

Address to farewell dinner for Vietnamese provincial civil administration

Senator Hiram L. Fong Papers

Public Relations, Speeches, statements, and messages, Box PR22, Folder 155

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Address of U.S. Senator Hiram L. Fong
Farewell Dinner for Vietnamese
Provincial Civil Administrators
Hon Kung Restaurant
November 12, 1965 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, Honored Guests, Friends:

In 1959 I had the pleasure of visiting your country and to meet many of your leaders and your people. I also inspected many of the work projects in which we were helping in education, health, agriculture and others. Since then, I have taken an especial interest in your people and am quite familiar with the dedication and the courage of your people who are fighting communist aggression.

I have been informed that already over 25,000 of them have died in battle; that over 50,000 have been wounded; that some 2,000 local officials have sacrificed their lives during the past 18 months. Americans are also fighting and dying -- side by side with Vietnamese in this common struggle to preserve freedom.

But, as you and I know, it is not enough to fight against something. We must fight for something. The communists know this too; they are doing their best to capture the support of your people with promises of a brighter future.

In this connection, President Lyndon Johnson recently said, ". . . The people of South Viet-Nam must know that after the long, brutal journey through the dark tunnel of conflict there breaks the light of a happier day. . . Only in this way can long run stability and peace come to their land."

This is where you as provincial civil administrators can play a big part. This is where Americans have and can continue to help. Let me explain. Every nation -- to remain free and strong -- must provide for the many needs of its people, -- adequate food, shelter, medical care, education.

South Viet-Nam is blessed with rich resources. But rich resources alone are not enough. They must be developed to produce the needs for the people. For instance, your large areas of fertile lands must be properly cultivated to produce maximum food products. Factories must be built to take care of your industries. People must be trained to man your farms, your factories, your government.

During the past 10 years, the United States has spent two billion dollars to help your people help themselves. Our AID volunteers and your citizens -- together -- have made steady gains, in spite of the burdens of war. Here are examples of this gain:

1. Your rice production has been doubled since 1954
2. Corn output would rise from 25,000 tons in 1962 to 100,000 tons in 1966
3. Pig production has more than doubled since 1955
4. A new variety of sweet potatoes promises a sixfold increase in yield
5. Over 7 million people have been vaccinated against cholera alone
6. More than 4,000 new classrooms have been built
7. Enrollment in vocational schools have gone up four times (from 300,000 in 1955 to 1,500,000 today)
8. Some 700 factories -- textile mills, cement plants, electronics and plastics -- are changing the face of your country.

And where do you, as top provincial officials, come into the picture? You will be setting examples of efficient administration in a Vietnamese framework; administration in which your people will be served; in which citizenship participation will be encouraged.

I need not tell you that progress does not come from "plans on a desk alone or even directives and orders..... It

involves people -- brave, tireless, filled with love for their fellows. . . " Viet-Nam has many such people today -- dedicated, courageous, selfless -- who are serving your country in these danger-filled days and sultry nights.

Gentlemen, I am happy to know that your visit to our country and especially your stay in our islands have been enjoyable and profitable. No one can come to our great country and not learn many things which will prove invaluable to them. On returning to Viet-Nam, you take with you a multitude of impressions of modern America. May we hope that these impressions will spark ideas to assist you in meeting the needs of the people and provinces of your homeland.

I know that our people have enjoyed your presence. We in the United States have had the pleasure of meeting many officials from your country. We hope that many more from your country will come here so that the chain of friendship between your country and our country can be even stronger, and that by marching side by side and putting our shoulders together we will build a stronger world dedicated to peace, justice and human progress.

I extend to you our warmest aloha. May your journey back be a safe one. Thank you.

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