

(Morgan Gandy)

SAIGON, 08200, (UPIS)--Buddhist politico-priests in colorful, flowing robes of chocolate brown, canary yellow or saffron orange are the pivoting political hinge on which swings the fate of Vietnam--and of the enormous American military, economic and political commitment here.

"The role of the Buddhist leaders is the same as a door hinge," one well-informed Vietnamese intellectual explained. "They can swing the door of Vietnam in any direction--towards war or towards peace, towards the conference table or the battlefield. Both the United States and the Communists can use the Buddhists for negotiations to settle the Vietnam war."

The "crunch question," as one Western official explained, was whether the Buddhists would ~~pivot~~ ^{OR to} pivot more to the Communist side ~~than~~ the American side.

Both Western and diplomatic sources agree that the ~~Buddhist~~ militant Buddhist organization has been infiltrated by the covert Viet Cong Communist agents--but ~~no~~ ³ none of these sources would even "guess" ~~how far the process has gone~~ the extent of this subversive process.

(More--Miller -BD)

"The dimensions of the Buddhist-oriented power is growing by the minute," ~~the~~ the Vietnamese intellectual continued.

"It is the Buddhist leaders who are now making policy in Vietnam--
~~washington, the American Embassy~~ and the Saigon government ^{is} are only reacting.

"It is only the grace of the Buddhist monks--notrptnot the support of LBJ--that determines whether Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky can survive. It is only the Buddhist priests in the northern provinces that can ^{fuel} ~~quiet~~ the civil insurrection--notrptnot ^{There ARE} thirty five thousand American Marines." ^{NOTRPTNOT}

"The rampaging Buddhist-inspired demonstrators can-- ^{indirectly} without firing a shot--confine all American troops in the cities to their zoo-like compounds protected by barbed wire. Not even the Communists with all their military force can do that."

(More--Miller--ED)

In ~~the~~ May, nineteen sixty three, the Buddhists began their movement of protest against the regime of the late President Ngo Dinh Diem, a Roman Catholic. When Diem was toppled by military coup d'etat ~~in~~ six months later in November, the Buddhist leadership began to consolidate its ~~ste~~ strength--and its power ~~is~~ slowly blossomed. Since then it has become a vital third force expanding between the Communists on the one extreme and the anti-Communist governments on the other extreme. ~~The~~ Sources close ~~to~~ to the Vietnamese government argue that the Buddhist leadership has consistently had three political choices: to protest against the Communists, to remain neutral or to protest against the various Saigon governments. These sources contend that ~~full~~ the full impact of the Buddhist power has only been directed at the ~~anti-Communist governments, and~~ Saigon regimes--and not ~~not~~ against the Communists. When the Buddhists were neutral, they only consolidated their ranks for the next protest thrust at the Saigon ~~regimes,~~ ^{GOVERNMENTS,} these sources say.

(More--Miller--ED)

One of the leading "policy-making" Buddhist monks is named Thich (Venerable) ~~th~~ Tri Quang, eye steely, enigmatic forty-three year old priest who was born in ~~the~~ the ~~unpublished~~ home province ~~of~~ of such revolutionary Vietnamese as President Ho Chi Minh, now President of North Vietnam.

According to inside sources and faithful followers of the enigmatic monk, this is an immediate ~~step~~ step-by-step ~~of~~ ^{REVIEW} of Tri Quang's strategy:

1. Election within three months in government-controlled areas for eye constitutional ~~body~~ assembly to draft--and approve immediately--the ~~constitution~~ national constitution. (Prime Minister ^{to} ~~body~~ body to half-elected and half-nominated Ky wants this in four to six months--and approved by eye ~~referendu~~ referendum.)
2. The ~~constitutional~~ constitutional assembly ~~will~~ would also draft regulations for the election of eye legislative body.

(More--Miller--BD)

fourth add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x legislative body x x x.

elected

3. This legislative body, composed only of civilians, would in turn elect a chief of state and name a prime minister-- both civilian. ^S Norpnot Buddhist priest would directly participate-- but the Buddhist-bloc of laymen would be a sizeable.

4. That civilian prime minister would consult religious, political and social groupings to form a cabinet--totally civilian-- to be approved by the legislative body.

5. At this point, Prime Minister Ky, ~~will~~ operating ^{As Ay} as caretaker government, would then turn over power to the new civilian government. At some ^{UNKNOWN} ~~uncertain~~ point before this, the ten-man military junta would be phased out before Ky transitions power. The demise of the military junta, which ~~is~~ is now the legal political base of the government, would either be decided ^{on} by the constitutional provisions--or by the demonstrations ^{to} and turbulence in the urban centers.

6. Once Ky has transitioned power to the new civilian government, ~~at~~ the military generals would ~~must~~ give up their political role and return solely to military matters.

7. Having accomplished all this, one of the first major ~~one~~ questions to be discussed in the legislative would be whether or notpnot american and allied troops should be allowed to stay in Vietnam--how many troops, their exact geographic positioning, and ^{their} military role.

8. The role of the American and allied troops would be only in support of the Vietnamese.

(More--Miller--BD)

There would be no more "American only" operations, under an American commander, but independent from the Vietnamese troops. The American naval gunfire, airpower and artillery would support the Vietnamese troops only on request.

9. The Vietnamese government would present an economic aid budget, to be requested from the American governments and other foreign governments, and this would then be discussed with the American government.

"But ~~+~~ Tri Quang does not want surplus foreign aid dumped on the heads of the Vietnamese," the source explained. "He wants economic aid that will develop the country."

10. On the social side, the Vietnamese population would act as "watchdogs" to see that government officials act efficiently and honestly and that the Vietnamese troops are well behaved with the population.

(More--Miller--ED)

sixth add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x the population. x x x

"This is ^{1/2} ~~the~~ ^{CHAOS OR} Tri Quang plan--and he is determined to carry it out whether by ~~trick~~ or intrigue or persuasion," one reliable Vietnamese politician explained.

The ~~five~~ followers of Tri Quang explained that the basic ~~pres~~ premises of ~~this~~ this strategy were based on aye combination of religious plus nationalistic factors. The Buddhist ~~religion~~ religion would be given special status, but less than ~~the status~~ ^{That} of the state religion, and would be considered the "religion of the people." ~~That~~ Tri Quang is attempting to have Buddhism become the spokesman of all the non-Catholic religions. He considers ^{AYE} ~~the Catholics,~~ ^{CATHOLICISM,} of which ~~which control~~ roughly ten percent of the people, are followers, to be "an imported religion," with ^{ITS} ~~their~~ first allegiance to the Vatican rather than Vietnam.

(More--Miller--ED)

seventh add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x than Vietnam x x x.

On secular affairs, Buddhism, which he considers the "religion of the people" would become inter-twined with Vietnamese nationalism and these two forces would be directed at both the "foreign imported ~~real~~ ideology of Communism," as well as the "imported" Western influence on the Vietnamese economy, social and culture ~~aspects~~.

(Communism, ^{Cadre,} before the seizure of power, rarely portray themselves as ~~ant~~ atheistic to the population and are considered in Vietnam to be the ultra-nationalists. The Communist cadre preach nationalism rather than Marxist-Leninism to the population they are attempting to convert.)

Tri Quang, according to these sources, has divided the Vietnamese society into three categories: the Communists and pro-Communists "who exploit Vietnamese nationalism for tactical reasons;" the ~~the~~ true Vietnamese nationalists who ~~are being exploited~~ have been exploited by the French colonialists and the "dictatorial" Diem regime, and are currently exploited by the foreigners as well as by the Communists, and ^{Small} a ~~small~~ minority of "war profiteers", into which he lumps Vietnamese generals, government officials and Vietnamese traders.

(more--Miller--ED)

eighth add---morgan gandy---saigon

x x x vietnamese traders x x x

At this moment, if the Buddhist leadership does not obtain
~~the~~ aye government that carries out Tri Quang's plan, the *militar*
politico-priests ~~will~~ are expected to intensify their ~~ag~~ agitation
~~and~~ either against it or within it.

But, if Tri Quang's plan is carried out, the unknown
factor is whether ~~his first enemy~~ he considers his first enemy
to be the "imported" ideology of ~~Communist~~ Communism, or the
"imported" American troops.

(Endit-Miller---ED)