

Indochina War In Eighth Year; People Indifferent

By OLEN CLEMENTS and MAX CLOS

HANOI, Indochina (AP)—Every night church bells beckon the faithful in misty old Hanoi. Heavy guns rumble on the city's outskirts. The devout go to worship. The others—French, German, Arab, Moroccan and Vietnamese soldiers and civilians—flock to the cafes, the tea houses, the taxi dancehalls.

The Indochina war is in its eighth year and the people in Hanoi are used to it. This city is a center of the French Union forces, including French colonial soldiers, the heavily German Foreign Legion and Vietnamese troops that can call this land their own. They are at war with forces which

are led by a Communist but backed by many non-Communists. These forces are known as the Vietminh. Some civilians say there are so many Vietminh sympathizers in Hanoi that Moscow-trained Ho Chi Minh would never attack the city—he would endanger too many of his friends.

Just now a sort of red haze blows down through the river delta and from Communist China, 90 miles to the north. Millions of mosquitoes buzz in and out of the separate night clubs of the Arabs, French and the Vietnamese.

French Union troops patrol the countryside and fight along the wet roads.

A thousand miles to the south is hot Saigon, where shops display Paris gowns and good food abounds. It, too, is under control of the French Union forces. All through that southern area watchtowers manned by four to six men keep an eye on roads that may be mined.

The civilian population is more or less indifferent. Vietnamese and Chinese carpenters work all day building hundreds of new homes and apartments for people who apparently never give a thought to the war or to the prospect that artillery or planes might knock down some of these new buildings some day.

The indifference to the war has created a grotesque riddle for all of Southeast Asia—Indochina, Malaya, Burma, Thailand and Indonesia. The indifference and weariness of the war extend to many places in Viet Nam, and the associated kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia.

Many now believe a military victory by either side is an impossibility unless far more troops and supplies are poured into the fight. They hope the Big Five conference in Geneva in April and the conference of prime ministers of Southern Asia in Ceylon in May will help to solve the riddle.

Gen. Henri Navarre, commander in chief of French Union forces, says: "We have here a politico-military war. It is only when the Vietnamese government will have won the approval of the population that a victory will be possible."

Since 1949 chief of state Bao Dai has been trying to set up a national front without success. Probably almost half of the 12 million Vietnamese living in the zone con-

trolled by Bao Dai's government are directly aiding the Vietminh or indirectly supporting them out of sympathy for Ho Chi Minh. But only a fraction of the population is really Communist. Most are just anti-French. Many are anti-Communist.

The nationalists, who for five years have been refusing to support Bao Dai effectively, give two reasons:

1. Bao Dai has not obtained independence for Viet Nam. The ex-emperor signed a 1949 treaty with France which gave his country semi-independence within the framework of the French Union, but France retained actual political control.

2. The nationalists are critical of the system of personal power established by Bao Dai and of the corruption of his regime. The 40-year-old ex-emperor holds all the executive and legislative powers.

The new government formed in January by Prince Buu Loc persuaded Bao Dai to announce a program seeking to give satisfaction to the nationalists' aspirations. Buu Loc has promised general elections for a national assembly "within as short a time as possible." He also has demanded total independence from France to be guaranteed by the United Nations and has denounced the 1949 treaty.

The new Premier and members of his Cabinet are to go to France at the end of this month to negotiate a "treaty of association to establish a union between two partners equal in rights and duties."

Two factors menace the program. To gain Vietnamese approval, Bao Dai must take a firm attitude toward France.

But until Viet Nam's fledgling army is a great deal bigger and better trained, French forces are still the only protection against the Vietminh, and Bao Dai cannot remain in power without them.

He must take care to avoid risking a bad reaction from the French public, which seemingly has begun to doubt that there is any point in pushing the war against the Vietminh. It thinks France is going to be pushed out even in case of victory by the nationalists.

If Buu Loc is too adamant in the Paris conference, the French may demand an immediate end of the war. Foreseeing such a possibility, Buu Loc has given assurance that Viet Nam will not na-

tionalize any French properties and will give France important economic privileges.

Vietnamese leaders believe that within two or three years it will be possible to create a united nationalist front capable of effectively opposing the Vietminh. They reached whether any peace or armistice ought to be accepted earlier.

Meantime, there is an Alice in Wonderland aspect to the situation. The forces on both sides cannot go anywhere militarily because it takes all their strength to stay where they are.

Tomorrow Larry Allen describes the way the war is fought—and the prospects.

Pope Still Sick But Rests Well

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Pope Pius spent a "fairly good night," Vatican sources said today, but his general condition still was described as stationary.

The Pope was said to have rested quite well during the night. Severe attacks of hiccupping had kept him from sleeping and severely weakened him during the first weeks of his month-long illness.

The pontiff, who will be 78 next Tuesday, is believed to be suffering from gastritis but his inability to retain the barium solution necessary for X-ray examination has prevented a complete diagnosis. He is on a semiliquid diet and is able to leave his bed for only brief periods.

3 Killed While Probing Crash

NEW DELHI, India (AP)—An Indian Airlines Douglas DC3 crashed today during tests to determine the cause of a previous crash. The crew of three, all Indians, were killed.

The co-pilot, K. R. Malhotra, was the brother of the Indian government's inspector of accidents, Y. R. Malhotra, who was directing the tests. He is also investigating a crash at Nasipur in December, in which 14 people were killed.

Scientists Find New Elements

BERKLEY, Calif. (AP)—The list of known chemical elements has reached 100. Prior to the atomic age there were only 92.

Production and chemical identification of element 100 in the atomic reactor at Arco, Idaho, was announced yesterday by four scientists in the University of California radiation laboratory, the home of much atomic research.

Element 100, as yet unnamed, is by far the heaviest known, 254 times the weight of a hydrogen atom. It is more of a scientific curiosity than anything else. It is no good for atom bombs or atomic power.

Japanese Police Act In Bribe Case

TOKYO (AP)—Police raided the offices of eight Japanese shipping companies today searching for evidence in connection with charges of corruption among high government officials, the Asahi Evening News said.

Records were confiscated and executives of two companies were arrested on undisclosed charges.

Two members of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida's Cabinet have been accused of accepting a million-yen (\$2,780) bribe from shipping firms which obtained rich subsidies. Other government officials have been accused of attending lush parties sponsored by favor-seeking shipping companies.



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