

America seeks revenge on Vietnam, activist says

By OSCAR HALPERT
Of the Emerald

Angered by losing the Vietnam War, the United States is trying to revenge itself on the current Vietnamese government, human rights activist Don Luce said Friday.

The United States is denying aid to Vietnam, Luce said in a University address, is backing the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia and is turning its back on human rights violations throughout Southeast Asia in an effort to destabilize the Vietnamese government, Luce said.

The United States stopped sending 35 tons of rice to Vietnam when the war ended in 1975 and won't help the Vietnamese clear their fields of mines, Luce said.

"The people in the cities are afraid to go back to the farms — they're afraid that they're going to step on a mine."

According to Luce, the Pentagon refuses to send Americans to aid in mine detection "because they don't want anyone to get hurt."

"Apparently, the United States doesn't think the farmers are people."

By cutting off other sources of aid, Luce said, the United States "almost forces Vietnam into dependence upon the Soviet Union."

For instance, he said, American pressure has forced European nations to cut off the supply of milk to Vietnam while milk shortages have caused widespread malnutrition among children.

Luce has urged American colleges to raise funds to send a ton of milk to the impoverished region.

Luce, — recently returned from a fact-finding mission to Indochina — also said U.S. support of

the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia is proof that the American government is trying to revenge itself on the Vietnamese.

"Our country is still angry at Vietnam because they beat us, so we support him (Pol Pot) as a means of destabilizing Vietnam," Luce said.

"The U.S. government has charged Pol Pot with being a suppressor of human rights and, at the same time, has supported him diplomatically, economically and militarily."

The U.S. also has turned a deaf ear to human rights violations throughout Southeast Asia and isn't really interested in solving the refugee problem there, Luce said.

He said Thai children sometimes are sold to work in factories and earn less than three dollars for a 14-hour work day. But the Thai government doesn't crack down on the practice because it isn't hurting relations with Washington, Luce said.

"The Thai government interprets Pres. Reagan's foreign policy as meaning that either there are no human rights or governments are to be trusted solely for economic reasons."

Regarding the refugee problem in Southeast Asia, Luce said the United States "likes the propaganda of the escaped refugees."

After spending 13 years in Vietnam as an agriculturist for the International Voluntary Service, Luce made international headlines in 1970 along with two U.S. Congressmen when they discovered "tiger cages" in a South Vietnamese prison camp. He was expelled from South Vietnam in May, 1971.

Luce currently is director of the Asian Center in New York City and former director of Clergy and Laity Concerned.

Folk music to highlight cultural night

The music of a Nicaraguan folk group on tour to benefit reconstruction efforts in Managua, Nicaragua will highlight a cultural evening Tuesday night.

Carlos Mejia Godoy and Los de Palaguina will play at 7:30 p.m. in the Central Presbyterian Church.

The musicians will be accompanied by Aura Beteta, Nicaragua's Consul General in San Francisco. Beteta will discuss the current situation in Nicaragua, emphasizing the participation of the Roman Catholic Church in the new government, the role of women in the revolutionary process and the "worldwide significance" of the National Literacy Campaign.

The Eugene City Council will officially welcome Beteta to Eugene tonight at 7:30 in the council chambers at 777 Pearl St.

Beteta also will speak at a

teach-in at Harris Hall at noon Tuesday.

The featured musicians are considered the foremost interpreters of traditional Nicaraguan folk music. During the war against the Somoza government, they toured the country in support of the revolution.

They are now touring the United States for the first time as

"cultural ambassadors." Proceeds from their concerts are used to finance reconstruction of the Nicaraguan capital city.

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