

Getting France to Release Viet Nam Hold Presents Touchy International Problem.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The United States is gambling on the future of South Viet Nam. It is taking a hand, directly or indirectly, in the way that strategic area is governed. What lies ahead? What are the chances of keeping communism out? How about Premier Diem? Preston Grover went to Saigon to seek answers to these and other questions.

By PRESTON GROVER
Of The Associated Press

SAIGON, South Viet Nam (AP)—The French have lost out decisively in South Viet Nam but the task of getting out of power gracefully has been handled so neatly on all sides that it has become a major international problem.

Many French here recognize that they have lost out and sooner or later must turn over control fully to the Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese want the French out. The Vietnamese want to run their own country.

The Americans want the French out. Americans believe it will be easier to organize an anti-Communist defense when the French are gone.

Those are simple statements, but there the simplicity of the problem ends. National ambitions and sensibilities enter at this point to make the story both dramatic and dangerous.

Civil war is still a bare possibility in this country. Perhaps more serious is the fact that the French and Americans have got into such a squabble over how to lead the country to independence during the next 12 months that they are risking the very independence they are trying to save.

MISTY LAND

Moreover, their squabbling endangers their relationship in Europe.

Here in this soft and misty land it all seems too unreal and unnecessary. The Saigon River flows past the window of the room where this is written. This section of the river is a quarter of a mile wide and is deep enough to handle big steamers. Its shores are lined with ships from the West, but the river is crawling as well with smaller boats, some hauling sand and wood to be unloaded by walking conveyor belts of coolies, others engaged in that strange and intricate commerce that involves rice, bamboo, coconuts, teak, fermented fish, cloth and families. The families huddle on the decks while the boats carry them and their big and little bundles to some other place where maybe it will be better.

Up and down this river roam landing craft, troop transports, destroyer tenders, gun boats and mine layers. They represent the



TACKLE SOUTH VIET NAM PROBLEMS—Ngo Dinh Diem, left, premier of South Viet Nam, chats with village leaders at Qui Nhon during a visit to the town which changed hands several times during the Indochina war with the Communist-led Viet-minh. Diem, victor in the military and political war now in the cleanup stage, appears well on the way to his goal of ousting the French from power in South Viet Nam.

remnants of a battle lost because they could not turn and twist their massive weight and striking power fast enough to meet the swarms of smaller, more agile enemies that finally beat them.

LIGHT TOUCH

That happened to France in the rice-paddy war and political struggle she could not adjust herself to fight.

France came first to this country with the light touch of selfless missionaries. A few of them landed on the south coast of Viet Nam called Cochinchina. That was just after the American Revolutionary War.

Later a treaty was arranged between France and the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese were colonists themselves in those days, and had just finished a centuries-long sweep from the Tonkin delta of North Viet Nam southward into Cochinchina.

Viet Nam was having a civil war when the French treaty was arranged in 1787 but before the French got around to ratifying it, they were having a revolution themselves. Nevertheless, an enterprising French bishop in India rounded up forces, sailed them over to Indochina, and helped seat a troubled prince on the throne. With this help, the new king unified the country. He opened it to western civilization.

The opening was temporary. A later Vietnamese king turned on the Catholic priests, slaught-

ered a score of them, and chased others into the wilderness to die of disease and starvation. The revolution against the West and its ways lasted until the Western tide of imperialism opened Japan and China also. In 1882 France forced the local prince to cede three southern provinces of Viet Nam. By 1885 the French had gained control of all Viet Nam, North and South, the final act being a brief skirmish with the Chinese to make them give up ancient claims.

Thus began the years of French influence in Indochina which have so colored their present outlook. Indochina was one of the richest prizes any nation got in the big empire rush. It poured its wealth into France and the French put skill, enterprise and civilization into Indochina. The current language of the intellectual classes here is French. The French built railroads, bridges, highways, and opened a vast network of canals which from the air looks like white ribbons lying straight and clean through the jungle.

Frenchmen came here to live. They closed the market to other nations and sold their own goods here at high prices. It was real empires.

There was resistance but the French for long years could put it down. The first rude shock came when the Japanese turned on the West. Many Vietnamese sided with the Japanese.

The French return in 1945 was the beginning of a sad affair. In

vain the Vietnamese pleaded for freedom "within the French Union."

The French did not seem to realize that the era of colonialism had about ended in the Far East. Indonesia pulled loose from the Dutch. India and Burma were released by Britain. The Philippines, by an earlier agreement, received independence from America.

LARGE REASONS

Still the French held on. There were reasons, and large ones. France was fighting to keep a place among the big powers after her defeat by Germany. She needed the wealth of Indochina, wanted to preserve a foothold in Asia.

The commercial angle still is important to France, but the world-power factor seems to influence her leaders most today. In Europe, the United States has paid out billions to help her in this struggle. But here, in recent months, the policy has changed radically and some of the local exponents of American policy give little heed to such matters.

One of the more bitter chapters was written at Geneva last year when the French, beaten in the field despite American aid, in effect gave up their rights in North Indochina. They promised the South also the right to vote its freedom. But it was not in the hearts of the French to let it go, and therein lies much of the source of the current troubles.

Slap Saves Boy's Life

READING, Pa. (AP)—A powerful smack by a diesel locomotive brakeman sent two-year-old Billy Mattson sprawling Sunday and the feelings of the child's parents were not of anger but gratitude. Billy was walking along the tracks of the Reading Railroad in the path of a 40-car freight train, which hadn't enough time to brake.

Brakeman Aloysius A. Russell, 26, saw the boy from his seat in the cab of the locomotive. He raced up the catwalk on the outside of the engine and reached down and cuffed the boy clear of the train.

Russell and the boy fell clear and watched 10 cars pass over the spot where the boy had been walking. Both suffered only minor injuries.

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