HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM

HEARINGS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

JUNE 16, 21, AND JULY 26, 1977

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
93-996
WASHINGTON : 1977

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402
Stock Number 052-070-04262-1
HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 1977

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2:05 p.m. in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building. Hon. Donald M. Fraser (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. Fraser. Today the subcommittee begins its third hearing on human rights in Vietnam. During the two previous hearings held last month on this subject, the testimony assessing the situation in Vietnam was wide ranging, most of it from witnesses who have recently visited Vietnam. Although we have no political and commercial relations with Vietnam, in light of the steps taken toward normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam, it is important that we remain informed of the situation.

Our witness today is Mr. Nguyen Cong Hoan, one of the few South Vietnamese who served as a member of the National Assembly in Hanoi. He represented the South Vietnamese province of Phu Khanh in the Assembly. As a member of the Hanoi Assembly Mr. Hoan served on its Cultural and Educational Committee.

Previously, under the Thieu regime, Mr. Hoan was a member of the Saigon Assembly and was known for his opposition to Thieu's government.

In March of this year Mr. Hoan fled Vietnam from Nha Trang in the southern part of the country and went to Japan. He arrived in the United States a few days ago.

Mr. Hoan, the subcommittee is happy to see you here today. I understand that you have a prepared statement.

Mr. Tran. Your honor, my name is George Tran and I am serving as interpreter for Mr. Hoan. I will now read the statement in English so that the audience can understand it.

Mr. Fraser. That's fine, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF NGUYEN CONG HOAN, FORMER MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTING PHU KHANH PROVINCE

Mr. Hoan. First, let me express my sincere appreciation and thanks to this committee for giving me the opportunity to bring my testimony here today. It was to bring this testimony to the outside world that I

1 Mr. Hoan's statement was given through an interpreter, Mr. George Tran.

(145)
have escaped from Vietnam, leaving behind my family to considerable hardship, possible death. But the suffering of my family is nothing in comparison to the suffering of millions of my countrymen.

The U.S. consulate in Japan notified me of my departure for the United States only in the evening of Friday, July 22, 1977, therefore leaving me very little time for rest and preparation for the testimony. Moreover, in this 15-minute opening statement, I cannot elaborate on any subject. I just mention the subjects and shall be glad to the best of my knowledge to give information on any subjects mentioned or not mentioned here. Please ask questions.

I was, as you all know, a member of the new Unified Assembly and a member of its Subcommittee on Culture and Education, therefore a member of the new ruling class with all the prerogatives attached to it. I lived better than under Mr. Thieu. I would not trade the security of this position against the dangers and hazards of an escape by fishing boat if I did not feel strongly enough about what I saw and heard in Vietnam for 2 years, both in North and South Vietnam. I saw it from both the ruling class point of view and from the people's point of view. I decided I must go.

Today, although South Vietnam has fallen under Communist rule, the ideal of liberty still remains well alive in the hearts of our people. Given the new rule, many like myself come to better appreciate the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Popular dissatisfaction has gained every strata of Vietnamese society. I firmly believe that our people will succeed in our struggle to liberate ourselves and to recuperate our lost freedom and human rights if the United States and other free world nations will only refrain themselves from giving the Communist government additional weapons to oppress and exterminate those who are still struggling.

Gentlemen, our people have a traditional attachment to their country. No Vietnamese would willingly leave home, homeland and ancestors' graves. During the most oppressive French colonial rule and Japanese domination, no one escaped by boat at great risk to their lives. Yet you see that my countrymen by the thousands and from all walks of life, including a number of disillusioned Vietcongs, continue to escape from Vietnam; 6 out of 10 never made it and for those who are fortunate to make it, they are not allowed to land.

Our people so much hate war and are so exhausted by war, yet as unbelievable as it may seem they are ready to continue the struggle for many more years to liberate themselves from the most inhuman and oppressive regime they have ever known.

The reason for this determination is because they can no longer endure the total suppression of human rights and see no future for their children. My case is an example.

I come here to convey to you the real situation in Vietnam. On the heads of my mother, my wife, and four children I swear to tell only the truth as I see it.

I would be happier if I could freely talk to my people but as you well know the Communists do not allow opposition, do not permit anyone to criticize the state policies even in a timid manner and with constructive intent.

In Vietnam today it is the dictatorship of the Communist Party.
The Government can arrest, execute, deport, expropriate, tax, withdraw rice allowance, fire from employment, ban from schools, forbid traveling and do many more things to the people without specific charges or explanation.

All the basic rights are suppressed.

The right to run for public office: Each candidate must be presented by the party.

Freedom of expression: All the mass media, TV, radio, newspapers, publishing houses are controlled by the Government. Each newspaper article is carefully censored before printing.

Freedom of thought: No one has the right to express any thought, idea, misgivings that are contrary to the official line. Whoever does will be considered “reactionary” and will be sent to reeducation camp.

Liberty of residence: The ordinary citizen does not have the right to change his place of residence. Destitute malaria-infected “new economic areas” are used to send families of the officials and officers of the former regime while their urban homes are being occupied by the cadres or Bo-Doi.

All the four religions of Vietnam—Buddhism, Catholicism, Cao-Dai and Hoa-Hao Buddhism—are considered reactionary, “the opium of the people” and are under intense persecution. The persecution is subtle and pernicious.

Individuals and political parties once involved in the preservation of democratic liberties in South Vietnam, even those closely allied with the National Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government are behind bars; some are the target of revenge and retaliation. Most will be kept indefinitely in reeducation camps and many are deported to the North.

Reeducation camp inmates are prisoners, not students. (I have an official document to this effect.)

Gentlemen, I attended a number of top policy meetings in Hanoi during my several months stay there. Communist Vietnam has not renounced their aggressive intent toward its neighbors. It sends weapons not only to Laos but also to Communist insurgents in Thailand, Malaysia. Vietnam also sells arms worth some $2 billion to other nations.

In spite of peace, the Government keeps its whole army in active duty.

Under a plan of general mobilization, all able-bodied men and women between the age of 18 and 25 must register for active military duty.

During my stay in the North I heard news about MIA’s. I was also given the opportunity to understand the Government’s policy in dealing with the United States on this issue.

Gentlemen, I appreciate your concern in seeking the truth about Vietnam. Regarding other witnesses, visiting journalists and dignitaries who toured Vietnam for a few days or weeks and give a rosy picture of Vietnam, I would like to present what I know about it.

The Government never allows any foreign individuals or organization or any independent observers to come to Vietnam and see the truth for themselves.
When a foreign visitor is about to visit Vietnam the authorities will arrange the places he will visit, the scenes he will see, the contacts he will talk to. Even if he meets someone in the streets and talks to him, the encounter has been prearranged. No Vietnamese dares to talk to a foreigner unless he is given permission to do so. The Government needs aid for reconstruction and uses those visits and visitors to press for aid back in the States. These PR activities are being given top priorities in Hanoi.

The Government maintains a few show camps, model work site and a number of contacts on hand for this purpose. No one is allowed to say anything to a foreign visitor without clearing it first with the authorities. Whoever says anything that will be judged detrimental to the new regime will be severely punished.

Any investigation of conditions inside so-called reeducation camps, if ever permitted, would have to take into account the police atmosphere and the workings behind the bamboo curtain. The personal safety of the witnesses must be guaranteed if the investigator is to find any truth at all.

I escaped to Japan with three companions, two of whom are congressmen from the former South Vietnam Assembly. Like myself, all of them have left their families in Vietnam. They are still in Japan, confined to the fishing village where we lived during the past months.

May I appeal to you to help them gain admittance to the United States? This is an appeal from an elected representative to elected representatives on behalf of elected representatives.

Once more, may I express my gratitude to the subcommittee for the invitation, particularly to the chairman and Representative Derwinski for his sympathy and support.

Thank you.

[Mr. Hoan's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Nguyen Cong Hoan, Former Member of the National Assembly Representing Phu Khanh Province

First, let me start by stating a few facts about myself. My name is Nguyen Cong Hoan. I am 34 years of age, born in 1943 in the province of Phu Yen, Central Vietnam. By profession, I was a high school teacher of physics and chemistry since 1967 when I graduated from college with a B.A. in Physical Sciences. I have never belonged to a political party nor have I ever served in an executive branch position in Vietnam, before or after the fall of South Vietnam. In 1971 I ran for the first time as candidate for a National Assembly seat representing Phu Yen, my native province, and won to become a member of the Opposition Bloc led by Representative-Lawyer Tran Van Tuyen. In 1973 because of my past association with the Buddhist youth peace movement (while still a student) I was appointed Commissioner for Buddhist University Student Affairs in Charge of Central Vietnam, working under Venerable Thich Giac Duc, the then Commissioner-General for Youth Affairs, Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam. In 1974, I joined the National Reconciliation Force headed by Senator Vu Van Man to in an effort to set up a viable Third Force that would play a central role in a neutral postwar Vietnam.

After the fall of Saigon I went back to teaching. In the spring of 1976 the Front nominated me to stand as a candidate representing Phu Khanh (a combination of two former provinces, Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa) and subsequently on April 26, 1976 I was elected to the first unified National Assembly of Vietnam with 94.99 percent of the votes. Since then I have participated in two sessions of the National Assembly in Hanoi, one in June 1976 and one in January 1977. As a member of the Committee on Culture and Education I have also participated in
three sessions of this committee, twice in Hanoi and once in Saigon. Because of this and extensive travel in the North (which included Nghe An, Son Tay, Hai Hung, Nam Dinh, and of course Hanoi) I can say with a measure of confidence that I am aware of the situation both north and south of the 17th Parallel. Because of my legislator's duties I was privileged to travel widely in my province, which exposed me to much public contact both before and after April 30, 1975. And because of my legislative work I had access to many reports and discussions dealing with national objectives, long-term projections and official policies of the government.

A PERPETUAL THREAT TO LIFE

Based on these experiences I can categorically say that the present government of Vietnam is a dictatorship run by the Communist Party of Vietnam. In such a regime the common person lives in a situation of perpetual threat to his life. Although no bloodbath has taken place in Saigon or the major cities of the South as it had been widely feared, based on the Tet 1968 experience in Hue, in the provinces where there are no observers eliminations and killings have occurred on a widespread scale and under many forms, some so subtle that no outside observers can possibly detect.

For instance, in a typical province which I know well since it is my own, Phu Yen, directly after the Communist takeover around 500 people were killed en masse in a forested area of Hoa Quang Village, Tuy Hoa District, Phu Yen Province, around 15 kilometers west of Tuy Hoa town. The victims of this mass execution were Dai Viet party members, police, intelligence and Phoenix officers, people with an anti-Communist record, and hoa chanh's. Some 200 other people have been eliminated in the days that followed and in the last two years. No one dares to reveal about the death of his loved ones, and no one dares either to complain about such deaths.

In the rest of Central Vietnam, as far as I can determine the same thing has also been happening. There is no such thing as the rights of habeas corpus. And if the government is entirely in the hands of one party, with no independent press, with the executive, legislative and judiciary all lumped into one, then what can a person do to proclaim an injustice done to him in the present situation of total isolation from the outside world?

Among those personally known to me who have fallen victim to the authorities' policy of revenge are:

Le Van A, former ARVN captain, who used to live on Tran Hung Dao Street, Tuy Hoa, in front of the Phu Yen Hospital. A was a very close friend of mine.

Venerable Thich Dieu Dan, Deputy Representative of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Phu Yen Province, was suspected of being a CIA agent because he had in his possession a certificate of appreciation from the U.S. Consulate for his assistance in the search for MIA's. He was killed.

Mr. Tran Pho, a teacher in Song Can, the paternal uncle of Tran Quang Hiep, my private secretary, was killed with a machete at Le Uyen.

Mr. Nguyen Hua Tri, a Dai Viet party member formerly of Song Can, was buried alive.

Mr. Truong Tu Thien, a Dai Viet party leader, was arrested in January 1976 in Saigon, then brought back to Nha Trang to be eliminated after extremely atrocious tortures.

Many others died in concentration camps, the victims of overwork, malnutrition, extremely unhealthy sanitary conditions, a near total lack of water and medicine. Tens of thousands of people in the southern part of the country have also fallen, and their relatives, I am sure, would be more than willing to divulge the information if only they be guaranteed from reprisal.

THE LOSS OF FREEDOMS

1. The rights to vote and to run for public office do not exist for the simple reason that, be it the National Assembly election of April 25, 1976, or any other since, nobody has the right to volunteer his candidacy. The very first prerequisite is that one be proposed and nominated by the Front, i.e. the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam in the South or the Fatherland Front in the North. The right to vote, too, is a caricature since one is forced to do so when one knows for certain that the results have all been predetermined. It is true that a number of former so-called Third Force elements were voted into the National Assembly, for instance, Mrs. Ngo Ba Thanh or Professor Ly Chanh Trung, but these were
elected more to deceive world public opinion rather than anything else. All these elements do not in any case amount to more than five percent, and it is easy to see that they are totally helpless in a situation when more than 95 percent are staunch Party members taking always the party line.

2. The freedom of the press and of publication is reduced to the existence of two official dailies in North Vietnam, Nhan Dan (The People) and Quan Doi Nhan Dan (People's Army), and two official or near official daily organs in the South, Saigon Giai Phong (Liberated Saigon) and Tin Sang (Morning News). Not a single independent Vietnamese or foreign journalist is allowed free circulation in the country, including those coming from communist countries.

All publication rights belong to the state which manages all printing presses and other printing supplies like paper, ink, etc. All publications that are not published by the government are banned, including religious texts and science textbooks.

3. The freedom of expression is unknown. Even though I was a National Assembly representative, I had no right to express myself at such a forum nor can I refuse to read a report there if I am assigned to read one. The report usually is one written beforehand or even when it is written by one, it is usually written under the supervision of the head of the delegation. After each National Assembly session, the various delegations are expected to report back to their electorates but only in strict accordance with the guidelines already written up by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly. Even representatives to the National Assembly are not supposed to talk to foreign journalists unless they have the green light from the head of their delegations. We were reminded that all foreign journalists are potential spies, including those who came from communist countries.

As far as the people are concerned, any meeting involving more than two or three persons outside the family is immediately suspect and those involved can be requested by public security officers to give a report of what they have talked about. Should there be a discrepancy between the reports, they can be immediately arrested for further investigation.

All large family gatherings for purposes of a wedding or funeral must have the previous permission of the authorities who would send public security officers to be present at the scene.

4. The freedom of thought is totally circumscribed. The Communist Party believes that “in order to build socialism it is necessary to have a new-type socialist man and to build this new-type socialist man one must carry out a cultural and ideological revolution.” And so, in the name of this revolution, the authorities force the population into an unbreathable mold including:

Daily doses of indoctrination meant to inculcate into the population the basic tenets of communism. In this regard all other thoughts that deviate from Marxism-Leninism are branded reactionary or counterrevolutionary, and the communist cadres are the final arbiters as to how far one deviates from the party line so as to determine the proper sanction. Here there are no laws that apply or courts that one can appeal to.

Writers who have been published in the past are considered reactionary and therefore have to undergo long term indoctrination. This case is of Duyeto Anh, Vu Hoang Chuong, Nha Ca, Nguyen Manh Con, and many, many others. Those not sent to reeducation camps are subjected to another form of treatment less cruel, that is mutual recrimination and criticism. They are forced to come out with denunciations of one another and at each stage, a few would be singled out as targets for all the others to point their backs at. This form of treatment has caused several former writers and artists to become crazy, such as the case of Nguyen Thi Hoang, the famed woman author of Vong Ta Hoc Tuo (“In A Student's Arms”) who is now living in Nha Trang.

As far as the fate of the performing artists are concerned, a number have been arrested, others forbidden to perform, while the rest are allowed to do so but only under the strict guidance of communist cadres.

All the songs created by composers other than the officially approved communist ones are banned, including those that deal with the love of the country or the love of peace. The pretext given for such banning is that these songs encourage a mood of wistful yearning for the past, i.e. the previous regime.

But the crucial importance is attached by the communists to the field of education. All the lessons taught in class have to be approved beforehand and they must include what is called the “ideological content.” This applies even in the
case of such fields as mathematics, physics and chemistry. The teachers are expressly forbidden to teach anything that would fall outside the purview of officially approved textbooks. Official textbooks, it is said, are considered to be the law. To such an extent that a theorem or definition may be misrepresented and the teacher would still not be allowed to make the correction. To do so would be considered a gross misdemeanor, a tampering with the law.

All the teachers and students, whether at university or high school level, have to attend the political and indoctrination sessions organized by the party, at the end of which they are expected to put down what they have learned.

5. The freedom of religion in a communist society of course is a contradiction in terms. With its slogan, “Everything for the edification of socialism,” the Communist Party of Vietnam looks at religions as the main obstacles to such an end, which therefore determines the extreme repression they are subjected to.

In my travels in North Vietnam I had a mind to find out about the religious situation there after thirty years of communist rule. What I found is that there is almost no religious life left in the country. Even in such areas as Quynh Lai District, Nghe An Province, which boasts of a quarter population of Catholics the state of Catholicism there is extremely sad. Most of the churches have been destroyed or requisitioned by the state and the few that are still standing are attended on Sunday by only a few older people. As for the situation of Buddhism in North Vietnam, most of the better known temples are now kept as sightseeing places. Not a single young monk is found therein, only a few and very old priests are still practicing the religion which is in clear danger of disappearing. With the last priests will also have died.

In the South the training to become monk or priest is expressly forbidden. It is claimed that “to practice the profession of monk or priest is to betray the nation” and that “monks and priests are crooks disguised as proletarians.” This quotation comes directly from a speech given by Mr. Nguyen Xuan Huu, Central Committee member, Party Secretary for the province of Phu Khanh, at the National Liberation Front meeting of June 15, 1976.

Every religious library has been confiscated and the contents burned. All religion-affiliated establishments such as the denominational schools, orphanages, community centers, hospitals and social work centers, have been taken over by the government.

Many of the more prestigious religious leaders have been arrested including:
The An Quang Buddhist leaders Thich Tri Quang, Thich Quang Do, Thich Huyen Quang, Thich Thien Minh, Thich Quang Lien, Thich Thong Bui, Thich Thong Hue, Thich Thuyen An, Thich Thanh The, etc.

Such Catholic leaders as Monsignor Nguyen Van Thuan, Deputy to the Archbishop of Saigon, Father Tran Huu Thanh, leader of the Anti-Corruption Movement, etc.

Hoa Hao leaders such as Mr. Luong Trong Tuong (74 years old), etc.

Cao Dai leaders such as Mr. Tran Quang Vinh (73 years old), etc.
The Coconut Monk Mr. Nguyen Thanh Nam and others.

Of these a number have died in prison or been killed such as Father Hoang Quynh, etc.

Even the temples and churches do not escape defacements or deliberate acts of offense such as the throwing to the ground of Buddha’s images or Christ’s statues. According to their plans, these will be replaced by busts of Ho Chi Minh. All religious mass organizations are proclaimed to be illegal and forbidden to meet or carry out activities. All the great religious holidays are no longer considered to be national holidays.

The propaganda machinery of the government is ordered to attack and slander openly the major faiths of Vietnam. A film entitled, “A Holy Day” (Ngay Le Thanh), which was realized after the communist takeover of South Vietnam, is a scurrilous attack on Christianity which depicts in one scene a rape committed by a Catholic father on one of his parishioners on the occasion of the “holy” day. The theater is also enlisted in a vast and ongoing effort to discredit religion. In January 1977 I saw along with the entire body of National Assembly representatives attending that session a cai luong (“renovated theater”) piece played by the Central Cai-Luong Troupe, the main thrust of which was aimed at the “perversions” of religion. A novel entitled Ruoi Trau (“Gnats”) is also played up as portraying an enlightened view of religion.

While independent religious publications are forbidden and mass organizations made illegal, the government creates others run by communist cadre such
as the publications *Cong Giao va Dan Toc* ("The Catholic and the Nation"), *Giao Ngo* ("Enlightenment"), and the so-called "Patriotic" Buddhists and "Patriotic" Catholic, etc.

In 1963 Venerable Thich Quang Duc burned himself to death to protest the repressions of the Ngo Dinh Diem government, causing worldwide repercussions. On November 2, 1965, twelve Buddhist priests and nuns burned themselves to death in Can Tho to protest the repression of the communists and yet the world remained indifferent. It is precisely because of such reactions that the communists have felt themselves encouraged in their repressive ways.

6. The freedom of residence is also taken away from the Vietnamese people. To control them, the government has invented what they call the "household management" system ("quân li họa"") which calls for an extremely detailed revelation of one's background, which in turn would determine one's place of residence. Thereafter, one is not allowed to change one's residence unless one chooses to go to the so-called New Economic Zones. Many families are ordered to the New Economic Zones, the vast majority of which are people associated in one way or another with the former regime.

The authorities have many ways to force one to move. For instance, one can be threatened to be sent to a reeducation camp or drafted in a labor gang. Essential commodities such as cloth, sugar, medicine, etc., can also be denied one if one refuses compliance. Or again, the children cannot be sent to school if one stays.

In reality, the New Economic Zones are no better than prison camps, all located in remote and insalubrious areas where one must work in collective camps, where one will want everything and thus become totally dependent on the whims of government personnel. It should be realized that under the regimes of President Ngo Dinh Diem and President Nguyen Van Thieu there were also "agrovilles," "New Life Hamlets," etc. But people were never afraid to go there even during the war where there was still a good measure of insecurity involved. But the New Economic Zones are lands of exile that no one in his right mind would choose to go unless forced to do so.

**THE REEDUCATION AND LABOR REFORM POLICY OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS**

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement forbade reprisals and discriminating treatment towards individuals or groups that have cooperated with this or that side. Nonetheless, after the takeover of South Vietnam, the communist authorities ordered everyone belonging to the former government, army and parties to come out and register for reeducation and labor reform.

This policy was applied differently depending on the localities since there did not seem to have been a "standard operation procedure." But in general one can distinguish two types of reeducation, a longterm kind and a short term kind.

Longterm reeducation is indefinite and does not bear a cutting off date. It is reserved for:

- Former ARVN officers.
- Former cadres and personnel in the fields of intelligence, public security, the Phoenix and the Chieu Hai programs.
- Former members of political parties in the South
- Those defined as owning a "blood debt" to the people.
- As for the short term kind of reeducation, then there is a cutoff date and it is reserved for the remaining military personnel and government officials, including even those already in retirement.

The camps reserved for the longterm reeducation people are all located in remote areas of the country, usually in the wooded or mountainous back country. This only leaves out those that are undergoing interrogation and therefore are being detained in the former prisons of the Republic of Vietnam. All the people in camp, however, are called and labelled prisoners on their internal documents but they enjoy none of the privileges and guarantees that still go with the condition of prisoners.

At the end of 1976, the communists published an eight-point policy dealing with this group of people, according to which the amount of time stipulated for spending in camp is three years in the case of those who show progress. Unfortunately, how that progress is going to be measured is not defined. This shows still another form of deception and control practiced by the communists.

According to the reports of those who have been released and also according to my own observations during visits to these camps, the prisoners' spirits
undergo very trying and excruciating experiences. Sometimes I no longer had the feeling they were human. This is the result of extreme physical deprivation. Not only that, they were ill-treated in many ways and under innumerable forms: forced labor, hand detection of mines, filling in of bomb craters, etc.

A few prominent personalities are left out of the camps such as former General Duong Van Minh, former Senators Vu Van Mau and Nguyen Van Huyen, a couple of former oppositionists in the National Assembly, but these exceptions were mostly meant for propaganda purpose (to throw sand on people’s eyes). At any rate, they do not amount to many.

Just to take the case of Phu Yen Province alone, there are seven main prison camps, not to mention the smaller detention camps that are established almost everywhere in order to keep the suspects. The seven camps are:

The central jail of Tuy Hoa. This was the former provincial jail located in the town of Tuy Hoa.

Camp A30 in Lac Chi Hamlet, Hoa Thanh Village, Hieu Xuong District, which contains about 3000 political prisoners.

Camp A20 located at Dong Tre, Xuan Phuoc Village, Dong Xuan District, which contains about 1000 persons who came back to Vietnam on the Viet Nam Thong Tin boat.

The camp complex number 5 that is made up of four separate camps T51, T52, T53, and T54, located in Ngan Dien Hamlet, Son Ha Village, Son Hoa District, contains around 2000 former army officers.

Now my province has a population of 500,000 people and over 6000 people are in jail. Therefore it is easy to project and see that the total number of political prisoners in South Vietnam must come to no less than 200,000 at the minimum.

A number of officers from the ranks of captain and major up and high-ranking civilian cadres in the intelligence, public security and police, chieu hoa, administrative and political party categories, have been sent to the North. Their fate so far is unknown. Many others have also been openly executed simply as “examples” for the others. This was the case of former ARVN captain Huynh Van Luc, for instance, in camp T54. Many more have died as a result of illnesses or diseases, overwork or simply an accident, yet their next-of-kin are almost never notified, nor are they allowed to recover the body for a decent burial.

Many famous politicians have simply disappeared since the day they reported for reeducation. This was the case of Messrs. Vu Hong Khanh, Le Dinh Duy, (former Vietnamese Nationalist Party leaders), Phan Thiep, Nguyen Mau, Doan Mai, etc. Mr. Tran Van Tuyen, President of the Bar Association of Vietnam, who headed the Opposition Bloc in the Lower House, National Assembly of the Republic of Vietnam, is believed to have died in jail.

It is thus apparent that the Communists in Vietnam are not only trampling human rights underfoot, they have absolutely no regard for even the prisoners code universally recognized as a standard of humanity in warfare.

CONCLUSIONS

The above should give one a fair idea of what the Communists are doing to Vietnam and the Vietnamese people in terms of human rights.

Mr. Fraser. Thank you very much, Mr. Hoan.

Do you have any knowledge of English?

Mr. Hoan. Very little, sir.

Mr. Fraser. Do you understand some of it?

Mr. Hoan. Very little, sir.

Mr. Fraser. As I understand it, you were in the National Assembly in Hanoi but before that you were also in the Assembly in Saigon.

Mr. Hoan. That is right, sir.

Mr. Fraser. When were you first elected to the Assembly in Saigon?

Mr. Hoan. It was in October 1971, sir.

Mr. Fraser. What district did you represent then?

Mr. Hoan. At that time it was in Phu Khanh.

Mr. Fraser. Was that your home?

Mr. Hoan. It is my home, sir.
Mr. Fraser. Could I ask how old you were when you were first elected?

Mr. Hoan. I was 28 years old since I was born in 1943.

Mr. Fraser. Had you served in the military of the South Vietnamese Government or Saigon Government?

Mr. Hoan. I never served in the army, sir.

Mr. Fraser. Were you active politically before you ran for the Assembly in October 1971?

Mr. Hoan. At that time mostly I was active on the social field. Some of those activities are against the corruption in the former Thieu regime. I was mostly involved in activities for peace.

Mr. Fraser. With whom did you work in your efforts against corruption and in support of peace?

Mr. Hoan. Mostly in student milieu, among students.

Mr. Fraser. What were you doing for a living at that time?

Mr. Hoan. I was a teacher, sir.

Mr. Fraser. Of what subject?

Mr. Hoan. Physical sciences.

Mr. Fraser. Where were you teaching?

Mr. Hoan. Taberd Institution which is a Catholic institution and Van-Hanh Institution which is a Buddhist institution.

Mr. Fraser. Both in Saigon?

Mr. Hoan. Both in Saigon, sir.

Mr. Fraser. How did you escape your requirement of serving in the military?

Mr. Hoan. According to the law in Vietnam, in 1967 I graduated from the university and I had a B.A. degree. That is why I got the permission to postpone the enrollment for 3 years so that I can prepare a doctorate degree.

Mr. Fraser. What happened at the end of 3 years?

Mr. Hoan. After those 3 years I benefitted from the law which gave me another postponement because I have an old mother of 70 years old that I must support.

Mr. Fraser. Prior to the fall of the Saigon government, did you have any contact with the Liberation Front or the Vietcong?

Mr. Hoan. Before the Vietcong Communists seized Saigon—they seized my province 1 month before they seized Saigon. That is why I happened to know them when they seized my province.

Mr. Fraser. How far is your province from Saigon?

Mr. Hoan. 500 kilometers to the north.

Mr. Fraser. Were you teaching at this time in Saigon?

Mr. Hoan. When I was elected to the congress I did not have the right to teach any more, holding outside work, and at that time I happened to be in my province because the congress—I mean the National Assembly—was out of session in Saigon.

Mr. Fraser. Is that the province where your mother lives?

Mr. Hoan. That is right, sir.

Mr. Fraser. You had been critical of the Thieu government prior to the fall of the Saigon government? You had been critical of President Thieu?

Mr. Hoan. That is right, sir.
Mr. Fraser. So at the time that the Liberation Front or the Viet-cong took over in the south, did you look forward to that as an improvement or what was your attitude?

Mr. Hoan. I was hoping for an improvement under the regime because I thought that when peace returned to Vietnam we would have more opportunity to work for the country and the condition would be more favorable.

Mr. Fraser. When did you run for the Assembly in Hanoi?

Mr. Hoan. It was in the elections of April 25, 1976, sir.

Mr. Fraser. At that time were you a member of the party?

Mr. Hoan. No, sir.

Mr. Fraser. I think you told us, but what district did you represent at that time when you ran for the Hanoi Assembly?

Mr. Hoan. I was running for the province of Phu Khanh because the Communists combined the two former provinces of Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa into one.

Mr. Fraser. So that the new district you ran from represented two former provinces, one of which you had represented in the Saigon Assembly?

Mr. Hoan. That is correct, sir.

Mr. Fraser. Did anybody else run in the same election in which you were elected? In other words, did anybody run for that same seat?

Mr. Hoan. The number of seats in the Phu Khanh province to be elected were 11 and the Communists chose 12 candidates. Eleven were elected and one was defeated.

Mr. Fraser. How many of the 12 candidates were members of the Communist Party?

Mr. Hoan. Among those 12, 10 are members of the Communist Party.

Mr. Fraser. So you were the only one who was elected who was not a member of the Communist Party. Is that correct?

Mr. Hoan. That is correct, sir.

Mr. Fraser. Did you subsequently join the party?

Mr. Hoan. No, sir.

Mr. Fraser. So you didn’t attend the fourth party congress held in November–December of 1976?

Mr. Hoan. No, sir.

Mr. Fraser. How many months then did you serve until you left Vietnam?

Mr. Hoan. From April 25, 1976, until March 29, 1977, so it is almost 1 year, sir.

Mr. Fraser. That was approximately 1 year.

Mr. Hoan. Yes, sir.

Mr. Fraser. For what part of the year was the Assembly in Hanoi meeting?

Mr. Hoan. They have two sessions every year, one in January and one in June.

Mr. Fraser. How long does each of those sessions last?

Mr. Hoan. In the January session when we discussed about budgeting and the 5-year plan we met only for 1 week. In June we had another session for another 1 week.