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INDOCHINA

REPORT

OF

SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

ON A STUDY MISSION

TO THE

ASSOCIATED STATES OF INDOCHINA

VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, LAOS

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Francis R. Valeo was detailed to the committee by the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress to assist Senator Mansfield in his study.

FOREWORD

Communist power in the Far East thrusts outward from the heart of the Asian mainland in two principal directions. One drive extends into the Korean Peninsula, where it has recently been blocked by a combination of United Nations military action and diplomacy. The second probes into Indochina, from whence, if unchecked, it might turn west toward India or south and east toward Indonesia and the Philippines.

World peace hangs in balance along both these avenues of Communist expansion. Hence, the security of the United States and of other free nations is no less involved in Indochina than in Korea. Indochina is the key to control of southeast Asia, rich in the raw materials of war. This is an area of rice surplus—on which the armies of Asia march—and of petroleum, tin, and rubber. To deny these sinews of power to the Communists is to limit their capacity to engage in further aggressive adventures.

Although the responsibilities of the United States in Korea have been more direct than in Indochina, our policies since 1950 have recognized the essential indivisibility of these two situations. It will be recalled that in taking action in Korea in June of that year, we also made provision for direct military assistance to Indochina. This aid program has continued through the past 3 years.

In view of the interrelationship of the two situations, it seemed to me that the halting, at least temporarily, of hostilities in Korea called for a firsthand study of the situation in Indochina. My objective in making this study has been to obtain information of possible interest to the Committee on Foreign Relations, particularly along the following lines:

1. Current military situation in Indochina.
2. Political developments in the relationship between France and the three Associated States of Indochina and within the Associated States relevant to the conflict with international communism.
3. The role of American aid in the defense of Indochina against international communism.
4. Prospects for a successful termination of the conflict in Indochina.

The report that follows is based primarily on discussions with officials and nonofficial observers and on personal observations in Vietnam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the Kingdom of Laos during the latter half of September. In order to obtain additional information and to cross-check findings, officials and nonofficial observers were also interviewed in Paris at the beginning and end of the study.

I should like to express my appreciation for the courtesies extended to me in Indochina by Ambassador Donald Heath and Gen. T. J. Trapnell of our mission at Saigon; by Commissioner Maurice Dejean and Gen. Henri-Eugene Navarre; by Prime Minister Nguyen Van Tam and Gov. Nguyen hun Tri of Vietnam; by Prime Ministers Penn

Nouth of Cambodia and H. H. Souvanna Phouma of Laos; and by their staffs. The assistance and cooperation of these officials, their staffs, and many other persons in the three States greatly facilitated the carrying out of the study mission.

I should also like to note the indispensable assistance of Mr. Francis R. Valeo, Chief of the Foreign Affairs Division of the Legislative Reference Service, on detail to the Foreign Relations Committee staff, who accompanied me on the study mission.

MIKE MANSFIELD.

OCTOBER 27, 1953.

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INDOCHINA

A. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

The Indochinese war is a grim one. It is a strange and elusive struggle, a shadowy war without battle lines. It is a war of sudden raids in the night, of parachute drops on scattered supply dumps, of interminable patrol actions, of ambush, terrorism, and sabotage.

It is fought in dense jungle, in remote mountain passes, and in the great river deltas. These are now vast green seas of rice, shoulder-deep in monsoon rain. This kind of terrain favors an enemy whose tactics are hit-and-run, plunder, and retreat. To a considerable extent it neutralizes the mechanized equipment which the French possess. For years now it has been a stalemate. The casualties mount; but positions remain relatively the same. Except for an abortive advance of the Viet Minh into the Kingdom of Laos last spring and occasional sallies by the French and Associated States forces against Viet Minh supply centers, there have been few major actions and no significant positional changes in many months.

The French and Associated States forces continue to dominate the large cities, the principal rice-producing areas, the rubber plantations, the coal mines, and port facilities. The Viet Minh hold the rural areas, the jungles, the mountains and, at night, parts of the rice-producing deltas which are under nominal control of the French and the Associated States by day.

There are indications that the stalemate in Indochina may be coming to an end. The months ahead could witness the beginning of a series of significant military engagements. On the one hand, the Viet Minh have been concentrating in divisional strength in the northern delta region. On the other hand, the new French commander, Gen. Henri-Eugene Navarre, has made clear that he thinks in terms of ending the defensive mentality which has characterized the French and Associated States operations since the death of Gen. de Lattre de Tassigny in January 1952. To this end, tactical concepts are being revised; France is dispatching 9 additional battalions from Korea and Germany to the Indochinese theater; and the indigenous forces of the 3 Associated States are being expanded as rapidly as the French believe possible.

The Viet Minh forces under Ho Chi-minh consist of approximately 300,000 men. It is an army built around disciplined and devoted Communist cadres and is generally regarded in the area as well organized and well led. While a portion of the manpower is grouped in small, scattered guerrilla bands, the Viet Minh are capable of deploying in divisional strength. The bulk of the army is concentrated in and around the Red River Delta in northern Vietnam. There are, in addition, Viet Minh forces in central Vietnam, in the Mekong River Delta of south Vietnam, in northern Laos, and on the borders of Cambodia.

The Viet Minh are equipped with an assortment of locally produced and foreign-made weapons, which include those of American and of recent Soviet manufacture. They have neither aircraft nor naval vessels.

Their principal source of outside supply is Communist China. Equipment flows over the border at the rate of 3,000 to 5,000 tons per month and military reports indicate that there has been some slight increase in the total since the Korean truce. The Chinese also supply technical advisers and training facilities. There is no evidence of Soviet Russian personnel within Indochina but there are reports of such personnel operating across the border in southern China.

The military position of the Communists in south Vietnam appears to have weakened over the years in the Mekong Delta area. It is unchanged or perhaps more powerful, however, in the northern Red River region, which from the outset has been the citadel of Viet Minh strength. The Communists also continue to pose a threat in northern Laos.

Opposing the Viet Minh are some 400,000 French, French Union, and Associated States forces, equipped with air and naval units. The core of these forces consists of French and French Union troops. However, the armies of Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, those of Cambodia and Laos are expanding.

The casualties suffered by the French Union forces and the 3 Associated States, while lower than those of the Viet Minh by perhaps a 5-to-1 ratio, have been greater than those of the United States in Korea. Casualties among French officers have been particularly heavy.

The non-Communist forces have been supported largely by France, whose current annual outlay for the conflict in Indochina amounts to approximately $1.2 billion, and by the United States at the rate of some $500 million a year. French expenditures in Indochina over the years has more than equaled the grants which France has received under our foreign-aid programs.

Like ourselves in Korea, the French are participating in an extremely difficult military undertaking. It involves fighting at the end of supply lines that stretch halfway round the world.

B. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

The French are trying to halt communism in an area where nationalism is giving a new birth of freedom to peoples who have not known it for a long time. The French have found that in these circumstances military problems are deeply enmeshed in political problems. This creates a situation not readily amenable to simple, get-out-cheap formulas.

The current of nationalism runs strong throughout Indochina. It is not, perhaps, of equal fervor in each of the three States but in all of them it is the basic political reality. It gives rise to a desire for independence from foreign control that is deep-seated and widespread. To a great extent, it explains the continued acceptance of Ho Chi-minh in many parts of the region. He has been publicized not as an exponent of communism but as the figurehead of anticolonial, anti-western nationalism.

The problem for France and, in an indirect sense, for ourselves is to treat with this political reality in a manner which will insure that full independence, once achieved, will not immediately be nullified in the onrush of international communism. It is a problem that has both moral and practical aspects. This country is committed by belief, tradition, and practice to policies of supporting the right to self-government of peoples able and willing to assume the responsibilities of self-government. Moral aspects apart, failure to utilize the indigenous power latent in nationalism merely serves to increase immeasurably the cost to ourselves and to France of preventing the Communists from seizing Indochina and it could even throw the entire issue into doubt.

It is the general consensus of opinion of French, indigenous, and American observers in Indochina that one of the most important elements in a successful termination of hostilities lies in the mobilization of the local peoples against the Communists. This involves the winning over of the non-Communist support which, as a form of misdirected nationalism, is now enjoyed by Ho Chi-minh. At the same time it requires the stimulation of a substantial part of the population, presently indifferent, into active participation in the conflict on the non-Communist side.

French leaders, both in Paris and in Indochina, give evidence of recognizing this reality. As previously pointed out, they are moving rapidly to expand the military forces of the Associated States while shifting political power to the three local governments. Preparations are now being made and preliminary discussions are already under way to give effect to the July 3 declaration which paves the way for full independence. At issue are such matters as control of foreign exchange, customs, justice, the sureté, the participation of indigenous military in the high command of the armed forces and arrangements which link the three Associated States such as a common currency and a common customs.

Given mutual confidence and patience on the part of the negotiating political leaders, it is possible that most of the remaining limitations on full national sovereignty can be removed during the coming months.

Impetuous actions, however, such as recently manifested in Cambodia,[1] could be seriously disruptive, as could a failure of rapport between French officials in Paris and Saigon or unwarranted pressures by ourselves or other outside parties.

If there is to be a meaningful transfer of full sovereignty to the Associated States, one which will not immediately jeopardize the resistance to the Communists, it must be a transfer which is worked out by the French and the nationalist leaders in a manner satisfactory to both. Once such an arrangement has been achieved, the last remaining political block to the full mobilization of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian national sentiment against the Communist advance in the area will have been removed.

The political problems of the Associated States, however, will not end with the achievement of full independence. The leaders of these countries are already confronted with a multitude of internal difficulties and these are more likely to increase rather than decrease in the future. The basic problem which confronts all three govern-

[1] See appendix 1, subsection on Cambodia.

ments and particularly that of Vietnam is to put down firm roots in their respective populations. They will be able to do so only if they evolve in accord with popular sentiment and if they deal competently with such basic problems as illiteracy, public health, excessive population in the deltas, inequities in labor and land tenure, and village and agricultural improvement. Finally, it is essential that there be a constant raising of the ethical standards of government and a determination to use the armies, now in the process of formation strictly for national rather than private purposes. Failure in these fundamental responsibilities of self-government will result in the achievement of the shadow rather than the substance of independence. It could also mean the rapid reduction of the three nations to chaos and the subsequent intrusion of some new form of foreign domination from close at hand.

C. UNITED STATES AID TO INDOCHINA

Direct United States assistance to Indochina began in August 1950. At that time, France's domestic economy had reached a point where it was no longer able to sustain the burden of the conflict in Indochina. Simultaneously, Ho Chi-minh's forces were everywhere preparing to push the French into the sea. This blow, however, did not fall. France did not withdraw. Throughout Indochina this is attributed largely to our intercession which provided the margin of material support and of hope that enabled the French to pursue the struggle.

Under military-aid agreements signed in December 1950, some 350 ships bearing arms have reached Indochinese ports. These shipments have included small-arms ammunition, transport vehicles, combat vehicles, military aircraft, naval vessels and small craft, communications equipment, small arms and automatic weapons, artillery ammunition, hospital supplies, and engineering and other technical equipment. There is a United States Military Defense Assistance Advisory Group in Indochina under Brig. Gen. T. J. Trapnell which provides instruction in the use of this equipment.

A pact of Economic Cooperation was signed between the United States and Vietnam on September 7, 1951. Subsequently, similar pacts came into effect with Laos and Cambodia. Under the STEM (Special Technical and Economic Mission) program of the Foreign Operations Administration some $96 million has been authorized as technical and economic aid during the fiscal years 1951–54. It is used to finance projects in village rehabilitation, sanitation, small business, irrigation, and public works. An additional $30 million annually in "military-support assistance" has been allocated in 1953 and 1954.

In all, the United States has been assuming about 40 percent of the total cost of the war in Indochina. In March 1953 the United States assured France of a willingness to increase its aid program if France produced an adequate plan for concluding the war. Such a plan, based on the views of General Navarre, was presented to the United States by the Mayer Cabinet and later by the Laniel Cabinet. The United States and France announced in a joint communique September 30, 1953, that—

* * in support of plans of the French Government for the intensified prosecution of the war against Viet Minh, the United States will make available to the French Government prior to December 31, 1954, additional financial resources not to exceed $385,000,000 * * *.

This assistance was additional to aid to Indochina in the Mutual Security appropriation early in 1953. The new allocation will raise the United States share of the cost of the war to an estimated 60 percent of the total.

In general, military supplies appear to be entirely adequate to meet current needs in Indochina. The only items which are cited by French authorities in the area as being in short supply are C–47 transports, helicopters, and small naval craft for use in the delta areas. These shortages will probably be relieved in the near future.

Economic assistance from the United States is channeled through the indigenous governments of the three States. Military aid, however, is made available to the French military authorities who, in turn, allocate it to the various forces engaged in the conflict. There is considerable pressure emanating from the governments of the Associated States to participate more directly in American military aid. Any change in the present distribution system, however, prior to a clarification of relationships between the various parties under the July 3 declaration could prove disruptive of present military operations. Furthermore, a service of supply, now nonexistent, must be developed in the national armies of the three States before aid can be effectively handled by them.

D. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

The military prospects of the non-Communist forces in Indochina are improving

Three principal factors account for the improvement in the military position of the non-Communist forces which 3 years ago was at the point of utter dissolution. In the first place, there has been an expansion of the national forces of the Associated States. Much remains to be done before these forces acquire the skills, morale, and leadership that will be necessary if they are to assume the primary burden for the defense of their countries. A start has been made, however, and the announced policy of the French is to push this process as rapidly as possible.

A second factor in the improved situation is the flow of American aid. This assistance makes possible the equipping and activating of indigenous forces on a large scale. It also provides the margin without which the French would probably be unable to continue to sustain their commitments in Indochina. American aid, however, does not and should not involve the commitment of combat forces. Sacrifices for the defense of freedom must be equitably shared and we have borne our full burden in blood in Korea.

The third factor is the new approach to the conduct of the campaign against the Viet Minh, which has been introduced by General Navarre. It is basically, as has been pointed out previously, the psychology of the offensive. While it is still too early to evaluate its effectiveness, the general consensus is that it has already provided a lift to morale and may provide in time the striking edge necessary to end the long stalemate.

The non-Communist forces in Indochina are still, however, a long way from the threshold of victory. Without a vast increase in present striking power, the Viet Minh will not be defeated. This increase, primarily a question of manpower, cannot come from France, already hard-pressed to meet commitments elsewhere. It certainly cannot come from this country. It can come only from the three Indochinese States.

And it is right that it should come from them. Their hope for freedom and national existence is at stake. If they have the will to sustain themselves as independent nations, the French have pledged themselves to continue to support them until the Communists are defeated. As for the material needed to insure the resistance, we have not stinted in our assistance in the past and we are not likely to do so in the future.

Transfer of full sovereignty to the indigenous governments of the Associated States in the near future is possible

Responsible French officials in both Paris and Saigon are unanimous in their views that France must withdraw from political authority in the Associated States. This view is generally shared by nonofficial observers. The French Government is on record as pledging the transfer. Indigenous leaders, in varying degrees, are anxious to assume full political responsibility. The issues that remain to be resolved before the transfer can be made do not appear to be excessively complex.

In these circumstances, then, the principal problem would appear to be one of timing, especially insofar as the transfer affects military operations. Full independence can be a reality only within the context of security against Communist aggression.

Apart from the question of timing, a successful transfer depends on the closest liaison between Paris and French officials in Indochina so that political decisions arrived at between France and the Associated States will be carried out promptly and accurately in the field. It also requires that the indigenous leaders of the three States recognize that full national independence carries with it full responsibility for maintaining internal order and effective government.

Essential to the negotiation of the transfer are good faith and the utmost patience on both sides. It is not the kind of settlement that either side can be clubbed into making by well-intentioned friends. It is the kind of settlement that can be negotiated only by the two parties themselves. And it must satisfy both.

Continuing American assistance is justified and essential

As previously pointed out, American aid has provided the margin of material assistance necessary for continuing resistance to the Communist advance in southeast Asia. In making available this assistance we recognized that Indochina is of great importance to the security of the non-Communist world and to our own national security. Just as the conflict in Korea is being fought in part to avoid war on our own frontiers in the future, so too is the war in Indochina.

In these circumstances continued aid to the French and Associated States is justified and essential. Neither the French, who are already making heavy sacrifices in Indochina and who must support commit-

ments to the common defense in Western Europe and other parts of the non-Communist world, nor the newly created Associated States can carry this burden alone. In the interests of our own security, therefore, it is necessary that American aid be continued.

American assistance in this area, however, as elsewhere, must be carefully administered to insure its most economical and effective use. It may be desirable, therefore, to review in detail both the military and economic aspects of the aid program in Indochina. Some informed observers in the area believe that present procedures and undertakings are unduly wasteful.

A solution to the war in Indochina satisfactory to the non-Communist world is possible

It is to the advantage of international communism to continue this highly indecisive struggle in Indochina, not to our side. It drains the strength of France into distant battlefields and impairs the consolidation of the defense of western Europe. It churns into turmoil and chaos an area which should have peace and stability. Finally, it places a heavy financial load on the people of the United States at little cost to Moscow or Peking.

This situation can be reversed provided the position of the non-Communist world in Indochina is steadily strengthened over the next 2 or 3 years. If progress is made in the military and political fields along the lines previously mentioned, and if American aid continues, the Communist threat in southeast Asia can be dissolved.

Only an outright invasion by the Chinese Communists would be likely to rescue the Viet Minh from defeat in time at the hands of the expanding non-Communist power in the Associated States. If such an invasion were to occur, however, it would create an entirely new situation of international aggression. On September 2, 1953, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, in a speech before the American Legion convention in St. Louis, warned that such an aggression "could not occur without grave consequences which might not be confined to Indochina."

While present plans of the French and the Associated States must necessarily envision essentially a military solution to the problem of the Communist advance, a negotiated settlement based on the Korean precedent is by no means ruled out by France. A truce in Indochina, however, as anywhere in dealing with the Communists, depends on strength, not weakness. On September 15, 1953, the Chinese Communist regime proposed a Korean-like peace conference on Indochina. The French have repeatedly indicated their willingness to enter into negotiations to this end and the desire for peace is strong in the Associated States. The Viet Minh under Ho Chi-minh, however, so far have spurned all overtures which might lead to a termination of hostilities, probably because they still believe that they can win.

In these circumstances, continuance of the present three-pronged effort in Indochina is of the utmost importance. The Communists may become more receptive to a cessation of hostilities once they are faced with the certainty of ultimate defeat. That is why they must be convinced that the French mean to pursue a course leading to the establishment and preservation of the independence of the

three States. They must be convinced that the three States, in turn, have the will and popular support necessary to fight for their national freedom. They must be convinced, finally, that we are prepared to stay with the struggle until the liberty of this area is assured.

And the need to stay with it is clear because the issue for us is not Indochina alone. Nor is it just Asia. The issue in this war so many people would like to forget is the continued freedom of the non-Communist world, the containment of Communist aggression, and the welfare and security of our country.

APPENDIXES

Appendix I

Background Information on Indochina

The Indochina peninsula forms the southeasternmost extremity of continental Asia. To the north is China. Burma and Thailand border on the west. The Gulf of Tonkin and the China Sea lie to the east, while the Gulf of Siam is to the south. Indochina is comprised of three separate States: Vietnam on the east, extending from the China border to the extreme south; Laos, in the northwest hinterland; and Cambodia, in the southwest. The State of Vietnam includes the areas previously known as Tonkin in the north, Annam in the center, and Cochin China in the south. Hanoi is the principal city in the Tonkin Delta and Saigon, the capital of Vietnam, the principal city in the Mekong Delta. Pnom Penh is the capital of Cambodia and Luang Prabang the capital of Laos.

The population of Vietnam is 23 million, Cambodia 3½ million, and Laos 1½ million. Three-fourths of the Indochinese live on the coastal plains on one-tenth of the total land surface. Ninety percent of the population is rural. The total area of Indochina, 285,640 square miles, is about twice the size of the State of Montana.

Rice production predominates in the Indochinese economy. About five-sixths of the cultivated land produces rice. Prior to World War II Indochina was the world's third largest rice-exporting country with Cochin China the principal exporting region. Rubber production has developed rapidly in Cochin China and Cambodia since 1911, with some 69,000 tons exported in 1939. Other agricultural products include sugar, cotton, corn, tea, coffee, silk, lac, and spices. The high mountain ranges of the north produce hardwoods, bamboo, herbs, and vegetable oils. Laos is a primary source of teakwood. High-grade anthracite coal, iron, manganese, zinc, and wolfram are mined in Tonkin. Laos produces tin.

Indochinese industries are largely of the conversion type and include rice mills, distilleries, sugar refineries, spinning and textile mills, tobacco-manufacturing, lime and cement works, paper mills, and chemical plants. Although heavier industry had begun to develop between the two World Wars, the war and unrest which followed has stopped any significant industrial expansion.

When the French returned to Indochina in 1945 rice exports had dropped to one-tenth of the prewar level. They have not yet regained their former position. Rubber production in 1952 had almost returned to the prewar level. The transportation system built by the French has deteriorated during 12 years of war and rebellion. Shortages of technical personnel and investment capital retard industrial development. Problems related to a high population density in the Tonkin delta, absentee landlordism in south Vietnam, and high interest rates on agricultural loans persist. While some gains have been made since World War II, significant economic recovery has been retarded by continuing internal hostilities.

The French colony of Cochin-China and the protectorates of Annam, Tonkin, Laos, and Cambodia were federated in 1887 to form the Union of Indochina. Under French rule the colony enjoyed certain benefits of western education, sanitation, and material progress. Railroads were built, canals and harbors dredged, mines developed, rubber plantations established, and rice culture expanded. French medical services gained wide recognition. French cultural institutions were intermingled with the indigenous. French became a second language of the educated classes.

As nationalism and anticolonialism spread throughout Asia it found support in Indochina. During the 1920's various national movements challenged the French authority. French prestige was crippled by the Japanese occupation during World War II, and the Indochinese desire for independence was nurtured by the postwar attainment of independence by the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, India, and Pakistan.

In March 1945 Japan proclaimed the end of Indochina's colonial status, removed the Vichy administration from office, and recognized indigenous regimes. In Annam the Emperor Bao Dai proclaimed an independent State of Vietnam. With the surrender of Japan in August 1945, Bao Dai transferred his authority to a government headed by Ho Chi-minh and became an adviser in that government. France quickly regained control in Laos and Cambodia and, by an agreement of March 6, 1946, with the Ho Chi-minh government, recognized the Republic of Vietnam as a free State having its own government, parliament, army, and finances, and forming a part of the Indochinese Federation and the French Union. The entry of Cochin China into the Republic of Vietnam was to be determined by a plebiscite. Discussions with the Ho government eventually broke down and Ho Chi-minh's forces commenced an armed insurrection against the French. During a temporary truce Ho demanded a greater degree of sovereignty than France was willing to concede. In December 1946 full-scale war commenced which has continued to date.

In September 1947, France opened discussions with Bao Dai, who had in the meantime broken his connections with Ho Chi-minh, for the establishment of an indigenous government. Basic agreements were signed in Paris March 8, 1949. France agreed that Cochin China would become part of an independent and self-governing State of Vietnam within the framework of the French Union. Under the agreement France retained a measure of control over the Vietnamese Army and the right to maintain military forces in Vietnam. Vietnamese foreign policy was to be coordinated with that of France through the High Council of the French Union. Vietnam's currency was linked with the franc and the French retained certain administrative controls.

Bao Dai assumed office June 23, 1949, and sovereignty was formally transferred February 2, 1950. In July 1949, a similar treaty was signed with the Kingdom of Laos and in November with the Kingdom of Cambodia. In conferences at Pau, France, ending in November 1950, clarifying agreements were reached.

The association of the three States within the framework of the French Union provided the basis of their title, "Associated States of Indochina." The three States were recognized by the United States and Britain in February 1950. Subsequently recognition was extended by some 30 other powers. Their applications for membership in the United Nations were vetoed by the Soviet Union. However, the States are members of several U. N. subsidiary agencies. In October 1950, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia took part in the London meeting of the Consultative Committee on the Colombo Plan and, in September 1951, delegates of these States signed the Japanese Peace Treaty in San Francisco.

On July 3, 1953, France agreed to negotiate with Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia with a view to transferring to the three States some of the functions and powers which had been retained by France under the earlier agreements.

The most pressing problem in Indochina is the military conflict with the Communist-led Viet Minh. The Viet Minh League for Independence was founded in China in 1941 as a coalition of Indochinese nationalist movements under Communist domination. During the immediate postwar period its propaganda made little or no mention of communism and popular support was sought by stressing the theme of national independence. The Viet Minh leader, Ho Chi-minh, a Communist organizer with experience in France, the Soviet Union, China, and Thailand, had organized the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930. When the Japanese withdrew from Indochina in 1945 they left behind large quantities of arms and ammunition which fell into the hands of Ho Chi-minh. With this materiel, the Viet Minh forces were able to launch a surprise attack on the French garrison in Hanoi in December 1946.

APPENDIX 2

NOTES ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE ASSOCIATED STATES

VIETNAM

Bao Dai, upon assuming power as the Chief of State, declared that the people of Vietnam would have the right to choose their own form of government at some future date; that, in the meantime, government would be by ordinance and decree. The government is directed by a Premier who is President of a nominated

Provisional National Council. Nguyen Van Tam, the present Premier, was appointed in June 1952.

The first nationwide election under the Bao Dai regime was held in January 1953. The election was on a local basis for municipal and village councils and was limited to non-Viet Minh areas. At the time of the election it was announced that newly elected municipal councils would later choose Provincial Councils, which in turn would nominate members of three regional assemblies. The regional bodies would select representatives to a national assembly.

The government of Nguyen Van Tam has energetically approached the administrative problems involved in the transition from a colonial to a national civil service. Defense appropriations have been doubled. Premier Tam has given publicity to French and American aid programs while pressing for the allocation of American aid directly to Vietnamese authorities rather than through France.

Political opposition to Premier Nguyen Van Tam has centered in certain nationalist groups which have always opposed the Viet Minh or have defected from it. These groups, which include such powerful politico-religious sects as the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, favor complete independence for Vietnam and oppose the more conciliatory position of Bao Dai and Premier Van Tam toward France.

Following the announcement of France in July 1953 of a willingness to negotiate a modification of the pacts with the Associated States, Bao Dai moved to gain the increased support of the nationalists. Upon departing in September for preliminary discussions with the French Government in Paris he announced that he was spokesman for all segments of the Vietnamese population and would press for complete independence of Vietnam as well as for a free association with France in a union grouping sovereign and friendly peoples.

CAMBODIA

King Norodom Sihanouk, at the close of World War II, affirmed his loyalty to France and, on March 7, 1946, signed a provisional agreement providing for French direction of Cambodia's foreign policy and matters affecting the Indochinese Federation. At the same time the King set in motion the transformation of the absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy and the creation of a unicameral legislative assembly elected by universal adult male suffrage. An electoral law was promulgated in May 1946, and members of the legislative assembly were elected in September 1946. Three political parties emerged: the Democrats favoring a maximum of autonomy; the Progressives desiring gradual political evolution; and the Liberals urging French control. In the election the Democrats gained 50 of the 57 seats. A constitution was promulgated on May 6, 1947.

During the immediate postwar period Cambodian political affairs have also been affected by the Issarak or Free Cambodia movement. This militant organization of Cambodians in Thailand and Vietnam affiliated with the Viet Minh in 1948. King Norodom responded to the threat of armed rebellion to gain complete independence from France by assuming for himself the position of leadership in the nationalist movement. While in New York City, in April 1953, King Norodom publicized Cambodia's grievances against France. Upon returning to Cambodia he dramatized Cambodia's desire for complete independence by going into temporary exile in Thailand. Cambodia has expressed dissatisfaction with the present pacts governing economic relations among the Associated States and has attempted to break the hold of Saigon on the Cambodian economy by modernizing the port of Pnom-Penh and by orienting her trade toward Thailand.

In September 1953, Cambodian Premier Penn Nouth made a public statement to the effect that Cambodia would remain neutral toward Viet Minh forces in Vietnam so long as they left Cambodia in peace. The Foreign Minister, Strit Matak, however, sought quickly to allay adverse reactions in the United States and France by issuing a statement repudiating the neutralist stand and affirming Cambodia's loyalty to the free world.

LAOS

King Sisavang Vong is the head of the State. The aging monarch entrusts the affairs of state to his son, Crown Prince Savang Vathana. The basic agreement defining the relationship of Laos to France and the French Union is similar to the agreement of France with Cambodia. A constitution guaranteeing democratic freedoms to the Laotian peoples was promulgated May 11, 1947. Legislative power is exercised by a national assembly elected by direct universal suffrage.

APPENDIX 3

TEXT OF THE DECLARATION OF JULY 3, 1953, ON INDOCHINA BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT

The Government of the French Republic, meeting in Council of Ministers, has examined the relations of France with the Associated States of Indochina.

It considers that the time has come to adapt the agreements made by them with France to the position which they have acquired, with her full support, in the community of free peoples.

Respectful of national traditions and human freedoms, France has led Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam to the full flowering of their personality and has maintained their national unity in the course of cooperation over nearly a century.

By the agreements of 1949, she recognized their independence and they agreed to associate themselves with her in the French Union.

The Government of the Republic wishes today to make a solemn declaration.

During the period of 4 years which has elapsed since the signature of the agreements, the brotherhood of arms between the armies of the French Union and the national armies of the Associated States has been further strengthened thanks to the development of the latter, which are taking daily a more important part in the fight against the common enemy.

In the same period, the civil institutions of the three nations have put themselves in a position to assume the whole powers incumbent on modern states, while the voice of their governments has been heard by the majority of countries composing the United Nations organization.

In these conditions, France considers that there are grounds to complete the independence and sovereignty of the Associated States of Indochina in assuring, with the agreement of each of the three interested governments, the transfer of the functions that France has still retained in the interests of the States themselves, because of the perilous circumstances resulting from the state of war.

The French Government has decided to invite each of the three governments to come to an agreement with it on the settlement of questions which each of them may deem it necessary to raise in the economic, financial, judicial, military, and political fields, in respect of and safeguarding the legitimate interests of each of the contracting parties.

The Government of the Republic expresses the wish that agreement on these various points may strengthen the friendship which unites France and the Associated States within the French Union.

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