris Agreement”—contacts between American and Vietnamese. Shipler says there is evidence but presents none of it. He quotes two provisions of the Paris Agreement, both of which have been and are being fully observed.

17. Pars. 36-38—Shipler’s statement that the DAC was originally scheduled to be dismantled early this year is an exaggeration or possibly a misunderstanding on his part. When the DAC was established, the US Mission hoped that the cease-fire would bring total cessation of hostilities in South Vietnam. Had that happened, it was generally felt the DAC could complete most of its mission within approximately a year and have its residual functions absorbed by the Embassy or performed outside the country. At no time was this a positive commitment, although some Embassy officers may have mentioned the possibility to newsmen in the early days of the cease-fire. As of January 1, 1974, there were 1,015 DOD civilians in DAC, a fact made available to Shipler by the Embassy. There are now 907 actually in South Vietnam, slightly fewer than the authorized number of slots. The number of DAC contractor employees on January 31, 1974, was 2,762. On July 1, 1973, the number was 3,502, which represents a drop of 740 instead of the 2,200 reported by Shipler. He has apparently confused the July figure with the original total of DAC contractor personnel in March 1973, which was 5,237. The US has no military advisors in South Vietnam; no advice is given the Vietnamese in contravention of the Paris Agreements, contrary to Shipler’s undocumented personal opinion.

18. Par. 41—This paragraph is wholly misleading. Regardless of what unidentified American and Vietnamese officials and US civilians may have told Shipler, the DAC does not perfunctorily “see that the South Vietnamese get the equipment and ammunition they ask for.” It is self-evident that the US has not given the GVN carte blanche, but if the point needs explanation, specifics can be cited. For example, more than 200 aircraft to which South Vietnam is entitled under the one-for-one replacement program have not been provided by the US. Since much of the defense material provided the RVNAF comes from US sources, both as required by law and in the absence of a South Vietnamese industrial base, the DAC assists the Vietnamese to relate their needs to US supply sources. This is a far cry from advising them on what to ask for, as Shipler glibly suggests.

19. Pars. 42-47—The case of Gerald Kosh, the Regional Liaison Officer who was captured in the Paracels and later released by the Chinese, has been written about by several journalists. His duties were described by the DOD press spokesman at the time of his capture and explained to Shipler by the Embassy Press Officer, who also told him there were 12 Regional Liaison Officers in the country.

Shipler was told that an RLO does not act as an advisor, engage in covers or clandestine operations or participate in combat. Shipler was skeptical and insisted that there must be more behind the work of the RLOs than the USG was willing to disclose. He was asked if there was not, that an RLO was basically employed to conduct, overt liaison with the RVNAF and report on RVNAF efficiency and use of military equipment and supplies. The RLO only collects and transmits information he is given by the RVNAF, so it is pointless to suggest that his "reports
end up in the hands of the South Vietnamese, perhaps providing indirect advice of one sort or another." It should be noted that in some cases, U.S. law requires that audits and end-use inspections be conducted by joint US/Vietnamese teams. It is not uncommon for an American and South Vietnamese to make an inspection or auditing tour of a military unit together. It is often required procedure.

20. Pars. 48-49—Shipler is wrong when he reports that Americans are still stationed in every province. There are four Consulates General in Vietnam in addition to the Embassy in Saigon. While there are some Vice Consul and development officers in the provinces, many of them cover two or more provinces. Only a few DAC civilians and no military personnel are stationed outside the greater Saigon area, aside from a few US Marine guards at the Consulates General.

21. Pars. 50-51—It is true that six Air Force Generals visited South Vietnam last fall; another group came recently. They came at the request of the American Ambassador who wished to be assured that our military material aid was adequate, but frugal; that it was appropriate to the scale of attacks being mounted by the NVA/VC forces at the direction of Hanoi; that, as required by law, we would be able to report accurately and precisely to the Congress. The Generals were very helpful and the Ambassador hopes they can return at approximately the same interval in the future.

22. Pars. 52-56—We will not simply say Shipler's statement that "although the Paris Agreements explicitly rule out advisers to the police force the South Vietnamese National Police continue to receive regular advice from Americans" is inaccurate, it is utterly false and known to be so by the writer. Certainly, it is true that CIA officers connected with the Embassy meet routinely with police officials. It is hoped that this practice is followed at every Embassy in the world in a continuing effort to keep senior officials of the U.S. as well informed and as currently informed as possible. That Americans in the provinces maintaining contact with local police officials may, out of habit, still be called "advisers" does not in any way change the fact that there are no American advisers, formal or informal, or any device or cover.

23. Par. 57—It is correct that the Ambassador issued instructions to USAID officials in Saigon not to discuss these matters with Shipler. He worked on the New York Times article for more than three weeks—in Saigon, Bien Hoa and Danang. It became obvious to U.S. Mission officers from Shipler's line of questioning that he had no intention of writing a reasonably balanced story, but rather a biased indictment of the U.S. role in Vietnam and the GVN's unreasonable obstruction of communist objectives. Shipler, therefore, was not given the kind of cooperation the Embassy normally extends to responsible reporters, since it is simply not possible to cooperate and thereby give a platform and inferred credibility to deliberate and gross distortions calculated to deceive the American Congress and the American people. DAC contractors, incidentally, were not told to refuse to talk with Shipler, as he asserts.

24. Pars. 58-63—Here we begin to see the link forecast in Hanoi planning last fall. The figures given in the Kennedy report for overall assistance to police programs may well be accurate. We simply cannot confirm from here. It is important to record that the provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of last December are being scrupulously complied with and at a more rapid pace than actually called for in the law itself. But the American people should be told why Hanoi is so determined to utilize every pressure at its command to destroy the police program.

The answer is simple. No guerrilla subversion can exist in a closed society. It is no problem in North Vietnam or in the Soviet Union or the PRC for that matter. The guerrilla type of subversion and terror can only exist in a free and open society. In a free and open society, even one with warts, as both ours and the South Vietnamese have, the most effective deterrent against terror and subversion is an effective police force. Therefore, every effort is made by the communists to erode all propaganda reserves against it, including the unwitting. Charges of repression, terror, brutality and corruption must be reiterated over and over again until it finally becomes imbedded in the conventional wisdom. We see the culmination of this process in Shipler's statement that "the police here have military functions and engage in infiltration, arrest, interrogation and torture of communists and political dissidents." The juxtaposition should be carefully noted. Certainly, the police engage in "infiltration arrest". How else can any free society anywhere defend itself? They engage in "interrogation". Any police system anywhere in the world does the same. And now follows innocently the word "torture". No evidence is presented, just the charge. Who is interrogated—"communists" and now, innocently again, "political dissidents," with no evidence presented.
Then follows the flat statement: "This activity violates the cease-fire agreement. . . ." In the first instance, there is simply no eradicable proof of the police actions alleged. Nor is there the slightest reference by Shipler to there being any possibility that there has been any violation on the so-called PRG side.

25. Pars. 64 and 65—Shipler accurately records that the Ambassador and Major General Murray refused requests by the New York Times for interviews. The reason is obvious. To do so would permit their own reputations for integrity to be used as a platform for promoting a campaign to grossly deceive the American Congress and the American people. Neither will permit this, although they quite freely see most reputable journalists who request interviews. As stated earlier, no instructions were issued to contractors to shun newsmen who apparently, on their own, also do not wish to be used in a campaign to deceive the American people. The comments attributed to the Ambassador, from a second hand source, are also without foundation.

26. Par. 66—The USG has never made a secret of the fact that it intends to replace some F-5A jet aircraft with faster, more maneuverable F-5Es. In the DOD press briefing of January 8, 1974, Lt. Gen. James said that this was no new information. "We have said all along," he told reporters, "that we had supplied the South Vietnamese with the F-5 Tiger One, which was the earliest F-5, and that considerable improvements had been made on subsequent models that we had contracted to provide them, and these old aircraft would be replaced on a one-for-one basis. This will be done in time. . . ." The USG does not regard replacement of some F-5A aircraft with the later F-5E as a violation of the Paris Agreements. The F-5E is simply a newer version of the F-5A, which is no longer available.

27. Pars. 67 and 68—Shipler states that a high-ranking official of "one of the non-communist delegations, asked recently if he thought the U.S. was faithfully observing the one-for-one rule," replied, "of course not." The ICCS official was quite right, but not in the way Shipler implies. As a matter of fact, the USG unfortunately has not been able in one single category to provide one-for-one replacements of all the material lost by the GVN while defending itself from continuing NVA/VC aggression since the cease-fire. Article VII of the Paris agreement specifies that the two South Vietnamese parties shall not accept introduction of troops, military advisers and military personnel including armaments, munitions and war material into South Vietnam. Both parties, however, are permitted to make periodic replacements of armaments, munitions and war material which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the cease-fire on the basis of piece-for-piece, of the same characteristics and properties, under supervision of the Joint Military Commission (TPJMC) and of the ICCS. Article 18(c) gives the ICCS specific responsibilities regarding prohibition under Article VII. The ICCS Protocol specifies the designation of ICCS teams at points of entry, some of which are listed in paragraph B of Article 4, and some are to be designated by the two South Vietnamese parties. These pertinent sections of the Paris Agreement and of the ICCS Protocol have not been implemented because of the inability of the TPJMC to reach agreement on either the designated points of entry or the "modalities" of the control and supervision of military shipments. The record shows there has been considerable unwillingness on the part of the so-called PRG to help the ICCS deploy to sites in territory controlled by the Viet Cong.

While the GVN has designated the additional points of entry, as required, the PRG has refused to do so. The PRG, as a matter of fact, has tried to prevent development of ICCS teams. For example, an ICCS helicopter taking a team in April 1973 to the entry point of Lao Bao in PRG territory was shot down claiming the lives of several ICCS members and the American crew. It is unjust for Shipler to say that the Saigon side is unlikely to grant permission to supervise replacement of weaponry for South Vietnam. The GVN has indicated its willingness, time and time again, to cooperate with implementation of the agreement and protocols provided the other side displays a similar cooperative attitude. Thus, the activities of the point of entry teams have been frustrated. At the beginning, on a unilateral basis, the Canadian and Indonesian delegations joined in involving themselves in supervision and control of military shipments and the GVN did not object to this. Shipler does not point out that the ICCS has no supervision whatever of military shipments coming into South Vietnam from the north. Nor does he mention anywhere in his article the utilization of combat troops from North Vietnam since the cease-fire, a fact well known to him.
28. Pars. 69-70—The Shipler quotation of Ambassador Durbrow ends the article consistently on another distortion. According to other sources, Durbrow was making the point that no one could expect the South Vietnamese unilaterally to observe the cease-fire if the other side ignores it completely. Most Americans, we expect, would agree.

29. In Summary, the Shipler article was obviously not written to inform New York Times readers but to give a slanted impression that the USG and GVN are grossly violating the cease-fire agreement and preventing any kind of peaceful political accommodation with the communists. The article contains numerous inaccuracies and half-truths. It deliberately omits or treats skeptically the flagrant communist violations of the Paris Accords, all of which have been pointed out repeatedly to Shipler and the NY Times Saigon Bureau by USG and GVN officials.

30. Both SecState and SecDef may release this message, or portions of it, either to the Congress or the press if they deem it useful to do so. Embassy believes the Shipler story and this response might well be made available to the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism as a case study of propaganda under the guise of "investigative reporting" rather than a responsible journalistic effort.

Martin.
APPENDIX 5

AIRGRAM—296, DECEMBER 26, 1973, FROM AMERICAN EMBASSY, SAIgon TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE; SUBJECT: FATHER CHAN TIN’S VIEW OF “POLITICAL PRISONERS”: A CASE STUDY OF MILITANCY OVERRIDEING OBJECTIVITY

AMERICAN EMBASSY SAIgon,

1. Summary: Several months ago, anti-GVN Catholic activist Father Chan Tin gave the Embassy a copy of a recent study listing 202,000 “political prisoners” allegedly held by the GVN as of June 1, 1973. The list contained some details about where these people were supposedly being detained. It differed markedly from both the GVN’s claims and the standard estimates then used by the Embassy. Although we were reasonably confident that our estimates were valid, we nevertheless re-checked them in the light of his statistics. The Mission conducted an exhaustive survey, utilizing all available sources. It conclusively refutes the widely-spread charge, echoed by Father Chan Tin, that GVN jails harbor “200,000 political prisoners.”

2. The Mission survey leads to the firm conclusion that the total prison and detention population in South Vietnam in the July-August period (the time frame of our check) was around 35,000. This figure comprises civilian prisoners of all types, not just “political prisoners” however defined. (End Summary.)

3. The reporting officer called last July 27 on Father Chan Tin, the well-known Redemptorist priest whose anti-government activism has kept him in steady trouble with the GVN (although he himself has remained out of jail and free to voice his criticisms). This year he has been attacking the government on the civilian prisoner issue, and official spokesman Bui Bao Truc has returned the compliment with a series of hard-hitting references to Chan Tin in several GVN press briefings.

4. Chan Tin gave the reporting officer a copy of a two-volume paperbound work (Vietnamese language) titled “Political Prisoners in South Vietnam After the Signing of the Paris Agreement,” published a short while earlier by the Committee Campaigning for the Improvement of Prison Conditions in South Vietnam, which he heads. A key part of the report, and the only one that he stressed in his conversation with the reporting officer, was a table showing the alleged “political prisoner” population in South Vietnam as of June 1, 1973. The total figure given is 202,000. This table is reproduced in slightly altered format as Enclosure 1.

CHAN TIN’S COMMENTS ON HIS FIGURES

5. In discussing his statistics, Chan Tin provided the following explanations and comments:

A. Common criminals are excluded from this table, which comprises solely what he called “political prisoners.” Thus, the total prison population is larger than 202,000. In all attempts to demonstrate his objectivity in this regard, Chan Tin noted that his “political prisoner” total for Con Son (9,200) was smaller than the GVN’s claimed capacity (9,614) and occupancy (9,898) for that facility as most recently published.

B. Asked to define his category of “political prisoners,” he said it includes Communist detainee. (In this respect his definition is significantly broader than

(36)
that used by some other anti-GVN critics.) He broke the category down into the following rough percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those arrested “for no reason”</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those arrested for what Chan Tin termed non-Communist dissidence</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those arrested for “Communist activities”</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About half of the 60% arrested “for no reason”, he said, have absolutely no inkling of why they are in jail. The other half may have some idea, but he believed the reason is not defensible. The 25% which he listed as dissidents are those he viewed as non-Communist activists arrested on “security” charges, and “they know why they are in prison.”

C. Pointing to the zero total under POW camps on his list, Chan Tin claimed that this too proved his objectivity. He exhibited some skepticism, however, that these camps are really empty.

D. The reporting officer expressed surprise at his inclusion of GVN military prisons, stating that these are presumably just for soldiers under military discipline. Chan Tin replied that many persons are in these jails for political reasons. Then, curiously backing off, he said that the total is only 12,000 and so their inclusion or exclusion makes little difference.

E. Chan Tin stressed particularly his statistics for district and village jails and police interrogation centers. He admitted those were estimates but each one came from “a person who is well informed” about the place. Acknowledging that the police centers have a high turnover, he insisted that one must nevertheless take their occupancy figures at any given moment as part of the total picture. He cautioned against using capacity figures (for these as well as other jails), since GVN cells are often extremely overcrowded.

CHANG TIN’S ESTIMATES COMPARED TO OTHERS.

6. Chan Tin’s list is the most ambitious effort we have seen documenting the oft-repeated charge that the GVN holds “hundreds of thousands of political prisoners.” The figure mentioned most frequently is 200,000, which by coincidence or otherwise is virtually what Chan Tin asserts. The chief importance of his list, in fact, is the boost it gives to the credibility of this statistic in some quarters, including influential circles in the United States. Senator Abourezk inserted Chan Tin’s table in the *Congressional Record* last September 18 (S16787).

7. The only other major attempt we have seen to justify the 200,000 figure in detail appeared in a “white book” published last June by opposition Deputy Ho Ngoc Nhu. However, there is very little coincidence between Nhu’s breakdown and Chan Tin’s. Nhu’s went into far less detail, gave significantly larger occupancy figures for the major prisons, and skinned lightly over the smaller jails with roughly estimated averages. He included Phu Quoc among the big prisons with a figure of 40,000 occupants, thereby damaging his credibility from the start. Phu Quoc, designed in any case for POW’s exclusively, is now reliably reported to be empty. Chan Tin avoided this trap and therefore, to this extent at least, must be taken more seriously.

8. Naturally, Chan Tin’s figures differ markedly from the GVN’s public claims. They also are far from the Embassy’s standard estimates going back several years, which have agreed roughly but not wholly with the GVN pronouncements. Enclosure 2 highlights those differences. Comparison is difficult not only because Chan Tin mentions just “political prisoners” but also because he groups the prison and detention systems in an individualistic way. In Enclosure 2 his grouping has been altered by the reporting officer so that similar categories can be roughly compared side by side. The GVN figures are based on two booklets about civilian prisoners published this year by the Information Commission. The first of these booklets came out in July; the second was an improved version appearing in November (see Saigon A-140 and Saigon A-281).

9. Although major discrepancies exist in more than one of the categories in Enclosure 2, by far the biggest problem concerns police detention centers and jails below the provincial level. The GVN’s July booklet says that jails do not exist below the province level, while the November revision acknowledges an unstated number of facilities where people are held for up to five days. The Mission has included in its estimates of the total number of prisoners of all types held by the GVN a fluctuating total of several thousand being temporarily housed
in local lock-ups at various levels down to the villages. We have estimated the capacity of these local lock-ups at about 15,000. Chan Tin adds up local detention facilities around the country and arrives at a total of 101,800 "political prisoners" being held in them, or just over half his claimed total. The other half he places in regular civilian and military prisons.

UNCERTAINTIES OF THE STANDARD EMBASSY ESTIMATES

10. Based on the extensive knowledge that the US Mission had of the GVN prison system until recently through its Public Safety Advisers, we have been confident that the charge of 200,000 GVN-held "political prisoners" is a gross exaggeration. We estimated the total capacity of the GVN correction and detention systems, including all civilian jails from the national prisons down to the local police lockups, at 51,941 on December 31, 1972. Thus, the figure 200,000 is on the face of it physically impossible. As Enclosure 2 shows, the total occupancy figure on the same date added up to 43,717. This figure includes all categories of civilians held on that date. Since then, the number of prisoners has declined significantly, due to the release of thousands of prisoners on such occasions as Tet and Buddha's Birthday. The 1973 releases of Communist offenders in exchanges with the other side have also reduced the number.

11. However, we have always been aware of the possibility of soft spots in our analysis, although we have consistently believed they do not undermine the validity of our estimates. Since those areas have created some uncertainties, we think the chief vulnerabilities should be explicitly outlined, as follows:

A. Our 1972 end-of-year figures are based on statistics given to our Public Safety Advisers by the GVN. Such statistics were supplied periodically. Even though they were in-house figures, it is conceivable that the GVN's reporting system going up the line from local officials to the central statistics bureau was imperfect. However, no reliable source available to the Mission ever contradicted the general picture presented to the Advisors, who were themselves in a good position to check.

B. Occupancy can, and frequently does, exceed capacity. In short, as Chan Tin pointed out, the prisons are often overcrowded. This casts some doubt on our use of capacity figures as a yardstick. However, the GVN in recent years has increased its prison capacity significantly to meet the overcrowding problem. Since 1970 at least, the occupancy of the system as a whole has seldom if ever exceeded its total capacity. Even assuming the worst case, it is obviously not credible that a figure in the "hundreds of thousands" would be approached.

C. Our figures have excluded the military prisons, which are designed for AWOL soldiers, etc., and therefore would appear irrelevant to any discussion of civilian prisoners. Yet it may be contended that some civilians are tucked away in military jails, unaccounted for by the system. The number of people considered subject to military discipline adds to this possibility. There is also the problem of deserters—how do you classify a draftee who deserts the field of battle for political reasons and finds himself in the brig? Chan Tin would doubtless call him a civilian "political prisoner," but the GVN, as every other State including our own, would consider that he broke his oath and the law and classify him accordingly. A further complication is that some military offenders are held in civilian prisons, thus mixing the two categories. But this, if anything, makes the total we have used for civilian prison occupancy look worse than necessary. The errors therefore may cancel each other out. In any case, we judge that any uncertainty created by this factor does not invalidate the general estimates. It is noteworthy that Chan Tin's figure for this category comes to just 12,000, and he did not insist on it in talking to the reporting officer.

D. The police detention system and particularly the provincial interrogation centers have been something of a blind spot in our assessment. It is less easy to follow what the GVN is doing in some of these places than in the national or provincial prisons, and accordingly we must acknowledge some softness in the Embassy's usual occupancy estimates for them. But again, we have been confident that our Public Safety Advisers were aware of the general picture in the detention centers, if not always of the details. They could have picked up any major discrepancies in what their GVN counterparts said about the numbers detained there, particularly since other sources available to the Mission could verify the matter.
THE NEW EMBASSY SURVEY

12. In general, therefore, we have been confident that our standard estimates are valid. However, our knowledge of the prison and detention system cannot be perfect, and Chan Tin came up with new claims in his list. Accordingly, the Mission decided in August to recheck its estimates in the light of Chan Tin’s allegations utilizing all Mission resources. The results appear in Enclosure 3. They show prisoners held as of July 24, 1973 (or August 22, 1973, in the case of interrogation centers). Where Chan Tin’s list cites a figure that can be compared with a Mission finding, his figure is adjacent, in parentheses.

13. The sources of our information are GVN records meant for internal use, i.e. what the GVN is telling itself on this subject. The figures are at least as good as our previous ones obtained by the Public Safety Advisors; and, given the concentrated effort behind the survey, they are probably better.

14. The results show clearly that Chan Tin’s statistics are inflated. In nearly all cases, his number of “political prisoners” is higher than the total occupancy. This is true even for Con Son, which he cited as an example of his moderation. (However, Con Son’s occupancy seems to have dropped over the past few months, due perhaps to the post cease-fire release programs.) The only place where Chan Tin gives a figure lower than the Mission’s is Chi Boa, a major prison where even Chan Tin apparently concedes there are many common criminals.

15. The most dramatic discrepancies concern the provincial prisons and the detention-interrogation system. Chan Tin says there are 37 provincial prisons, and he lists eight other “big prisons” individually in the provinces. He claims they all held 73,000 persons last June 1. In reality, only 35 of the former 37 provincial prisons are now operating. They held 14,291 prisoners on July 24. Not only does Chan Tin have outdated information on the number but he evidently double-counts the eight “big prisons.” As for the detention-interrogation centers, Chan Tin puts 68,000 persons in district and village jails and 33,600 in specified interrogation centers. Our sources support the GVN’s July claim that there are no district or village jails, and they enumerate exactly 314 persons in nine interrogation centers in the Saigon area on August 22—facilities where Chan Tin alleges there were 5,300 detainees last June. While these centers do have fluctuating occupancy rates, nothing can account for this discrepancy except sheer error on Chan Tin’s part. Most of these places have capacity figures that don’t approach his levels.

16. We can confidently estimate the capacities of many of the interrogation facilities outside of Saigon, and the maximum levels invariably fall below Chan Tin’s claimed occupancies. The Quang Ngai Center, for instance, can hold no more than 300 detainees, and the Qui Nhon Center can accommodate just 1,000. According to reliable reports, both are now largely empty. The total occupancy of the installations not cited in the survey may be in the hundreds only. This, of course, is just a guess, but by extension from the 314 figure in the Saigon area it seems logical. We figure a thousand as a maximum estimate for the nationwide interrogation center population.

17. One of our remaining soft spots, despite the survey, is the detention system at the district and village levels. The contention that there are no jalis at these levels may be true, but district and village police stations with an informal lock-up capability do exist, as obliquely acknowledged in the November publication of the GVN. Detentions here are meant to be brief and the physical arrangements largely ad hoc. No distinction is made between interrogation facilities, detention facilities, and what might pass for the local jail. It is unlikely that anyone held here checks GVN records unless and until he is passed on to the province level. Thus the GVN tendency to ignore these facilities is natural. But to counter Chan Tin’s charges effectively one must acknowledge the existence of these detainees and figure them in the total number. He patently exaggerates their numbers, and his claim should be set squarely. The real number is certainly very small these days; one would probably put it at no more than a thousand at any given moment.

Added to the interrogation centers, these facilities may bring the detention population to roughly two thousand nationwide. This is less than the number we’ve been carrying, based on the 1972 year-end figure of 4,060. Such a drop seems logical for the post cease-fire period, but it cannot be verified.
18. Taking the Mission survey in its entirety, therefore, we reach the conclusion that the prison and detention systems together held about 35,000 persons in the July-August period, broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Prisoners</th>
<th>Occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inmates of national prisons</td>
<td>15,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmates of provincial prisons</td>
<td>14,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist offenders (held separately pending release)</td>
<td>3,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detainees in interrogation centers and local lock-ups</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 35,139

1 These are the remainder of 5,081 held in this category at the time of the ceasefire. The others have already been released to the Communists in exchange programs negotiated with the Communist side.

Chan Tin's Error

19. Obviously, if our new survey is right, Chan Tin went drastically wrong somewhere, despite the care he says he put into his estimates. The easy answer is that he was egged on by the Communists, and that he is their agent. He has often taken positions damaging to the GVN and favorable to the Communist side; but this is insufficient evidence to conclude that he is a witting Communist tool.

20. Chan Tin comes through to observers as a quiet but stubborn man. Being a priest, he views people's plights in a human way. He may know of cases of unjust imprisonment and mistreatment in GVN jails from contacts with parishioners. Educated at the Sorbonne, evidently during the era several decades ago when socialist ideas were common currency, he puts the human tragedies he meets into a class-struggle intellectual framework. These traits were illustrated, for example, during the July 27 call on him by the reporting officer. A teenage girl entered his office during the call with a folded note for a relative in prison. She had gotten conflicting reports about where the relative was being held. Chan Tin listened sympathetically, assured her he knew where the relative was, and agreed to get the note to him. After the girl left, he then spoke to the reporting officer about the present situation in South Vietnam in dramatic class-struggle terms.

21. Translating these convictions into arguments that would convince a world impressed by statistics, Chan Tin has clearly let his subjective view override his objectivity in his published survey. His thinking apparently led him into ever more extreme positions as he prepared the statistics. Last April, he told an Embassy officer and a visiting Congressional staffer that it was difficult to make an accurate estimate of the total number of prisoners; his own guess at that time was 100,000, though he heard of figures as high as 200,000. He has now gone up to the highest figure circulating among critics for “political prisoners” alone. Perhaps he is convinced emotionally that this figure “must” be correct because it provides him with justification for his commitment to the issue.

22. Also, we believe in this case that Chan Tin has been swayed by his sources, some of whom may be less scrupulous than he. They may be indeed close to the picture, as he claims, but they appear also to have either an ax to grind or an emotion-clouded concept of the numbers that can be held in some of the prisons and detention centers. Chan Tin's total figure compounds these smaller errors. It is thus a fairly typical instance of little flaws, hard to pin down but easy to believe if one is disposed to do so, hiding a gross weakness in the overall result.

Ambassador's Comment

23. I am again indebted to Mr. Sizer and the other Mission officers who contributed to this report for an exhaustive and painstaking analysis. In the best tradition of the Foreign Service this report, without bias or subjective emotional involvement, presents the facts as best they can be perceived, after extensive study and research. It deserves, and I hope it will receive, the widest possible dissemination.

24. This report will not convince those who believe only what they wish to believe. It will, I think, be convincing to those reasonable and objective persons who are still concerned with the truth—and, fortunately, the majority of the citizens of the United States still come within this category.
Father Chan Tin’s list of “political prisoners” allegedly held by the government of the Republic of Vietnam, June 1, 1973 (from publication issued July 1973)

Four special prisons:
- Con Son (mostly for political prisoners) .................................................. 8,200
- Tan Duc (for women) .................................................................................. 1,500
- Tan Hiep (entirely for political prisoners) ............................................. 2,500
- Dalat (for juvenile males) .......................................................................... 1,000

Total .............................................................................................................. 13,200

Six POW camps:
- Phu Quoc .................................................................................................. X
- Ho Rai (Bien Hoa) .................................................................................... X
- Phu Tai (Gia Nhơn) ................................................................................ X
- Benang ....................................................................................................... X
- Pleiku .......................................................................................................... X
- Can Tho ....................................................................................................... X

Military prisons:
- Go Vap ........................................................................................................
- Four Big Prisons (Danang, Nha Trang, Can Tho, Pleiku) ...................... 6,000
- Other Military Prisons ............................................................................... 4,000

Total .............................................................................................................. 12,000

Nine big prisons:
- Chi Hoa ......................................................................................................
- Gia Dinh .....................................................................................................
- Can Tho ......................................................................................................
- My Tho ........................................................................................................
- Thua Phu (Hue) ........................................................................................
- Danang ......................................................................................................
- Quang Nam ................................................................................................
- Quang Ngai ................................................................................................
- Qui Nhơn ..................................................................................................

Total .............................................................................................................. 25,000

Thirty-seven provincial prisons, total .......................................................... 50,000

District and village jails total ........................................................................ 68,000

Interrogation Centers:
- National Police Headquarters, Vo Tnh H., Saigon ............................... 1,000
- Capital Police Headquarters, Tran Hung Dao Street, Saigon ............. 200
- Ben Bach Dang, Saigon ........................................................................... 200
- Ngo Quyen, Saigon ................................................................................ 200
- Bang Ky Bridge, Gia Dinh ...................................................................... 800
- Hang Keo, Gia Dinh ................................................................................ 1,200
- Military Security, Nguyen Binh Khiem St., Saigon ......................... 500
- Capital Military Security, Nguyen Tral St., Saigon ............................ 200
- Eleven military region security intelligence centers .......................... 1,000
- Quang Nam interrogation center ............................................................ 1,500
- Qui Nhơn interrogation center ............................................................... 1,500
- Quang Ngai interrogation center ............................................................ 1,500
- Forty-two province security stations ...................................................... 9,000
- Forty-five province military security stations ....................................... 2,000
- District security stations ......................................................................... 5,000
- Military region offices of military security .......................................... 1,000
- Other interrogation places ...................................................................... 5,000

Total .............................................................................................................. 33,800

National total ............................................................................................. 202,000
## Comparison of Father Chan Tin’s “Political Prisoner” Claim, GVN, Civilian Prisoner Claim, and Standard U.S. Embassy Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Father Chan Tin's Claim as of June 1, 1972</th>
<th>GVN Claim in July and November 1973 Booklets on Civilian Prisoners</th>
<th>Standard U.S. Embassy Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“special prisons” plus Chi Hoa, 15,200 “political prisoners.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 national prisons: Total occupancy of 20,501 as of Dec. 31, 1972; less since then.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“big prisons” plus 37 provincial prisons: 73,000 “political prisoners.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 provincial prisons: Total occupancy of 15,156 as of Dec. 31, 1972; less since then.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District and village jails and interrogation centers: 101,000 “political prisoners.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Detention system down to village level: Total occupancy of 4,060 as of Dec. 31, 1972; we have assumed occupancy roughly the same since then, though figures fluctuate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military prisons: 12,000 “political prisoners.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Military prisons: We have assumed these are strictly for soldiers under military discipline, and we have no evidence to the contrary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POW camps: Zero.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>POW camps: Empty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 202,000 “political prisoners.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: Occupancy of prison and detention systems totaled 43,717 as of Dec. 31, 1972; less since then.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### U.S. Mission Information on All Types of Civilian Prisoners Detained in South Vietnam as of July 24, 1973

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Prisons</th>
<th>U.S. Embassy Information</th>
<th>Chan Tin’s Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Prisons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Hoa</td>
<td>7,911</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu Duc</td>
<td>1,137</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con Son</td>
<td>5,488</td>
<td>8,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan Hiep</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalat Reformatory</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,342</td>
<td>15,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Prisons</th>
<th>U.S. Embassy Information</th>
<th>Chan Tin’s Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Prisons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Prisons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See footnotes at end of table p. 43.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Embassy information</th>
<th>Chan Tin’s estimate¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial prisons—Continued:</strong></td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kien Phong</td>
<td>1,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phong Dinh</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinh Binh</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinh Long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communist offenders (held in separate locations pending release), total</strong></td>
<td>3,506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military prisons; total for all</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District and village jails, total for all</strong></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interrogation centers:</strong></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National police headquarters, Vo Tanh St., Saigon</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Police Headquarters, Tran Hung Dao St., Saigon</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Bach Dang, Saigon</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngo Quyen, Saigon</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bang Ky Bridge, Gia Dinh</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hang Kao, Gia Dinh</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Security, Nguyen Binh Khiem St., Saigon</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Military Security, Nguyen, Trai St., Saigon</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven Police Stations in Saigon</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Political prisoners as of June 1, 1973.
² The Dalat Reformatory was deactivated on June 2, 1973, and transferred to the Ministry of Social Welfare. It will become a children’s protection center.
³ This total comprises 23,000 in the 8 prisons Chan Tin mentions specifically, plus 50,000 he lumps together in a separate category of provincial prisons.
⁴ Chan Tin includes Communist offenders among other “political prisoners” and gives no separate figure for this category.
⁵ The information received assumes that military prisons are irrelevant to the civilian prisoner issue. See airgram text for support of this assumption.
⁶ According to the information received, there are no jails below the province level. This is correct, but it ignores the small detention capability of the police at the district and village levels. See airgram text.
⁷ The Mission’s findings in this category are as of Aug. 22, 1973.
⁸ See airgram text.
APPENDIX 6

LETTER TO HON. GRAHAM MARTIN FROM MARTIN ENNALS, SECRETARY GENERAL, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, DATED JANUARY 14, 1974

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT,
January 14, 1974.

Hon. Graham A. Martin,
The Ambassador of the United States, Embassy of the United States, 4 Thong Nhut Street, Saigon, Republic of Vietnam.

Dear Mr. Martin:

I have the pleasure in enclosing copies of letters I have written to the President of the Republic of Vietnam and to the U.S. Secretary of State, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam. We are writing to all four signatories asking them to take immediate steps to resolve completely the lingering problem of civilian detainees in South Vietnam.

You will note in our letter to President Thieu that we have drawn attention to the statement made by Mr. Ray Meyer, Second Secretary at your Embassy in his letter to Mr. Gerry Tucker, Staff Consultant of the office of Senator Kennedy dated 31st April, 1973. In his letter Mr. Meyer stated that "somewhere between 500 and 1,000 noncommunist dissidents" were being detained by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. I would very much appreciate your comments on the apparent discrepancy between this statement and the frequently reported claim of the Saigon Government that it has no non-communist political prisoners.

Looking forward to hearing from you, I remain,

Yours respectfully and sincerely,

Martin Ennals, Secretary General.

Enclosures
APPENDIX 7

LETTER TO MR. MARTIN ENNALS FROM AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN, DATED FEBRUARY 12, 1974

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Saigon, Viet-Nam, February 12, 1974

Mr. Martin Ennals,
Secretary General, Amnesty International,
53 Theobald’s Road London WC1X 8SP

Dear Mr. Ennals: In your letter of January 14, 1974, you inform me that, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreements on Viet-Nam, Amnesty International is writing to all four signatories asking them to take immediate steps to resolve completely the lingering problem of civilian detainees in South Viet-Nam. You also enclose copies of letters you have written to the United States Secretary of State and to the President of the Republic of Viet-Nam.

I would like to make it absolutely explicit and clear that the remarks that follow are my own and are not to be interpreted as in any way reflecting the views of the Republic of Viet-Nam.

In your letter to me you ask me to note that in your letter to President Thieu you have drawn attention to the statement made by a former Second Secretary of this Embassy in a letter dated “31” (sic) April 1973, to a staff consultant of a United States Senator. You say that this letter (actually dated 3 April) “stated that ‘somewhere between 500 and 1,000 non-communist dissidents’ were being detained by the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam.” You go on to say that you would very much appreciate my commenting “on the apparent discrepancy between this statement and the frequently reported claim of the Saigon Government that it has no non-communist political prisoners.”

Before doing so, a brief clarification might be helpful. You have omitted from the letter you quote, inadvertently I assume, phrases which, if included, would have conveyed a quite different meaning. The letter actually said: “Though we do not have precise figures, we estimate that the GVN now detains—somewhere between 500 and 1,000 non-communist dissidents, such as Madame Ngo Ba Thanh * * *”. It is evident, therefore, that the letter made no such sweeping finding of fact as your selective quotation inferred. It admitted the absence of precise figures and clearly labeled the figures that followed as estimates. It further qualified the words “non-communist dissidents” by providing an illustrative example: “such as Madame Ngo Ba Thanh”. Even so qualified, the imprecision of such reporting, without any evidence to substantiate or confirm what, at best, was a guess, violates the standards of American Foreign Service reporting set out by Ambassador Charles Bohlen in his recent book, Witness to History, to which this Embassy is endeavoring to adhere.

Nevertheless, although your letter displays, again unintentionally, I assume, a similar lack of precision in attempting to equate apples with oranges—“non-communist dissidents” with “political prisoners”—it does deserve a comment. To me, the incarceration and Siberian exile of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn warrants his classification as a “political prisoner”. To me, the six million European Jews, between their arrest and murder, were “political prisoners”. To me, the almost three thousand intellectuals and officials of Hue, between their arrest by the North Vietnamese in the 1968 Tet offensive and summary murder, were “political prisoners”, as would be the additional 1,946 still missing, if they are still alive. To me all those imprisoned anywhere only because they are opposed by the regime which governs them are “political prisoners”. As one who has been called a hopelessly old-fashioned liberal humanitarian, I am unalterably opposed to such oppression whether it comes from a regime of the right or a regime of the left, knowing full well that my lack of capacity for “selective outrage” violates the norms of current intellectual modishness.

(45)
Now, the use of the term "non-communist dissident", taken by itself, would not seem to me capable of the precise definition essential for meaningful comment on the "apparent discrepancy" to which you refer. For "non-communist dissidents" may circulate freely in South Viet-Nam if they have broken no laws. In fact, many are known to my staff and many are interviewed by the foreign press. Fortunately the additional qualification—such as Madame Ngo Ba Thanh—is helpful. In Washington, in early October, one of my oldest friends, a great liberal former Governor of New York, and a former Ambassador both to Great Britain and to the Soviet Union, asked me whether I thought Madame Ngo Ba Thanh was a threat to the Government of Viet-Nam. I said I did not. He asked me why she was in prison. I asked him what he thought might have happened to a woman in the United States, who, having just concluded a hearing before our mutual friend Arthur Goldberg when he was a Supreme Court Justice, had accosted him as he was about to enter his car, flogged him with her umbrella, broken the windshield of his car, and then kicked him in his private parts. He said, "My God, she would still be in jail". I agreed and said I thought this would also have been the case in Sweden, Denmark, The Netherlands, Great Britain, Canada, the United States, or any other country where respect for the processes of justice precluded such savaging without punishment of those engaged in the administration of justice by contempt of court. I said Madame Ngo Ba Thanh was now free, free to stay and continue to criticize, or free to leave the country should she so choose.

On the basis of the above clarification of the terms you have used, I am able to inform you that I am unable to confirm any discrepancy between the comments in the letter to which you refer and the statement of the Republic of Viet-Nam that it now holds no non-communists political prisoners.

I note that the Stockholm Conference is preparing to meet again to set the coordinating lines for the coming propaganda offensive. I note further that a Vice Chairman of the so-called Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Viet-Nam, has met in Paris with a small group of the tattered remnants of the American "peace movement". He sent them home to the United States, after a severe tongue-lashing on the disintegration of their cadre within the United States, with instructions to mount an all-out offensive in the Congress to deny all assistance to the Government and people of South Viet-Nam. In the remote event of their success, the most massive irony will be that, in so doing, they completely eliminated any possibility that the Congress of the United States would approve extension of economic aid to Hanoi.

Through more than forty years of public life, I have consistently and unswervingly supported the goals and causes which Amnesty International purports to espouse. It is, therefore, with great sadness, Mr. Secretary General, that I am forced to conclude that those who manipulate the Stockholm Conference are probably correct, in their internal private and confidential appraisals, in now listing Amnesty International as one of those organizations most susceptible to unquestioningly pushing whatever propaganda line they wish it to pursue.

And that is, truly, a very great pity for there is so much to be done. There is so much that Amnesty International could do were it to return to the "unselective outrage" against injustice that marked its creation and which, I am certain, is still the aim of the distinguished Patrons listed on the masthead of your letter.

I remain, Mr. Secretary General, as ever, 
Sincerely,

Graham Martin.