we visited 32 of the 43 provinces—it is undoubtedly true that the yearly number of C.W.C.'s has increased, but the exact figure is unknown.

I certainly feel that it has approached 300,000 Vietnamese killed and wounded civilians in the year 1968.

Senator Kennedy. Now, Dr. Levinson, what we are really interested in here is that those increased numbers of civilian casualties in terms of civilians who were killed as well as wounded, are due to Vietcong terrorism as well as to the activity of the allied forces, South Vietnamese, as well as United States and Korean.

I think the point which you are emphasizing, dramatizing, is the fact that whether these people are caught in the crossfire of Vietcong or allied forces, still the kind of facilities and care that would be available to them is not what it should be, and in terms of comparison to previous years, has been actually reduced.

Dr. Levinson. This is certainly entirely true, and I would emphasize that although we do not have helicopters specifically available for these people, we are constantly told the helicopters will pick up people and bring them in. But there is a priority system that runs one through seven.

No. 1 is—U.S. military hit on down the line through ARVN, and so forth. But the constant finding is—No. 7 for Vietnamese women or little children hit, terribly wounded, and they are the last ones to get brought in. There is still some reluctance to pick up these people and bring them in the way they should be. People still arrive in oxcarts, or "chogey stick," as they say, carrying them with a stick and cloth and bringing them in.

Senator Kennedy. I do not think anyone questions certainly the first priority ought to be U.S. military personnel. I suppose what we have been interested in and concerned in is whether it would not be possible to attach to any military group or outfit some transportation in terms of airlift transportation, helicopters, that would be assigned to the care for civilian personnel.

There would be adequate communication with this unit prior to some kind of operation, in which the military knew that there were going to be necessarily civilian casualties, and that we make a conscientious effort to try and do something about it rather than have it the random kind of treatment, which I think you have found and we have found on other occasions, which appears relatively unchanged.

Dr. Levinson. Certainly, the U.S. military comes first, as you say. But the Vietnamese civilians should not come seventh. I think he rates up there a little higher on the pole.

I have many other illustrations, but in the interest of time, I would like to defer to Dr. Durant.

Dr. Durant. Thank you.

This, I think you will recall, is Phuoc Dien, the Philcag operation, which you visited. I think, in January 1968. This is the monument in the middle of this ideal resettlement hamlet, which is now totally abandoned because of security problems.

Senator Kennedy. The whole camp has been abandoned?

Dr. Durant. Yes.

Senator Kennedy. When we were there—-
Dr. Durant. This shows you some of the sites that have been totally abandoned. It is the most ideal urban settlement you can imagine, with soccer fields and a central marketplace, a central school, the dispensary, all of the facilities you can possibly imagine are now because of security totally desolate.

Senator Kennedy. As you remember, Dr. Durant—Dr. Levinson might—when we visited this camp, as you point out, it is really one of the most magnificent government installations or facilities I have even seen. The grass was beautifully cut, the trees were pruned; we went down to an area which was adjacent to the camp—I think it was the remnants of a rubber plantation down there—and they were listening to a Dixieland band play music to the refugees as they were receiving treatment. They were receiving dental care, they were getting their soap. They were going through their showers, the children were, and they were distributing all of the food. This was really the example of the ultimate in terms of refugee care, at least as was being suggested to us by the central government.

As I understand, they have abandoned the whole installation.

Dr. Durant. The problem is now one of security, and I think there was one family still living there and there was some question of whether this was a VC family that had taken up.

This is an example of, I think, part of the result of the constructive criticism of the committee. This is in Hau Nghia Province, near the Cambodian border, in a resettlement site called Can Ca, or An Dan Province(?). In which some really ideal refugee houses and resettlement areas have been created.

To bring you back, as you recall yesterday’s comments by Dr. Hannah, about land reform and refugees, and the problem of “urban drift,” sometimes listed on the official refugee list is that there are no refugees in Saigon. They are called evacuees.

Yet their number is approximately 250,000 or so, considering the Tet offensive. And you recall this is a cemetery, just to show some of the past lessons of the “refugee problem,” that we hope will not be forgotten. This is a cemetery, Catholic cemetery in the heart of Saigon in which 5,000 people have built their homes over the graveyards, and inside of the homes you can see children swinging between tombstone crosses. Another kind of monument in this sad situation.

You remember visiting this in January 1968, also, I think.

Senator Kennedy. This is a grave right there; it looks like the home of a family.

Dr. Durant. This is a Catholic cemetery, 50 percent of the people living on this cemetery are Catholics and they simply built their homes over the gravesite.

Some efforts have been attempted by the Government to do something about this in recent years, but this shows an example of how temporary things get, rather become permanent in a short period of time. Something like the old temporary buildings on Constitution Avenue. They become permanent after a while.

Well, this has become quite permanent. This is a classic bit of irony, a little Buddhist boy lighting his joss stick on his ancestral worship altar, standing on a cross.

This another example of a problem of Saigon promises.
This is an area not due to war, this is a natural disaster, a fire that took place in a poor section of Saigon in 1967. This was the same picture in 1968. Nothing had been done, yet there had been fires occurring in this area for approximately each year. It is an island area, which has no fire protection, and there were mostly slum housing.

Promises of land reform had been promised from every executive regime that had occupied the Saigon palace. When I visited here just this past trip, indeed some improvements had been made, but in questioning the people there, there was still no real land reform, they are still buying the sites of their homes from two very wealthy landlords who own most of the area.

This is some more of the Saigon post-Tet offensive problem of houses destroyed by air attacks. This is the sign of some of the considerable improvement that has been made. These are housing, post-Tet offensive refugee housing that has been constructed by the Saigon Government.

One of the problems in Saigon has been the redtape of the U.S. AID agency and its contract office. This is part of that refugee area, large area that was destroyed during the Tet offensive, which was supposed to be reconstructed by the Americans. You can see it is a vast wasteland, which in the distance you can see the Saigon Government's construction and something done by the British and Canadian Governments. But because of bureaucracy and redtape of our own AID agency, nothing has been done.

This is the My Tho which was recently mortared and is under continual attack. One of the sad facts of life about hospitals in Vietnam, they seem to be inappropriately located near military headquarters. So the near misses usually land in the wards, which makes for a little hazardous conditions, as this picture—which you really cannot see too well—but this is a patient lying in that same ward that was mortared some days ago.

This is the impact hospital in III Corps, that was allegedly to be finished some months ago. This is in Kien Phuong Province, Cao Lanh's impact hospital. It is staffed by a very energetic Korean health team, but has to be totally frustrated again, because construction has stopped in this hospital, in October of 1968, because of dispute between the American contracting office and AID, 50 to 80 percent of the patients in this hospital are civilian war casualties.

This is the very energetic Korean surgeon who runs the hospital, speaks quite fluent Vietnamese, and is a highly motivated but quite frustrated individual.

The problem here with the local medicine chief, again, is that he is on detached service from the Army, which is one of the things that we were pushing for to get more Vietnamese coverage from their own military forces for the civilians. But one of the problems is he has a quite active private obstetrical practice in downtown Cao Lanh. And he brings most of his private obstetrical patients to this hospital and leaves most of the civilian war casualties to Dr. Chee.

Back to a statement made yesterday that there major hospitals in Saigon are under major rehabilitative construction.

Certainly, the argument of security cannot be used in Saigon, except around Tet, and now for the occasional, sporadic rocket attack, but for the most part, Saigon is a relatively secure city.
This is Cho Quan Hospital, which is the only communicable disease hospital in the country responsible for the care of cholera patients and also has a 250-bed leprosarium. These are a couple of the lepers, 200-bed mental hospital and about 50- to 60-bed Vietcong prison hospital or political prison hospital.

There is the cholera ward. These are the cholera beds. This hospital has really totally inadequate running water and sewage facilities and electricity. When I first came to Vietnam in 1966, after several months we elected to have as priorities rehabilitation of, not the construction of any new beds, but the rehabilitation of existing facilities so to better cope with the contingencies that we may face. And in 1964 there was an attack of cholera of 20,000 patients that took place in Vietnam. Ten thousand of those patients were treated in this hospital alone, in this one ward, by Commander Phillips, who did an ingenious job of motivating and training the Vietnamese to treat cholera. So that there were only 90 deaths out of those 10,000 cases.

But we felt certainly with all of the money and goods being poured into this country that we could certainly provide a better hospital to do this in, in terms of electricity, water, and sewage. This was in 1966.

After months and months of haggling and harassment, this is still yet to come to be, because of redtape and bureaucracy on the part of both the Saigon Government and the U.S. AID contract office.

This is the sewer of that hospital, which drains into the local river and sort of acts as a distribution center; rather a treatment center. The classic bit of frustration and irony is that within a stone's throw of this hospital is the new Victoria Hotel, with hanks of running elevators, swimming pool on the roof, and rather tough to take in terms of priorities.

Senator Kennedy. One of the things we saw there is that when it comes to getting materials to build hospitals or reconstruct hospitals, it was extremely difficult, but if it was a question about getting building materials to reconstruct a hotel, or something like that, that could be done.

Is that the same kind of situation at the present time?

Dr. Durant. Well, certainly, in the highlands and in insecure areas, transportation of materials is a real problem. This is not so in Saigon. It is a question of priorities in Saigon.

Senator Kennedy. Whose priorities, the government's priorities?

Dr. Durant. Well, it is the government priorities and bureaucracy, bureaucratic redtape.

For example, here is Cho Ray Hospital, which is the largest hospital in the country, and the major teaching hospital that exists at the present time. Totally inadequate water and electricity really, a new plastic surgery center has just been finished, constructed here, but you see a kitchen facility and central supply area, which construction began on in 1964, is still unused because of the contract to install electricity and proper water supply to that central supply area and kitchen has gone through 18 revisions of its contract in the past 2 years and still nothing has been done.

Yet, we have sculptured hedges in the form of dragons and elephants.

Senator Kennedy. Let me ask you, just in that cholera clinic and ward that we saw, there were empty beds there.
Why are there empty beds there now, because there is no cholera? Dr. Durant. Right.

Two things this year, the number of immunizations of cholera has increased dramatically.

Senator Kennedy. Has there been any U.S.-free-world effort? Dr. Durant. Both, on the part of both.

Senator Kennedy. Is that the World Health Organization as well? Dr. Durant. Mostly the Vietnamese Government and our own government and our own government supporting a massive immunization program, that plus the cyclical character of cholera, it runs in cycles. It is difficult to tell how much of the reduction in cases is due to one or the other.

But in the year of 1968, there were approximately 5,000 cases and to this point this year, there have only been 500. So I cannot but hope that Dr. Hannah's emphasis on preventive aspects of care will be continued to follow through, because this is certainly where we get the most for our investment in a country like this, that has so many problems.

Senator Kennedy. What about the communicable diseases and immunization programs? As you remember, in 1967 we had two different reports—one on medical problems, and one on social welfare and refugees. These were done by special teams sent over by AID, in part at the subcommittee's suggestion.

A significant member of the public health team was Dr. John Knowles; of course, his comments were most helpful as well.

One of the areas they made recommendations in, was mass immunization.

Has that taken place? Dr. Durant. In those specific areas of cholera, smallpox, and plague: yes. The major medical problem of this country is tuberculosis; and the implementation, the lip service is there; but as yet, implementation of the massive BCG of all infants born in this country has yet to come to fruition.

This is a classic slide of a classic example of some ironies. One of the ways of telling the relative security of a province was to walk in the ward and inquire as to those people who are in casts, with their legs up in splints, whether this was due to a mine or a grenade, or whether it was a Honda accident. So Honda-itis is now a disease of Vietnam, inasmuch as we have, in order to suppress inflation, imported and continue to import at an enormous rate, some 150,000 Hondas every 6 months into Saigon.

These are some of the Saigon teenagers doing their thing in downtown Saigon on their Hondas.

Senator Kennedy. I do not know whether you want to comment on this, of course; when we were there we saw great numbers of these young men riding around on Hondas. And as we found out in our conversations then, it was relatively easy to buy your way out of the draft, and even if you were in the service to buy your way out of the service, for not an unreasonable sum.

I was just wondering whether you heard any other kind of information about that, or secondly, whether you drew any conclusions about the ages of the young men who are riding around on the Hondas. Did they look draft age?
Dr. Durant. Obviously, some of them did.

With regard to the magnitude of the draft evaders and the draft dodgers, it is very difficult to say.

Post-Tet offensive and, I think, the Saigon Government has certainly tried to do something about this. How effective it is and how much it costs to buy your way out of the draft, I really could not say at this time.

This is the slide showing some of the frustration that exists because of those three hospitals in Saigon that were supposed to be rehabilitated and nothing has been done.

Yet in the private sector, this is a Chinese hospital, built in the private sector by private funds, voluntary contributions, for the Chinese community in Cho Quan, right near Cho Ray Hospital.

That was a clinic.

This is another hospital built for one of the particular ethnic minorities of the Chinese sector of the Hakkau which is somewhat frustrating to see what can be accomplished in the private sector and yet we continually are ground down with redtape and delays in getting things done.

Here is another example of private sector construction going on this year. This is the hotel being constructed in downtown Saigon.

The MILPHAP program—I would like to take a minute to certainly give just praise to those young American medical officers who serve with the MILPHAP team, because they operate under the most hazardous of conditions. One of the tragic ironies of this war is that if bravery were inherent in the ingredients to win it, I think from the amount of input of American bravery and courage, the war would have been over quite some time ago.

But to take a young medical intern out of his internship, without any surgical experience whatsoever, and drop him in the middle of one of these small hospitals and without any preparation in terms of the vast numbers of problems and unusual problems he is going to be confronted with, without any blood bank, without any anesthesia support, and in the patients arriving by oxcart and sampan, and then to expect him to perform miracles, it is a wonder that they preserve their sanity alone.

I would just like to take this moment to put officially on the record the tribute that is due to them for what they have accomplished; because I think one of the policy decisions which they have no influence over is that they should have had some preparation in terms of learning to speak the language and some cultural preparation for the problems they are to be confronted with. They should have some orientation in terms of preventive medicine and how effectively to use what limited personnel they did have at their disposal, and that they should have some experienced leadership with regard to surgery and anesthesia so that instead of displacing the Vietnamese and simply providing service that they do, indeed, train Vietnamese and help them to truly help themselves.

This is a rare example of the patient arriving by ambulance to one of those hospitals, because they usually arrive by either this conveyance or some other slow boat.

This is one of those officers, Captain de Bartholomeo (phonetic
sound) in Phuoc Long Province who had a year of obstetrical training and is one of the type of individuals I was referring to.

Lastly, is an example of some of the priorities.

This is a monument being built in the heart of downtown Saigon, with numerous bubbling fountains, the equivalent of L’Enfant Plaza to the American war dead.

I would like to think that those Americans who did die, died for something more than bubbling fountains and that they would appreciate something being done to truly represent the country, or they would have truly died in vain.

Thank you very much.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much, Dr. Durant and Dr. Levinson.

One of the things we were interested in before, the Quaker Rehabilitation Center up in Quang Ngai, I was wondering, Dr. Levinson, did you get a chance to visit that, and also there is the medical center, Dr. Durant, in Saigon, which was making prosthetic devices.

One of the things that is a tragic aspect of the war is seeing all of those children that are limbless, not receiving the adequate types of prosthetic devices. And as doctors, you know in the child’s development, those devices have to constantly be rotated.

When we were there, we saw that there was waiting, in some instances, 2 or 3 years for a device. And, of course, with a child growing, lest they get the device fairly soon, particularly if they are young, then their whole metabolism and body structure development is distorted in a way that cannot be corrected.

I was wondering if you could talk just a little bit about this, whether you made any observations.

Dr. LEVINSON. There are currently five rehabilitation centers in the country—Da Nang, Can Tho, Saigon, and Quang Ngai; all but Da Nang were operational when we were there last year.

I stumbled, literally, upon a new one the Canadians had put up in Qui Nhon, so pleasant they even had sheets on the bed, for real, when I was there. It was ironical, to say the least, that 10 miles from Qui Nhon, nobody knew the rehabilitation center was open yet and there were empty beds waiting for the people that needed them.

But suffice it to say, there are these five centers, they are now active, they are overburdened, and I would say people can get prosthesis in a matter of several months now, as compared to a year when we were there last time. There has been a definite improvement, but when this war is over and the people come out of the hills, and everyone gets attended to, they will be grossly inadequate. We have had the figure of 35,000 amputees from several years ago. There are certainly many thousands more now and we are nowhere ready to care for these.

Senator KENNEDY. This seems to be an area where we can do so much. Dr. Howard Rusk has been greatly interested in it and was one of those who sent some of his personnel and trained staff over to Vietnam, along with the Quakers, and was able to do very important work. Certainly, with all of the knowledge and know-how that we have in terms of the plastics and materials that go into those devices, we ought to be able certainly in this area to work very closely with the appropriate medical departments within the Saigon Government and provide help particularly for children and others in insuring there will be an adequate supply.
It is inexcusable that they should even have to wait that long, I would think.

Dr. DURANT. In regard to that matter, I would like to cite that there are two really success stories in Vietnam that we can report about. One is just this. And the irony is that it has three ingredients that are necessary for a success story. One was it had a minimal amount of American interference and that American interference was very rational, and it had local Vietnamese leadership, and it bypassed totally the bureaucratic structure with regard to funding.

John Wells, who was the single American, who was the adviser to the Saigon rehabilitation center, had his own budget and was able to bypass and thereby able to do things. He was totally oriented to the process of self help. So that the amputees learned the process of making the prosthesis and taught their fellow patients, and this was what was so successful about it.

The other success story that we must report also is that certainly in the period of a year, the logistics system providing supplies to all of these 44 provinces has been increased by at least 50 to 100 percent and yet they are nowhere near the shortages that were available.

The shortages are now isolated with respect to specific items. But that was indeed a major improvement; again, I think, proportionate to the amount of constructive criticism and effort on the part of the committee.

Senator MATHIAS. Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my personal thanks to Dr. Levinson and Dr. Durant, not only for their report here today, but for their interest and their service in Vietnam.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that the report they have given us is very sober, very serious, and I think it could be both discouraging and depressing. I hope that the American authorities to whom these facts come will consider it as not discouraging but as challenging; because this is an overwhelming problem of real human suffering.

What, in effect, you have done is to take a human measure of this war and by any yardstick that could be applied, I think that what has happened to the refugees, the displaced, the homeless, the civilian victims of the war, by any yardstick falls far short of the standards America would want to apply.

I think that this report underscores the wisdom of the chairman of the subcommittee in calling these hearings, in trying to give not only the Senate but the entire American people some insight into the human problems of the war in Vietnam.

We are so preoccupied by the military and political problems, that sometimes what is happening to people escapes us. So I would like to thank the chairman for his persistence and his dedication in carrying forward with these hearings, which do bring to the American people this sad but necessary chronicle of what is happening in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Chairman, I may also take this opportunity to thank you for your very kind and generous words at the opening of the hearings.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much, Senator Mathias.

I think I just have one final question that I would be interested in response to by either or both of you.

Realizing that both of you had a profound experience in Vietnam—Dr. Levinson visiting it some six times, working as a volunteer
doctor in some of the most difficult kinds of conditions and in the pro-
vincial hospitals and having a continuing correspondence with his
friends and associates over there, and Dr. Durant, who has concerned
himself with these problems and spent a considerable period of time
there——

Are we really going to be able to do anything about the problems of
the civilian war casualties and the tremendous numbers of refugees
in this country, while the war is continuing? Or, are our efforts going
to be like putting our finger in a dike? Are we going to have to wait
until the cessation of hostilities before we can really make some mean-
ingful progress?

Would you respond to that.

Dr. Durant. I think that it is impossible to just wait. The magni-
tude of the problem is just so great that it cannot be ignored. Obvi-
ously, when the hostilities cease, it should be much easier to take care of
the problem. The problem is when the hostilities cease, then the pres-
sure to do something about the problem may also cease.

That is one of the problems, I think, why subcommittees like this
have to be continually aware and to continue to apply pressure, so that
it is not ignored and we have simply created two-to-three-million refu-
gees who are in an urban ghetto, and it will be quite doubtful how many
of those will want to return back to the farm.

The natural history of urbanization throughout the world has been
such that it is very difficult to get people to go back, once they move to
the city.

In the city they are dependent upon the American presence for their
economic survival. So the solution to these problems I do not think are
easy, nor simplistic, but I think it has to be continually looked at by
committees such as this.

Dr. Levinson. I would just like to further add that I think dol-
lar-for-dollar, as we get into the continuing problem, we must look to
even greater reliance upon independent agencies and their motivation,
rather than totally U.S. governmental sources.

Furthermore, we must emphasize the educational nature to train the
Vietnamese to help themselves. The giveaway era must end, we must
get their motivation and help.

Senator Kennedy. I am going to thank both of you once again for
your statements here and for your comments. The material that you
commented on is just a very brief observation of your total testimony
and your total report, which I am hopeful will be read widely by the
members of this committee and members of the Senate and the Ameri-

I want to thank both of you very much for your presence here and
for your interest and for your appearance before us this morning.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Hober of the refugee section of AID, and Dr. Phelps from the
medical section are here. They were not scheduled but if they would
like to make any comment or observation on the testimony that we have
heard this morning, we would be glad to receive it.

Or if they want to write some comments on it, we would welcome
that as well. We want to give them certainly an opportunity to make
any observation that they feel would be helpful. If they want to do
that for just a few minutes, we would be glad to hear it.
We have got some other witnesses and we do not want to delay them. If you have something particularly relevant to the earlier testimony, we would be more than glad to hear from you.

Dr. Phelps. Senator, just a word.

Senator Kennedy. This is Dr. Phelps of the medical section.

STATEMENT OF DR. MALCOLM E. PHELPS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH, VIETNAM BUREAU, AID; AND JOHANNES U. HOEBER, SENIOR REFUGEES AND SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER, BUREAU OF VIETNAM, AID

Dr. Phelps. Yes. I am director of the Vietnam Health Division.

Like you, I would like to say how much we appreciate Dr. Levinson and Dr. Durant's pertinent observations. To save time, I will tell you that we all realize that there are many problems over there; some of them are very frustrating, but we are making an attempt, as Dr. Levinson suggested, of education.

We now have nine nursing schools over there; we have been able to reduce some of the American nurses that were over there because of the training of some of the Vietnamese. Sometimes their quality leaves something to be desired. Also, we are working very hard in the medical and dental education.

We are now in the process of, we hope, getting money to complete the teaching hospital over there so that we will be able to demonstrate good medical care. The medical school is supported by 21 of our medical schools in this country, on the departmental basis, helping to upgrade the education.

I would like to say one other word about the American physicians. To date, there have been more than 650 American doctors that have gone over there and volunteered their services, working in less than ideal conditions, to assist in the effort. Many of them have gone back for the second or even the third and fourth time.

We would appreciate the privilege of adding a statement for the record.

Senator Kennedy. Fine. That will be welcome.

(The document referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF DR. PHELPS

While it is recognized that progress in the civilian war casualty treatment program and in the overall Vietnam Public Health Program has not approximated the levels which Drs. Levinson and Durant consider desirable, it is noted that they have observed a significant improvement in the functions of health logistics and physical rehabilitation of patients. In his testimony on the 24th of June, Dr. Hannah reported significant improvements in other facets of the Public Health Program. A.I.D. believes that more of Vietnam's population are receiving better treatment and better protection against disease today than ever before in the country's history. There have been significant increases in the number of civilian war casualties accommodated in both the hospitals of the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Relief and in the U.S. military hospitals in Vietnam. Evidence in A.I.D.'s possession indicates that Vietnam civilian war casualties who present themselves for treatment at Vietnamese or U.S. facilities all are being treated with ever-increasing effectiveness. Implementation of the Vietnam Government's program of joint civilian-military operation of medical treatment facilities is expected to remedy to a considerable degree the staff deficiencies which inhibit the performance of many of Vietnam's provincial health services.
At the same time, the organization of the U.S. and Free World Health Assistance Teams is being revised to provide an increased surgical capability to offset chronic shortages in Vietnamese surgical staffs.

The issue of greatly increased utilization of U.S. military medical resources in this country for the treatment of civilian war casualties is extremely complex. As noted in the testimony taken before this committee yesterday and today, the referral workload has not yet approximated the limit of the support the U.S. Military has been able to provide.

USAID officials in Vietnam have been apprised of the basic issues addressed in this hearing. The possibility of increasing the segment of civilian war casualties workload treated by U.S. military hospitals is being reviewed. The Committee will be informed of significant developments in these matters as they occur, and A.I.D. will be prepared to discuss these issues during the full hearings announced by the Chairman.

Senator KENNEDY. We appreciate your appearance here.

Dr. Hoeber, would you like to make any comment?

Dr. HOEBER. As Dr. Hannah pointed out yesterday, some substantial progress has been made in the refugee program, but we are all very conscious of the fact a great many inadequacies remain.

There is one point on which I would like to comment for a moment, and that is the problem of delayed payments of piasters for the refugees.

At the time Drs. Levinson and Durant arrived in Vietnam, the National Assembly had not yet passed the 1969 budget, and as a result funds were not flowing to the provinces to any large extent. This has meanwhile been remedied and adequate funds are now in the hands of the provinces.

As to the delay in payments, I would like to remind the committee that the staff of the Ministry, which is responsible for the management of the refugee program, consists of only approximately 1,600 people in the field. If you consider that there are over 2,000 refugee locations, some 900 camps, and some 1,100 scattered locations, it divides up to less than one fieldworker of the Ministry per location in the field.

Under the controls over payments on which we have insisted, all payments must be witnessed by a group of people at the time they are made at the camp. The delays have been in large part due to a lack of manpower. Of the 1,600 field personnel the Ministry has, the overwhelming majority are just clerical employees and not professional staff, and this is where one of the largest bottlenecks in the delay in the payment of piasters and the distribution of commodities still lies.

The other point which I would like to make, Mr. Chairman, if I may, you asked yesterday about this new reporting system which Dr. Hannah mentioned, which has been instituted for the refugee program. This puts now on the desk of the managers of the program regularly every month comprehensive data on each of the 900 sites which are recognized as refugee camps.

It includes such items as shortcomings in sanitation, medical service, physical shortcomings, shortages of classrooms, and so on.

With the help of this system, which was instituted only a few months ago, we have now selected 40 camps, most of them in I Corps, which need attention most immediately and most systematically. And the program of upgrading of camps will now be guided by this information which has not been available in a systematic fashion before.

I would like to join my colleague, Dr. Phelps, in saying we would be happy to submit some comments.
Supplementary Statement of Dr. Hoebel

The detailed observations reported by Drs. Levinson and Durant on the temporary refugee camps and resettlement areas are welcome. Many changes have been made in the refugee camps and centers as indicated in attachment “D” in Dr. Hannah’s statement.

The problems of sanitation and potable water which are most commonly cited are of continuing concern. These problems are among the more difficult to resolve satisfactorily because of the low levels of sanitation and water supply generally prevailing in rural areas.

In their general observations on refugee problems, Drs. Levinson and Durant recognized that although the payments to refugees are often slow and some non-existent, “the general situation has improved.” The Vietnamese Government is now developing improved payment procedures that would expedite distribution to the refugees. Given the present staffing level of the Vietnamese provincial and district services, an attempt to develop additional procedures for reporting actual payments to individual refugees would significantly diminish the advantage expected to be gained by the simplified payment procedure now under consideration.

In his statement, Dr. Hannah referred to the information we are now receiving through the new monthly reporting system on the funds allocated to the provinces by the Ministry and how much has been expended at the province level for temporary relief payments, resettlement allowances and other aspects of the program. Based on these reports for each province for the months of April and May 1969, a summary table of expenditure data nationwide and by corps for temporary relief and resettlement for the months of April and May is contained in attachment “A”.

We have raised with the U.S. Mission in Saigon the several problem situations reported by Dr. Levinson in his general observations on refugee problems in I and II Corps. We shall furnish the subcommittee with further information on these questions at a later date.

EXPENDITURES BY MINISTRY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL WELFARE AND RELIEF

[Status of plaster funds 1-31 May 1969]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATIONWIDE</th>
<th>Apr. 30, 1969</th>
<th>May 31, 1969</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporary relief:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry budget</td>
<td>$429,460,000</td>
<td>$389,460,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures from budget</td>
<td>$195,014,511</td>
<td>$237,608,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of budget expended</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resettlement:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry budget</td>
<td>$2,364,540,000</td>
<td>$2,364,540,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures from budget</td>
<td>$125,238,932</td>
<td>$133,989,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of budget expended</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAY EXPENDITURES BY CORPS</th>
<th>Temporary relief</th>
<th>Resettlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Saigon</td>
<td>$22,644,000</td>
<td>$16,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Corps area</td>
<td>112,559,156</td>
<td>24,275,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Corps area</td>
<td>29,516,369</td>
<td>31,016,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Corps area</td>
<td>30,289,344</td>
<td>26,944,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Corps area</td>
<td>14,604,703</td>
<td>34,995,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>208,608,767</td>
<td>133,989,719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Compiled by CORDS-Refugee Directorate.

Senator Kennedy. The points that were brought up this morning and yesterday in terms of the closing down of these hospital beds and the reduction of hospital facilities being available to civilian war
casualties and refugees, I find extremely distressing after you spend a considerable amount of money in the development of these hospitals, and refurbishing to some extent some of the provincial hospitals, and now we are reducing the numbers of hospital beds that are going to be available to the civilians.

I would certainly hope that we try and find some imaginative way of transferring, at least, if we are unable to provide sponsorship for the 91st Evacuation Hospital, that we are at least able to find some way of transferring it to the South Vietnamese and provide a MILPHAP team or other team that would give them some kind of assistance. Otherwise, it seems to be we are really defeating what we are attempting to do.

On the one hand, we are building hospitals and paying $90 a cubic foot for sand in one area and closing down hospital beds in another.

Obviously, there is a distinction in the intensity of the war activities, but it certainly appears to me to be questionable economy. I wish you would see if you cannot find some way or some device of not abandoning those facilities.

Dr. Phelps, Senator, we are working on that. There is one disadvantage to this hospital which is being closed; it is the location. Mainly, it is not in a center of population where it is easily accessible, that patients can get into it. It was built for military use.

Senator Kennedy, I have been to that. It is probably a quarter of a mile approximately, is it not, out on a sandy pit and it is not far from one of the poorest provincial hospitals I visited in Vietnam, which is just north of it. It is maybe a 4 or 5 minutes helicopter ride and was one of the poorest provincial hospitals I have seen.

Now, if it is a question of working out transportation—and that seems to be one problem—and if it is the cost of helicopters, whatever it is, I think obviously balancing that against the $90 a square foot for sand in a different place, it did not impress me that distances were that far in Vietnam, and it seems certainly the intensity of the engagements and the battles in the Corps area would appear to justify it.

It seemed when we visited that provincial hospital—do you remember the name of it, Dr. Levinson?

But it was very crowded, and it seems to me that we ought to get a hard look at it.

Dr. Phelps, Every effort will be made to use the hospital and equipment if we can. There were only actually 6 percent of the 1969 admissions to Phu Yen Province Hospital which were civilian war casualties so the war injured patient is not as serious a problem in that area as in other regions of Vietnam.

One other thing I would like to say, though, our main emphasis at the present time is on disease prevention. This is the area that we are stressing now. Actually, we feel there are probably enough beds in Vietnam if we could reduce the incidence of preventable diseases. In this past year, in 1968, the Vietnamese administered 28,496,000 immunizations with our help. This is not all of the picture; there are many activities—the latrines, the water supply, and all of these things need attention in order to control the spread of disease, and that is what we are working on. Our stress right now is to prevent disease, as much as possible.
Senator Kennedy. Well, now, this question here, we estimated, Dr. Levinson—and I do not think it is an unreasonable estimation—our committee estimated about 175,000 more casualties in 1967, and in 1968 he had estimated an increase in that of at least 40 percent. Let us say 60 to 80 percent. Let us say it is in excess of 200,000.

The figures that you gave yesterday indicated that in 1968 there were approximately—this is on the high side—but up to 800 civilian war casualties in U.S. military hospital beds. That went down to, as I remember, about 729 over a period of the first few months of 1969. Let us round it out to about 800.

Just assuming that some of those people are going to stay in those hospitals for a period of time, you are not even beginning to scratch the surface in terms of providing hospital beds. The higher estimate includes outpatients, those that have been actually wounded. But it would not appear to me you are beginning to scratch the surface in terms of providing services to the war-related or civilian casualties.

I have found one of the greatest deviations from the figures that were given to me by AID, and what we saw over in Vietnam, some of the civilians would refuse to give the accurate information because they were frightened whether they would get any kind of treatment if they said they were burned because of some kind of fire or knocked over by an army truck. We found that that was an accident and that was not a war-related injury, and therefore in the statistics that were given by AID and others, it underestimated, I thought, in a rather significant way a number of those that were war-related and were civilian war casualties.

I do not think you are prepared to suggest this morning that there are sufficient and adequate hospital beds for civilian casualties in Vietnam, are you?

Dr. Phelps. No; we are not, and even more so the Vietnamese hospitals are short of personnel.

Senator Kennedy. Certainly.

Dr. Phelps. It is not just beds, it is people to tend the patients.

Senator Kennedy. I am right with you on this, and I think therefore, closing some of these U.S. military hospital beds would be a tragedy. If it is a question of trying to find out and extending transportation or systematizing transportation to bring those that are wounded in these various areas or even other corps areas, then I think that ought to be thoroughly researched and let us find out the cost.

When you are spending billions in just ammunition alone, I do not know whether it would not be just as appropriate to spend several thousands of dollars or hundreds of thousands in providing transportation for war-related casualties.

Dr. Phelps. Senator, we in the Public Health assistance program would love to have this support. The transportation, we are dependent on the military for this, because you cannot travel the roads there safely. We have trouble sending our personnel into less secure areas. It is often difficult to build or repair hospitals; take the recent instance in Quang Duc when we had to get an armed convoy to send 60 trucks through with their sand. The sand became available, and now a VC attack has killed five of the carpenters that were working on the hospital project.
Senator Kennedy. We keep reading that it is getting more pacified over there all of the time.

Dr. Phelps. Not over against the Cambodian border where this occurred.

May I say one other thing about the civilian war casualties: In 1968, we have a record of those patients admitted to hospitals who are classified civilian war casualties; they totaled 87,000. Now, some did not come to the hospital, we do not have that data, this is the most accurate figure we have.

However, last year, in 1968, the percentage of war casualties admitted to the hospital were 17 percent of the overall admissions. This year, the first 4 months of 1969, it is down to 13 percent total admissions.

Dr. Levinson. Senator, you asked about this 91st Evacuation Hospital in Tuy Hoa that is being closed down, that 400-bed institution, and we know 2 miles away is this very poor provincial hospital.

When I was there, they were getting ready to add 100 beds to the provincial hospital. At the same time, they have already planned to close down the evacuation hospital. We need some liaison.

Senator Kennedy. We understand your problem, Doctor. We hope to be able in terms of the priorities of the war to try to see if we can get more help and assistance for you to help you do the kind of job I am sure you can do, so that you are not shortchanged. And to the extent that we can help you in our efforts, the members of this committee, I hope you will feel free to ask us to do so.

Mr. Hoebel. Mr. Chairman, if I may take another minute of the committee's time. I have here a cable which is typical. It just came in 2 days ago, and I would like to read two paragraphs from this cable:

The Quang Duc Province social welfare and refugee office and warehouse—

This is the office of the Ministry—

was completely destroyed June 10 by V.C. satchel charges and rocket attack. This office was previously damaged on May 12 by mortar attack. Local opinion suggested that this office was high on the VC sabotage list of its favorable impact on the local refugee population.

The second item is:

A V.C. mortar attack on the Hamlet of Hung My in Binh Dinh Province—

As you know, Binh Dinh Province has one of the largest concentrations of refugees—

on June 14 resulted in the destruction of 512 homes and 4,765 persons made homeless. Emergency relief was provided by the Korean army and plans are now to reconstruct the hamlet on its site.

These are only two examples of the difficulties under which the refugee program has to operate.

Senator Kennedy. Thank you very much.

We look forward to working with you.

Dr. Phelps. I want to express our appreciation to you for allowing us to appear here and tell you some of the problems that we have.

Senator Kennedy. Thank you very much.

We will now hear from two gentlemen representing the U.S. study team on religious and political freedom in Vietnam.

The team was organized by an ad hoc committee of well-known clergymen concerned with political and religious repression by the
Saigon government. The team visited Vietnam earlier this month and returned with an outstanding report, which I feel has made a significant contribution to a better understanding of the Thieu government and the need for this government to broaden its base to better serve the aspirations of the Vietnamese people.

The team members with us today are Bishop James Armstrong of the United Methodist Church, Dakotas area, and Mr. John Pemberton, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

We had anticipated, as well, that Father Robert F. Drinan, dean of the Boston College Law School and a member of the team, would also be with us. Unfortunately, Father Drinan had other commitments, but we will include in the record a number of articles he has written since his return from Vietnam.

We shall also include in the record the study team's full report of their mission.

(The documents referred to follow:)

[From the Washington Post, June 20, 1969]

VIETNAMESE PRISON SHOCKS STUDY TEAM

(First of three articles)

By Robert F. Drinan, S.J.

Father Drinan, dean of the Boston College Law School, wrote this article for the Boston Globe, his reflections on a recent trip with an eight-man study team on religious and political freedom in Vietnam.

SAIGON.—The heat of the tropics was already oppressive at 7:35 a.m. when a group of us got into a tired-looking Dauphine to go to the Chi-Hoa prison.

Two extraordinarily courteous Vietnamese interpreters accompanied us as we drove to the largest jail in Saigon. We knew that it was a prison where 40 or 2500 of the 5500 inmates would not be criminals but "political detainees." In South Vietnam that means that they are opposed to the Thieu-Ky government.

It had taken some heavy persuasion and pressure for us to get this far. U.S. Congressman John Conyers (D.-Mich.), a member of the team, had been very valuable in persuading American and Vietnamese officials that they could be candid about the process by which anyone suspected of being sympathetic to the National Liberation Front (read: "being against the Thieu government") can be arrested, sentenced by an extra-constitutional Military Field Court and imprisoned as a "Civilian defendant."

In the morning I and others visited the Chi Hoa prison. Congressman Conyers with two others of the team flew out to the remote Con Son Island, where 7000 inmates are detained more than 100 miles off the coast of South Vietnam. On the same day, John Pemberton, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, drove to Hue to visit a regional prison.

Chi Hoa is the showplace of prisons in Vietnam and even, according to reliable reports, in all of Southeast Asia. A nation tormented by war for more than 20 years has reason to be proud of this prison's educational and training programs, its cleanliness and order. It was consequently embarrassing to have to raise with the penal officials the problems surrounding the "political prisoners." The embarrassment seemed to be shared by our hosts, who stressed that the "civilian defendants" were really Communists or Vietcong and that they deserved the red badge they were required to wear.

No one called the political prisoners spies or traitors but only Communists—assuming that this term would be self-explanatory and self-justifying.

Everyone in South Vietnam becomes vague when one asks about the number of political prisoners. A few persons claim that up to 100,000 citizens are detained in jails, secret villas and remote province prisons. Official American and Vietnamese figures reveal that close to 50,000 citizens are in pre- and post-conviction detainment with some 30 to 75 per cent of these being political prisoners. If the number of political prisoners is 25,000 out of a total population of 17 million in South Vietnam, the comparable figure for the United States would be almost 300,000!
But "political prisoners" turn up in many forms. One form I saw at Chi Hoa was the presence there in jail of 120 Buddhist monks. It was shocking to see such number of celibate, head-shaven monks in jail praying at their own pagodas or monastery. Technically they are draft resisters but by their religion they believe in nonviolence.

No one in South Vietnam knew of Catholic seminaries or priests in jail because of resistance or opposition of the war. But in a nation which is only 10 per cent Catholic the Buddhists feel, rightly or wrongly, that there is de facto discrimination against them by a government which is disproportionately controlled by Catholics.

We met the most famous political prisoner in Southeast Asia in his cell at Chi Hoa the runner-up in the 1967 presidential elections, Truong Dinh Dzu. Arrested in May 1968 for an interview in which he advocated dialogue with the NLF, Mr. Dzu was sentenced on July 26, 1968 to five years—a sentence later commuted to three.

Mr. Dzu, a prominent and successful lawyer for 25 years prior to his role as runner-up and future rival of President Thieu, seemed heartened at the thought expressed by one of our team that the South Vietnamese government had become the "laughing stock" of the world for imprisoning a non-Communist advocate of peace whose only "subversive" idea was to urge negotiation and conciliation with the hope of forming a coalition government in which the Communist Party would have a role similar to the role of Communists in the governments of Italy and France.

Speaking in flawless English, Mr. Dzu expressed confidence that if the people of South Vietnam were not oppressed by a one-party government opposed to free political discussion, a multi-party coalition could emerge. He stated firmly that in a truly free election the Communists would get only 20 per cent of the vote.

Asked about the possibility of a release, Mr. Dzu, who is 52, referred to a heart ailment which has been bothering him and which, he felt, would be sufficient reason for his release.

It is clear that the Thieu-Ky government is taking good care of its illustrious prisoner. But the motives of the government might not be entirely pure; as one astute observer in Saigon remarked: "If Mr. Dzu died in prison, not a single person in South or North Vietnam would believe his death was due to natural causes."

If he were released and allowed to become politically active, it is uncertain whether Mr. Dzu could bring about a two-party or multi-party system. Political parties, severely factionated before the presidential election 22 months ago, are now even more fragmented because of the suppressive tactics of the Thieu government, which shuts down newspapers and imprisons citizens at the slightest sign of antigovernment activity.

[From the Washington Post, June 21, 1969]

THE U.S. AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM ON "INTERNAL SECURITY"

By Robert F. Drinan, S.J.

Father Drinan, dean of the Boston College Law School, has written for the Boston Globe his reflections on a recent trip to Vietnam as part of an eight-man study team on religious and political freedom. This is the second of three articles.

SAIGON—One of the most discouraging aspects of the suppression of anti-Thieu opinions in Vietnam is the misleading and contradictory posture of the United States in handling the situation.

I and other members of the U.S. study team were told in the White House on May 23 that the number of political prisoners in South Vietnam was decreasing. In Saigon a few days later, after cross-examination, the American Embassy official most familiar with the problem of political prisoners admitted that the number of this type of prisoners is increasing steadily. This officer was indiscreet—or honest—enough to admit that the increase in political prisoners will continue as the U.S. "pacification" program gets further out into the country.

It left one with an appalling feeling to be told by an American official that the U.S. mission in Vietnam is ferreting out suspected "Communists" in Vietnamese villages and turning them over to "kangaroo courts" euphemistically called Military Field Courts.

Every protest from us at the way the U.S. is handling the widespread crackdown on antigovernment sentiment was treated by Embassy officials with
the bland assertion that they could not interfere with a matter of such local and internal concern and sensitivity.

While there is clearly good reason for the U.S. Government to avoid unnecessary entanglements with the South Vietnamese government, our study team was unable to fathom why the United States has advisers at every single level on all conceivable subjects except apparently at the level of the wartime, extra-constitutional Military Field Courts in which citizens suspected of disloyalty to the government are sentenced to prison without the most elementary features of a fair hearing.

Although the group had been told that the Chi Hoa jail had 600 "children" as prisoners, it was shocking nonetheless to see some 200 between the ages of 10 and 14, some of whom were detained because they were "Communists."

We had likewise been briefed on the arbitrary nature of the arrests of the 2,500 political prisoners whose number included Truong Dinh, Dzu, the runner-up in the 1967 presidential elections. But everyone was shaken when they were taken to visit the Venerable Thien Minh, a Buddhist monk and the former director of the Buddhist Youth Center in Saigon.

The U.S. study team had routinely requested a visit with the well-known monk who was arrested in March of this year and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for allegedly assisting draft resisters. His severe sentence, reduced to three years on Buddha's birthday (May 30), and the circumstances surrounding his trial have outraged Buddhist monks and have given the Thieu government an international cause celebre almost as explosive as the case of Mr. Dzu.

The trip to visit the Venerable Thien Minh was better than a tale from James Bond. Methodist Bishop James Armstrong, a member of the U.S. team, had received a letter in Vietnamese from a high official granting permission for the visit. A complicated chain of guides and guards eventually brought us to the secret and separate small house where the government has confined the most famous of the 15,000 monks in a nation where 14 million of its 17 million citizens are Buddhists.

It was not a little ironic to note that the office of the U.S. adviser was two doors removed from the place of confinement of the monk. The Venerable Thien Minh emerged from the small Buddhist shrine created for him and greeted each of the members of the team. He spoke in Vietnamese although we knew beforehand that his French was excellent and his English adequate. We discovered later from our own interpreter that the monk had been directed to speak to us only in Vietnamese. Five civil and military officials stood around the small room listening to every word. The Venerable Thien Minh asserted boldly that "I have committed no offense except that I want peace." Through Dr. Allan Brick of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the director of the U.S. study team, the group presented the monk a medallion of the internationally recognized symbol for peace.

One received the impression that the Venerable Thien Minh was a combination of Asian intellectual and Oriental mystic. Reports in Saigon on his activities are contradictory. To everyone he was "controversial." To some he was "charismatic" while to others he was "too political." Whatever the correct judgment may be, it was clear that the Thieu-Ky government wanted to make an example out of this monk and to demonstrate by his imprisonment that those who advocate negotiation will, regardless of their station in life, receive the treatment given to spies and extortionists.

The group wanted to spend more time with the Venerable Thien Minh, but any meaningful conversation was clearly impossible in the presence of his jailers. Moreover, due to the delays in getting to his secret prison, the group was already late for a luncheon back in Saigon to be given for the group by 16 of the 130 members of South Vietnam's House of Representatives.

When we reached the office building of the lower House it was almost 1 p.m. Everyone was exhausted from the heat and shaken by the scenes we had witnessed.

As we started to meet the legislators at lunch, my mind went back to the day in November, 1963, on which, three weeks before the assassination of President Kennedy, President Diem of South Vietnam had been murdered. It was awesome to have seen with one's own eyes that the decisions which American statesmen had made in the months following the assassinations of November, 1963, had resulted in the imprisonment of thousands of persons in South Vietnam merely because they thought or expressed the view that the American statesmen were wrong.
[From the Washington Post, June 24, 1969]

PRESIDENT THIEU EXPLAINS
(Third of three articles)

By Robert F. Drinan, S.J., Dean of the Boston College Law School

SAIGON.—The members of the U.S. Study Team on Political and Religious Freedom were a bit surprised when the word came that the President of the Republic of South Vietnam, just returned that very day from Korea and Taiwan, had set aside an hour to visit with the eight Americans on the study group. We had learned that the Vietnamese press had been intensely interested in our visit to prisons and our inquiry into the question of political prisoners. But the invitation from President Thieu confirmed all our intuitions that our study centered on one of the most explosive issues troubling everyone in Vietnam today.

As the security guards cleared us through the heavily protected barricades surrounding Independence Palace, one's mind could go back to all the unflattering things which everyone has heard or read about General Thieu. He has been called the "Oriental cardboard Mussolini" and the "puppet" of the State Department. Rumors circulating in Saigon say that Thieu along with his negotiators in Paris have deposited substantial sums in Swiss banks and that, if the United States begins to withdraw and chaos results, they will be ready to go into "exile."

Personally the President is a gentle and amiable man. Born a Buddhist, he became a Catholic on the occasion of his marriage. Gracious and adroit, he handled the Study Team of eight Americans with the finesse of a master politician.

What the President said, however, in the magnificently furnished conference, suite of his elegant office was something else. He managed to slide over and evade each of the four questions raised by the study group. His version of the facts involved in each of the issues we raised differed sharply from what we had learned. But we listened, thanked him politely and perhaps profusely and, after 48 minutes, were once again on the front steps of the Palace counting the machineguns and helicopters on the lawns.

The visit with President Thieu was not exactly shattering, although it was disappointing. But it left one with the ever more difficult question of whether this man, who almost two years ago received some 35 per cent of the vote in an election without a runoff, can keep his country together until the next election in 1971.

The Study Team expressed to President Thieu its concern about the limitations on free political expression in South Vietnam, its misgivings about the adequacy of the judicial processes furnished to alleged "Communists" in the extra-constitutional Military Field Courts and its anxieties about the repression of Buddhist monks—not because they are Buddhists but because they are advocating peace.

The spokesman for the study group made it abundantly clear to General Thieu that, coming from a nation with 192 years of constitutional history, we raised these questions very haltingly with a government which has not yet reached its second birthday. The President clearly appreciated this diffidence on our part. He began to plead his case—with some eloquence, with some oversimplification but above all with superb unruffled graciousness.

The President began with the Buddhists although it had been our third point. Perhaps unconsciously he recognized that the bitterness of some Buddhists groups is crucially important. On the other hand it may be that he thought this subject would be of greatest interest to a group sponsored by a committee made up of representatives of every major religious faith in the United States.

President Thieu alleged that the "Communist CIA" had been meeting at the activist Buddhist monastery in Saigon, the An Quang pagoda. He indicated that his government had been indulgent with the An Quang group but that finally when the police found a grenade there his government felt obliged to apply the law equally to everyone without exception. President Thieu showed a slight flare of suppressed annoyance when he brought up the much agitated case of the imprisonment of the Buddhist monk the Venerable Thien Minh, the director of the Buddhist Youth Center. The President undoubtedly knew from the press that we had talked at length with the monk's lawyer and had visited the Venerable in jail. The President brushed aside all of the widely believed
opinions that the case against the monk had been manufactured and that his severe sentence of ten years was designed to deter the politically active anti-Thieu Buddhists. The President boasted that, in order to promote national solidarity, he had commuted the monk’s sentence to three years and had returned the Buddhist Youth Center (illegally confiscated by the government in March, 1969) to the Buddhists.

No religious repression was intended in any way, the General insisted, but only the impartial enforcement of all the laws against all offenders—and especially, one gathered, against all of those who want a political arrangement different from the status quo.

The General became a bit more defensive when he brought up the case of his government’s most illustrious inmate, Mr. Dzu, the runner-up to Thieu in the presidential election. It may be an old trick of dictators and despots, to put their most dangerous rival in prison; but it’s a bit difficult to explain in a nation with a shiny new constitution replete with highly sophisticated guarantees about the presumption of innocence and freedom of speech. President Thieu nonetheless referred to Dzu as a “political prisoner” and, in the most implausible statement of the entire conference, suggested that Dzu, sentenced to five years for advocating a coalition government, was sent to the remote prison island of Con Son so that Mr. Dzu could have a swim every day.

The President returned to the Buddhists as he took up the question of the war laws and the Military Field Courts. These courts were authorized as a war measure by the National Assembly although legal experts in Saigon feel that the Assembly actually amended the constitution without admitting it. These tribunals are presided over by a judge appointed by General Thieu and are free to (and generally do) disregard the rules of evidence and the guarantees in the constitution for persons accused of crime. Catholics have accepted these wartime measures, the President stated, and “obey the law strictly.” But Buddhists are giving a hard time. They want demonstrations, rallies and parades—all forbidden by the war laws except with specific permission. President Thieu indicated the record of his indulgence to Buddhists when they had produced crowds at events beyond the maximum authorized. Boasting once again, he said that he had not imposed any restrictions on the festivities for May 30, Buddha’s birthday. Any attempted curtailment would, of course, have been like an American public official trying to set a limit on the number of people who could be together in church on Christmas Day.

His monologue response to our four questions was not up to his usual adroitness when he came to the question of suppressing newspapers. He offered the startling view that there were too many newspapers for a population of 17 million. His own figure for the number of newspapers was 40. He felt that they reached too many people whose mind has not yet “reached democratic ideas.” These people believe “anything if it’s from Saigon.” They would therefore believe any propaganda for communism which the papers would make if they were permitted to do so. This is a “risk we cannot take” in view of the war.

The president concluded his talk by reciting a pleasantry he had related to a U.S. Ambassador. He had told the Ambassador that the Ambassador had to be responsive only to one nation’s public opinion but that the President of South Vietnam had to be very much aware of public opinion in two nations. President Thieu left no doubt about the fact that he “has ears all the time to U.S. criticism.” At the same time he stated firmly but graciously that Americans sometimes simply do not understand what is Vietnamese.

An hour later, a press conference attended by more than a hundred journalists, the inevitable question came: “What did President Thieu say to you?” An answer was given, rather vague, reflecting more hope than anxiety.

The question in a sense was needless. President Thieu had seen the U.S. Study Team on Religious and Political Freedom in South Vietnam. And that fact alone brought to everyone just a little more hope and a little less anxiety. When that happens in Saigon it’s a very good day.

[From the Washington Post, June 28, 1969]

VIETNAM JUSTICE—AND THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH IN WASHINGTON

By Robert F. Drinan, S.J.

In a recent series of three articles carried on this page, Father Drinan, dean of the Boston College Law School, told of his visit to South Vietnam with an eight-man team studying religious and political rights. Today he sums up reactions to his mission.
On May 23 I and a few of the members of a U.S. Study Team on Political and Religious Freedom in South Vietnam had an appointment in Washington with a highly placed official of the State Department. In the most positive way this official asserted that the number of political prisoners in South Vietnam had been continually decreasing. The study team had received a copy of a letter from another State Department official to a U.S. Senator stating the same thing.

I thought for a time at the meeting on May 23 of telling the State Department official that, on the basis of his assertions, I would cancel my commitment to go to Vietnam the next day. But I remained silent because I had agreed to go with a team whose trip had been financed by all the churches and synagogues of America. The State Department official, by his claims, stated by implication that the religious groups were misinformed and were attacking a non-problem.

As events turned out I am glad that I did not trust the State Department official.

On June 11 I was back in Washington and at another meeting told one of the high White House officials present at the May 23 "briefing" that a State Department official on May 23 had "lied" to us about the number of political prisoners. We had discovered in Vietnam that the number of political prisoners is increasing rather sharply, not decreasing. The White House official became flustered at this revelation and at the accusation. He urged that no one had "lied" and started a monologue about the difficulty of getting "hard" information. I pressed my point as much as courtesy permitted but received no satisfactory explanation of the discrepancy between what State Department officials were claiming to be the truth and the facts as they exist in South Vietnam.

The "hard" information about political prisoners which emerged in South Vietnam comes to this:

1. Of the 35,000 men, women and children in prison, about 60 per cent wear a red tag on their prison garb indicating that they are "Communists." Many of these until recently used to be called "political prisoners" but that name was changed to "Communists" or "Vietcong sympathizers." The change in name may be the reason for the State Department's assertions that the number of political prisoners is "decreasing."

2. The number of persons imprisoned for "non-crimes" is actually rising rather rapidly. The rate of increase is impossible to discover because of the fact that up to one-third of all the persons detained have not been charged with any offense or given any sentence. One of the reasons for the increase (a rise admitted by Embassy officials in Saigon) is the U.S. pacification program which, as it moves into the hinterlands, ferrets out citizens suspected of being "disloyal" and turns them over to the "kangaroo courts" known as Provincial Security Councils or Military Field Tribunals.

3. A significant number of political prisoners, prior to their "non-trial," were tortured by South Vietnamese officials in order to get information about VC activities and plans. We told a United States adviser about the countless stories we had heard from reliable witnesses about incredible torture devices employed in pre-sentencing detention centers. This official conceded that he had talked to four persons who alleged that torture had been inflicted on them. He said, however, that he did not believe these four individuals. Pressed for his reasons for not believing them, the official fell silent. It was appalling beyond belief when the American functionary said to me later that off the record and in his personal capacity he hoped that the study team would expose the existence of torture which he suspected was widespread.

4. The imprisonment of thousands of non-Communist but anti-Thieu citizens in South Vietnam (and the exile of thousands more in Paris) clearly inhibits the emergence of the system of two political parties, an arrangement specifically called for in the Constitution of South Vietnam.

No one at the State Department has yet admitted that the United States should do anything about these four findings. On June 8, a telegram, sent by the U.S. study team to President Nixon on June 5, was released to the press. On June 10 and 11 a 40-page report was given to several highly placed State and White House officials in Washington. No answers have been received.

When I left the handsome offices of the State Department on June 11 I was so depressed I did not talk for about 30 minutes. Still paralyzed by the atmosphere of Foggy Bottom and distressed by what I had heard, I took a cab with my associates. My encounters with the State Department over the period of May 23 to June 11 had not been happy ones. My companions, by their silence or their complaints, agreed. I did not know what to do. I ate a quick lunch and
hastened off to a 2 o'clock appointment in a Senator's office. A few minutes later I related my unhappy encounters with the State Department to three influential members of Congress. They did not express surprise. Only chagrin. I too was chagrined.

I shall never forget those encounters. They have probably done more than any other event in my life to galvanize my determination to work for a government which will be honest in its communication with its citizens. Those encounters left me with the conviction that our students and our young people are profoundly disturbed because they see in their government a policy of telling lies or at least a policy of trying to deceive people. However benignly one may describe or view such a policy, I knew on June 11 that it is the ultimate form of corruption.

U.S. STUDY TEAM ON RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL FREEDOM IN VIETNAM—FINDINGS ON TRIP TO VIETNAM, U.S. STUDY TEAM, MAY 25–JUNE 10, 1969

INTRODUCTION

Background

The U.S. Study Team was sent to South Vietnam by an ad hoc committee organized in late 1968 by a group of well-known churchmen concerned about the war and the repression of those religious and political forces in South Vietnam who urge an end to hostilities. This committee has wide national interreligious representation. The officers named were: Chairman, Barton Hunter, Executive Secretary of the Department of Church in Society of the Christian Church; Secretary, Gerhard Elston of the National Council of Churches; Executive Director, Allan Brick, Associate Secretary for National Program of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, who also served as a member of the team.

The sponsoring committee defined the team's goals as follows: "First, they will seek to identify the variety of religious forces in South Vietnam and the range of political expression existing there. They will seek to investigate the situation of religious groups and the extent of the imprisonment of leaders of nonaligned groups who represent potentially important political sentiment. The team will be interested, for example, in visiting both Mr. Dzu and Thich Thien Minh. Second, the team will seek to investigate the situation of all prisoners in South Vietnam. Recognizing the difficulties of doing this in a wartime situation, the team will nonetheless attempt to obtain realistic information."

Team members

Members of the team were: Bishop James Armstrong of the United Methodist Church, Dakotas Area; Mrs. John C. Bennett, Protestant church woman; Allan Brick, Associate Secretary for National Program, Fellowship of Reconciliation; Hon. John Conyers, Jr., M.O. of Detroit, Michigan; Robert F. Drinan, S.J., Dean of the Boston College Law School; John de J. Pemberton, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union; Rabbi Seymour Siegel, Professor of Theology at the Jewish Theological Seminary; and Rear Admiral Arnold E. True, United States Navy (retired).

A report issued by the team following the Vietnam trip documents police and military suppression of religious and political expression in South Vietnam under the Thieu-Ky Government. The chief findings of the team are:

First. Many thousands of persons being arrested in South Vietnam are denied all procedural protection. Arrests are made by a variety of local and national officials—by District police, special security forces, military forces and intelligence units—each exercising "relatively unfettered discretion."

Second. The Thieu-Ky Government's widespread and increasing use of the extra-constitutional Military Field Tribunal has been responsible for the sentencing and imprisonment of additional thousands of persons, denying them the fundamental elements of a fair hearing and often failure to serve prior notice of the charges against them. Many of these prisoners remain without trial in the hands of the arresting authorities while the reminder have been removed to prisons by administrative action without charges or trials.

Third. The Study Team agrees with those who say that repression, though not as obvious and violent as under the Diem Government, continues to be pervasive and brutal. While some persons visited appear to reflect modern notions of penal administration and certain prison officials seemed sensitive to the needs of inmates, the sheer weight of witnesses' statements concerning physical abuse seemed overwhelmingly conclusive. It became clear that whatever amelioration
appeared in the formal correctional institutions, torture and brutality are widespread in the arresting and interrogation process.

Fourth. Without question the Thieu-Ky Government uses the words "communism", "neutralism" and "coalition" to silence dissent and weaken political and religious opposition. Student peace movements, Buddhist pleas for nonviolence and a "third solution", and the freedom of the press have been systematically suppressed by an insecure government that relies more on police state tactics and American support than upon true representation and popular support. As one Vietnamese attorney phrased it: "One cannot fight for freedom without insuring freedom at home."

The eight member U.S. Study Team met with President Thieu, Minister of Interior Tran Thien Khiem and members of his staff, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and members of his staff, national religious leaders, lawmakers, intellectuals, attorneys, students, a variety of persons of different political persuasions and talked with scores of political prisoners. It visited prisons at Thu Duc, Chi Hao, and on Con Son Island, as well as the National Police Headquarters. The Government of South Vietnam was helpful in providing data, in permitting Team members to visit prisons, and in making accessible certain prisoners.

Three things are readily apparent in South Vietnam: First. A state of war exists and any meaningful study of freedom must be done against that background; second, South Vietnam is poor and is unable to provide from its own resources institutional facilities and forms of care which are taken for granted in the Western world; and, third, whereas the United States of America has lived under the guarantee of its present Constitution for nearly two hundred years, South Vietnam does not have a tradition of political liberty and its Constitution is only two years old. Notwithstanding this, in a message cabled directly to President Nixon from Saigon, the Study Team said: "Speaking for peace or in any other way opposing the government (in South Vietnam) easily brings the charge of communist sympathy and subsequent arrest.... There must be no illusion that this climate of religious and political suppression is compatible with either a representative or a stable government.

Many persons interviewed argued that President Thieu's government is less repressive than the ten years of brutal intimidation under Ngo Dinh Diem. Others, while agreeing that repression is not as obvious and violent, argued that it is equally pervasive though more subtle today. (Some of the following documentation will indicate that there is still unsubtle, violent intimidation.)

Three celebrated cases of political arrest have claimed international attention in recent months. They are the cases of Thich Thien Minh, one of the most influential Buddhist monks in South Vietnam; Truong Dinh Dzu runner-up in the Presidential Election of 1967; and Nguyen Lau, wealthy publisher of the Saigon Daily News.

Thich Thien Minh was arrested on February 23, 1969, at the Buddhist Youth Center and charged with "harboring rebels, concealing weapons and illegal documents... harboring deserters and supporting draft dodgers." After appearing before a military field tribunal, he was sentenced to serve terms of ten and five years at hard labor, the sentences to run concurrently. Last month, his sentence was reduced to three years.

It is assumed by many that Thich Thien Minh was arrested not because of the specific crimes with which he was charged but for his public criticism of the Thieu-Ky government and his strong advocacy of peace.

In February, he was summoned to the Ministry of the Interior and warned to tone down his sermons which were said to be disrespectful to the government of President Thieu. He had earlier said that the people of South Vietnam could accept neither the terrorist regime of North Vietnam nor the "corrupt government" in Saigon. Replying to Thien Minh, President Thieu said, "My government can die because of those pacifists, but before we die, they will have to die first."

The Study Team visited both Thich Thien Minh and Quang Duc Buddhist Youth Center. The Youth Center, closed at the time of Thich Thien Minh's arrest (20 other Buddhists were arrested at the same time), was handed back by the Government and re-opened during the Team's stay in Saigon. Team members saw Thich Thien Minh's room, as well as the many hallways, rooms and stairways that separated him from the tiny room and wooden closet with the false back that were said to be the hiding place of the V.C. agent and a cache of small arms. Seeing the distances and buildings involved, it is not difficult to believe the monk's assertion that he had no personal knowledge of a V.C. agent's presence in that hidden room.
The Team talked with Thich Thien Minh, who has been held in military custody. They interviewed him in a small house, a part of a larger complex of carefully guarded government officials pointedly left the room that the discussion might be private. However, it had been determined during the conversations that there was a government agent only four feet from the Venerable, behind a thin wall. Thus, the interview was necessarily inhibited. Thich Thien Minh had been moved four times since his arrest and was kept under the strictest security. Though badly injured in 1966 by a hand grenade, said to have been thrown by a V.C., he said his health was good. He added, "My only offense is that I believe in peace."

On May 1, 1968, Truong sinh Dzu was arrested "on charges of urging the formation of a coalition government as a step toward peace." In August, he was sentenced to five years of forced labor. Although the N.L.F. is now participating in the Paris peace talks and a coalition government is being widely discussed by responsible government officials in the United States, Mr. Dzu has not yet been released.

In a national election that denied certain candidates the right to run because they were peace advocates, and that heavily favored the Thieu-Ky regime because of its military and political structures of South Vietnam and because of the well-known support of the American 'presence' in Vietnam, Mr. Dzu ran second, polling 18 percent of the vote. He wisely did not announce his "white dove" platform until after his candidacy had been approved. (It is interesting to note that in the election, the Thieu-Ky ticket gained only 35 percent of the vote. In May, 1968, Vice-President Ky told an Italian journalist, "Our last elections were a loss of time and money, a mockery.") Dzu has never been accused of being pro-communist and is, as President Thieu openly acknowledged, a "political prisoner." The fact that, running as a peace candidate and advocating direct talks with the N.L.F., he ran second only to the President, accounts more than anything else for his imprisonment. Mr. Dzu was moved from Con Son Prison Island to Chi Hoa Prison in Saigon during the last week in May, 1969. U.S. Study Team members saw him in his cell in Chi Hoa. Suffering from a heart condition, he looked well and various kinds of medicines were in evidence. He said he wanted to serve his country as a nationalist. On June 5, President Thieu told the Team that support for a coalition government cannot be tolerated.

On April 16, 1969, Nguyen Lau, publisher and owner of the Saigon Daily News was arrested for "having maintained private contracts with a Vietcong political agent." The agent, a boyhood friend of Lau, returned to Saigon in 1964 from North Vietnam. He talked with Lau many times during the past five years and had, at one time, asked him to supply information for the V.C. According to both Lau and Tran Ngoc Hiem, the agent, Lau had refused to supply the information.

In discussing Lau's case with a member of the Team, one of Saigon's most highly regarded foreign correspondents explained its background. In Vietnam, a culture influenced immeasurably by Confucianism, family ties and friendship are revered. Mr. Lau, in a press conference held by government officials at National Police Headquarters, made no attempt to deny his associations with Hiem. He said that Communism was poisoning the minds of many, but that Vietnam would surely survive Communism. He added, "Even today, sitting before you, I keep wondering if as a publisher and as a Vietnamese intellectual, I should denounce a friend who I have known since boyhood."

Mr. Lau was educated at Oxford and the Sorbonne. As a member of an old and important family of wealth, he has no respect for war profiteers and little sympathy for corruption in the government. As a respected journalist and an avowed anti-Communist, he considered it part of his responsibility to be open to every facet of Vietnamese life. He once said, "If people are free to walk the streets, they are free to talk to me."

He insisted upon his right to criticize. On March 24, 1969, the New York Times quoted him as saying, "Diem said bluntly that he was not going to tolerate freedom of the press. There were no illusions then. We are living a lie now. People say they are giving you freedom and someone without experience in journalism may be innocent enough to believe that this is paradise. Now you may be carried away by your illusions and land in trouble." Less than a month later Nguyen Lau was arrested.

1 General "Big" Minh was kept in exile in Bangkok and Au Truong Thanh, the other leading contender was refused candidate status because of his alleged "neutralism." The Study Team talked with Au Truong Thanh in exile in Paris.
Members of the Study Team visited the National Police Headquarters. There, Lt. Col. Nguyen Man, Chief of Special Branch, told them about the government's case against the publisher. The only "evidence" he produced was the photostat of a press card, allegedly issued by Mr. Lau to one Tan That Dong, the alleged V.C. alias of Tran Ngoc Hiem. Such "evidence", however, raises serious questions. Two days following Lau's arrest, police brought a "so-called Vietcong" to the Lau home. In Mrs. Lau's absence, they proceeded to take pictures of him in various positions around the house. When her two sons (aged 10 and 14) protested, they were handcuffed while the picture-taking continued. When told of the incident, Mrs. Lau courageously went to the authorities. A senior police official did admit that police had visited the house with a V.C. agent and camera to gather "evidence".

Members of the Study Team were not permitted to see Mr. Lau, still being held without sentence. Nor were they permitted to see thirteen other prisoners they had made specific requests to visit.

These three cases have not been isolated because they are more important than others, but because they are more well known. They are symptomatic of a climate of intellectual, religious and political repression that has led to the imprisonment, exile or silencing of thousands of loyal Vietnamese nationalists, persons who are not pro-Communist, but who are critical of the Thieu-Ky government and who insist upon the right to think for themselves.

The government's sensitivity at this point is revealed in its attitudes toward dissenters, so-called "militant Buddhists", students and intellectuals, political opponents, and the press.

The religious picture in South Vietnam is confused. About one-tenth of the nation's population is Roman Catholic. Yet, from the time of Diem and the Nhu's on, Catholicism has played a dominant role in Vietnamese political life. (Actually, this goes back to the 18th Century French missionary-priest, Pigneau de Behaine, and the continuing influence of French Catholicism during colonial days.) President Thieu reminded the Study Team that, though he had trouble with Buddhists, Catholics had supported his administration. The former editor of a Catholic magazine, a friend and confidante of Archbishop Nguyen Van Binh, agrees that fewer than 10 percent of the Catholics in South Vietnam are critical of the war and of Thieu's government. It must be remembered that about 1,000,000 of South Vietnam's Catholics were born in what is now North Vietnam and came south following 1954. They are, for the most part, vigorous anti-Communists.

However, there are Catholics who want a closer tie with Buddhists and who are seeking what some call, a "third solution". They are trying to find answers between Communism and corrupt militarism. Father Hoang Quynh, an active leader of the All-Religion Citizen's Front, has worked with Buddhists in trying to prevent further friction between the Buddhist and Catholic communities. He has said, "Catholic faithful must learn to live a responsible political life." There are other Catholics who seem close to the Pope's view on meaningful negotiations and peace. They have won the confidence of Buddhist leaders.

When, in January, 1968, all of the bishops of South Vietnam released a four-page statement supporting Pope Paul's message on Vietnam and calling for a bombing halt in North Vietnam, it seemed that there had been a breakthrough. However, and without exception, those with whom Study Team members spoke indicated that the hierarchy in South Vietnam had confined themselves to what the Pope had said with no desire or inclination to supplement or further interpret the Vatican's plea concerning peace. There continues to be sharp feeling between Buddhists and Catholics. As one Buddhist complained, "When Catholics talk about peace, the Thieu government hears it one way. When we use the word, it is supposed to mean something else." Many Buddhists feel, and justifiably so, that they have been discriminated against by a succession of governments in Saigon.

There are two major Buddhist factions in South Vietnam; the "moderate" government-authorized faction of Thich Tam Chau, and the "activist" faction of Thich Tri Quang and the An Quang Pagoda. However, the Unified Buddhist Church of the An Quang Pagoda is made up of both Mahayana (northern) and Theravada (southern) Buddhists. Early in 1967, the government sought to frag-

2 The term "militant" is usually applied to the An Quang Pagoda faction. However, Buddhists are committed to nonviolence. In French, "militant" means an "active supporter or worker in a political group."
ment the Buddhists, withdrawing the charter of the Unified Church and recognizing the "moderate" wing of Thich Tam Chau. However, the An Quang Pagoda continues to be a major factor in the religious and political life of the country. On the Buddha's 2513th birthday, celebrated May 30, at the An Quang Pagoda, former Chief of State, Phan Khac Suu, Tran Ngoc Chan, General Secretary of the House of Representatives, other deputies and senators, Father Quyen, as well as Cao Dai and Hoa Hao leaders were present, indicating a broad base of popular support among disparate groups. During the ceremonies, white doves of peace were released as a crowd of more than 3,000 people looked on, and Thich Tinh Khiet, Supreme Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Congregation said, "Every hostile tendency of the world has jostled its way into the Vietnam war in order to exploit it and seek for victory, whereas all the Vietnamese people—either on this side or on the other side of the 17th Parallel—are mere victims of this atrocious war. Our nation is thus forced to accept ready-made decisions without having any right to make our own choice." President Thieu and pro-government supporters may insist that such peace talk is "political." If so, it is an obvious expression of that freedom essential to an emerging democracy. And it is no more political than a caravan of government-owned cars driving Thich Tam Chau to the Saigon Airport on June 5, to meet the Nepalese delegation to a World Buddhist Conference on Social Welfare; no more political than the imprisonment of hundreds of Buddhist monks.

Often the Buddhists who protest government policy are students. Following the government-controlled elections of 1967, Buddhist students joined by some of their professors were promptly singled out by the government for retaliatory acts. A professor of law said, "Van Hanh University (Buddhist) was the chief target for attack... If students go to meetings, the police follow them and they can be arrested any time. Many times, they are drafted before the legal age or before their deferments as students expire."

As a result of a peace meeting held in September, 1968, in Saigon University, the Student Union was closed by police. Students, professors, deputies from the Lower House and some Buddhist monks had participated in the meeting. Thirty persons, mostly students, were arrested. More arrests followed.

At about the same time, a student in the Medical School was murdered. He had been kidnapped by the N.L.F. and later rescued by American troops. He was accused of having "leftist tendencies." He was found dead with his hands tied behind his back, having been pushed from a third floor window. The police called it "probable suicide" and made no investigation.

Student resistance continued. On Christmas Eve, responding to the Pope's plea for peace, 2,000 students, many of them Catholic, held a peace procession. In the aftermath, hundreds were arrested.

In spite of setbacks and discouragement, spirit of the student peace movement remains unbroken. A Buddhist student stepped out of a sullen mass of prisoners at Camp No. 7 on Con Son Island and addressed members of the Team. The government translator said, "He is here because he refuses to be drafted. He says he doesn't want to serve the United States. As a Vietnamese citizen he will go into the Army only when we have independence." A student, recently released from Con Son, reacting to the devastation visited on his country by modern instruments of war, said much the same thing: "I will not serve a country that has done so much to my own."

Students, intellectuals and Buddhist monks do not comprise the only opponents who threaten President Thieu's government.

There is a growing mood of independence in the Lower House. It is only found in a few deputies, but they are voicing increasing opposition to the policies and practices of the Thieu-Ky government. There have been criticisms of Operation Phoenix in the National Assembly. Two members of the Lower House raised serious questions about prison policies early in May. The president's tax program has been challenged. Constitutional questions challenging the prerogatives of the executive branch are frequently raised.

President Thieu proudly points to the "new alliance" of political parties in South Vietnam as an indication of the breadth of his support. This alliance includes the Greater Union Force, the political arm of militant Roman Catholic refugees, the Social Humanist Party, a rebirth of Ngo Dinh Nhu's Can Lao party, the Dai Viet, an erstwhile grouping of anti-French nationalists, a faction of the Hoa Hao sect based in the Delta and the Viet Khuomintang, a pro-government bloc formed after the Tet offensive in 1968. All of these parties together, com-
bined with the Thieu-Ky vote, failed to capture half of the popular vote in the 1967 elections.  
While there is genuine political opposition, most of it has been driven underground. Members of the Study Team met with leaders of five old-line political parties no longer permitted to function as recognized entities. These men had all been active in the resistance movement against the French and were ardent nationalists. Their parties have been outlawed, their requests to publish a newspaper have gone unanswered, and their voices have been muted. These men, and they reflect a vast middle-position in South Vietnam, struggled against the French and consider the Americans their new colonial masters. Over the past twenty-five years, they have known imprisonment and sacrifice. (A retired general present had been in prison eleven times.) They argue that unity and independence cannot be achieved under present circumstances. One of them said, "We know the American government is anti-Communist and they help us fight Communism. But when they look at Viet Communists, they think of them as western Communists. That is a bad mistake." It is the conviction of the Study Team that there will be no truly representative government in South Vietnam until voices such as these can be legitimized and participate in the democratic processes of the republic. 
One further evidence of political oppression is the government's attitude toward the press. Although it seems reasonably tolerant of foreign correspondents, and they are permitted to function without too many instances of censorship, the government's relationship to the Vietnamese press is far more direct and inhibiting. Twelve months ago, censorship was officially eliminated in South Vietnam. Since then, at least twenty-five newspapers and two magazines have been suspended. Mr. Lan's Daily News has been suspended for thirty days for hinting that Thich Thien Minh's trial might have been unfair. Tin Song was closed when it suggested that Prime Minister Huong (one of the more highly regarded members of the Thieu government and a former political prisoner himself) once yielded to pressure in a cabinet appointment. Nguyen Thanh Tai, a UPI combat photographer, was arrested in May, 1968, for taking pictures "detrimental" to South Vietnam. 
One of the most credible and influential anti-government nationalist leaders with whom we talked prepared a three-page position paper for the Team. The English translation was his own. In part, he said:
"The range of political expression as legally exists here is narrow indeed ... Let us imagine for a moment that those people are given a chance. What would they do? 
They would firstly negotiate with the Government of the United States on agreement on the Allied Forces Establishment in Viet Nam which would provide for progressive withdrawals when the situation warrants it. Of course, they would bear in mind the security and the honor of the Allied troops who came here to protect ourselves and prevent a Communist domination.
They would secondly invite the Vietnamese people to actively participate in national affairs and take their share of responsibility. Democratic freedom would be enforced without restrictions, how adventurous this might first look. Live forces such as students, intellectuals, religions leaders and workers' unions would be given an authorized say. Unjust treatment would be redeemed. One cannot fight for freedom without ensuring freedom at home ..."
Many, not all, of the nationalist leaders with whom the Study Team talked believed that a continuing American presence in South Vietnam is an unfortunate necessity until the political situation can be stabilized and made more representative. One student leader who had been imprisoned twice by the Thieu government for his activities on behalf of peace argued that no truly representative democracy can come into being as long as U.S. troops are present and U.S. policy is being enforced. He said, "By now, we should have learned the irony of having any Vietnamese government that is embraced by U.S. power. The Americans must depart leaving us to decide our own future." He spoke those words with anguish, obviously knowing the problems that Vietnamese nationalism and many of its long-suffering advocates would face in dealing with the NLF in the wake of an American withdrawal. Yet, he bitterly insisted that after many years of American military presence and American good intentions, there was no other way.

2 The United States sent election "observers" to Vietnam to report on election procedures. As one cynical Vietnamese put it: "We are planning to send twenty-two Vietnamese observers who don't speak English to the United States ... for four days to see if your elections are fair."

At the luncheon given the Team by members of the Lower House, Deputy Duong Minh Kinh talked about the vast expenditures poured into North Vietnam by the Soviet Union and China, and into South Vietnam by America. He said, "We are beggars from all of the people in the world in order to destroy ourselves. That is the greatest tragedy of all."

II. DETENTION, INTERROGATION, IMPRISONMENT AND TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

The large majority of those imprisoned in South Vietnam are held because they oppose the government; they are "political prisoners". Undoubtedly, a great many of these are, as the government classifies them, "Viet Cong". Legally speaking, they are properly prisoners of war—although they are kept in a separate category from military prisoners. Others are "civilians related to Communist activities;" i.e., V.C. agents, and are accurately classified as such. Still others, many of them detained without hearing or trial, should be classified differently. Some of these have been picked up in "search and destroy" sweeps and are innocent of anything save being present in an area of military operations. Others are clearly political prisoners. They are nationalists and not Communists, but are seen by the government as inimical to its continuing control. In the official statistics very few "detainees" and "political prisoners" are so classified. The government places the vast majority of prisoners in either the "communist" or the "criminal" category.

The classification of prisoners in 41 Correctional Centers as given by Col. Nguyen Phu Sanh, Director of Correctional Institutions is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminals</td>
<td>16.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communists</td>
<td>64.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilians related to Communist activities</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>11.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activities harmful to national interest</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War prisoners temporarily in correctional centers</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colonel Sanh said that there are 35,000 prisoners in these Correctional Centers. The senior American advisor to Col. Sanh, Mr. Don Bordenkercher, estimated that, in addition, there are 10,000 held in interrogation centers. He reported that the number had gone up gradually since the Tet offensive of 1968 when the jump was precipitate. Ambassador Colby, General Abrams' Deputy for Pacification, said that the number of prisoners had gone up and will continue to go up as the pacification program (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) develops.

The national police in Saigon and in the provinces are the official organ for making arrests. In addition, there appear to be many other arrests and detention agencies. It is clear that those arrested are taken to a variety of detention centers for interrogation and that many are held in these centers for periods of time up to two years. According to the U.S. Mission, American advisors are involved only with cases of Viet Cong or suspected Viet Cong sympathizers and with persons apprehended during military operations; e.g., "Operations Phoenix", the 18-month-old program which pools information from half a dozen U.S. and South Vietnamese intelligence and security agencies with the purpose of identifying and capturing Viet Cong political agents.

Doubtless the total number of political prisoners in South Vietnam—including those held as prisoners of war by intelligence agencies and in military prisons, as well as those in the correctional institutions and those held by various other arresting agencies—far exceeds the official statistics and estimates. Due to the wide range of arresting and detention agencies, and the inadequacy of statistical methods, no accurate count of prisoners can be made.

In addition to the provincial Correctional Centers, there are four large prisons for essentially civilian prisoners. These are Chi Hoa in Saigon, Phu Ku in Thu Duc (for female prisoners), Tan Tien near Bien Hoa, and Con Son on an island off the southeastern coast. Team members were enabled by the Ministry of the Interior to visit Chi Hoa, Thu Duc, and Con Son Island Prison. They were also shown through the interrogation center at National Police Headquarters.

The following statistics, provided by prison officials, further illustrate the government's desire to de-emphasize the so-called "political prisoners" category.

Warden Pham Van Lieu of Chi Hoa prison reported to Team members on June 3, 1969, this prisoner classification:

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