

25 October 1963

CHRONOLOGY OF BUDDHIST CRISIS IN SOUTH VIETNAM IN 1963

- 8 May Eight persons killed in Hue during efforts of security forces to disperse a Buddhist crowd protesting the government's ban on display of Buddhist flags during Buddha's birthday celebration.
- 15 May Unsatisfactory meeting held in Saigon between President Diem and a delegation of Buddhist leaders who presented five demands including apology and compensation for Hue victims. Diem offered "assistance," but insisted deaths resulted from grenade thrown by Viet Cong terrorists.
- 21 May Unmolested Buddhist funeral ceremonies held in Saigon and Hue for victims of Hue affair.
- 3 Jun More than 60 persons injured, some seriously, by tear gas used by troops in clash with a Buddhist youth group in Hue.
- 5 Jun Monks in Hue reported on hunger-strike behind police barricades.
- 11 Jun Elderly monk Quang Duc committed public suicide by burning in Saigon.
- 16 Jun Compromise agreement reached by Diem and Buddhist delegation on the Buddhists' five demands. Rioting, however, broke out in Saigon despite cancellation of a funeral service for Quang Duc. One killed and several arrested.
- 1 Jul Saigon press carried letter from ranking Buddhist claiming Buddhists were still being harassed and questioning government's good faith in 16 June agreement.
- 17 Jul Demonstration by Buddhist followers in Saigon were broken up by police using clubs. Large-scale arrests occurred.
- 18 Jul Diem, in radio address, pledged to carry out 16 June agreement, and announced steps ordered to release Buddhists under arrest and remove barricades around pagodas.

- 3 Aug Madame Nhu in a speech referred to Buddhists as traitors and claimed they were under the influence of foreigners and Communists.
- 4 Aug A young Buddhist monk committed self-immolation near the coastal town of Phan Thiet in Central Vietnam.
- 8 Aug Madame Nhu told a US correspondent that the Buddhist behavior was madness and that she would clap her hands at another Buddhist "barbeque."
- 11 Aug Antigovernment demonstrators in Saigon carried slogans denouncing Madame Nhu.
- 12 Aug A young Buddhist girl attempted suicide in a Saigon pagoda.
- 13 Aug A young Buddhist monk burned himself to death near Hue. Buddhist leaders claimed this suicide and the previous one were not sanctioned by the hierarchy. The following day Buddhists and government troops clashed near Hue.
- 15 Aug Diem told a US correspondent that his policy of conciliation toward the Buddhists was "irreversible."
- 15 Aug Ambassador Nolting left his post in Saigon. A Buddhist nun burned herself to death near the coastal town of Nha Trang in Central Vietnam.
- 16 Aug An elderly Buddhist priest committed suicide by burning in front of a pagoda in Hue, apparently with approval of Buddhist leaders. Strict curfew regulations were imposed in Hue and Nha Trang.
- 20-21 Aug Raids were carried out against pagodas in Saigon, Hue, and other major coastal towns shortly after midnight, following a proclamation of martial law. The government claimed to have discovered weapons and evidence of Viet Cong involvement. Unknown numbers of Buddhists were arrested. The US issued a statement deploring the use of repressive measures.
- 22 Aug GVN Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau resigned in protest.

- 22 Aug Ambassador Lodge arrived in Saigon.
- 25 Aug Several hundred students were arrested after abortive demonstrations in Saigon. Demonstrations also occurred at Saigon's central market: one girl was killed by a policeman's bullet.
- 27 Aug Cambodia severed diplomatic relations with South Vietnam.
- 29 Aug French President De Gaulle issued a statement looking to the eventual reunification of Vietnam.
- 1 Sept Three Buddhist monks, one of them leader Tri Quang, took refuge in the US Embassy in Saigon.
- 2 Sept Saigon press accused CIA of coup plotting.
- 2 Sept President Kennedy, in a TV interview, stated that the situation in South Vietnam might be improved by changes in GVN policy and "perhaps in personnel."
- 7 Sept Demonstrations occurred among high-school students in Saigon. Sporadic student agitation and arrests occurred during the next several days.
- 16 Sept Martial law was lifted.
- 23 Sept US fact-finding mission under Secretary McNamara and General Taylor left for South Vietnam.
- 27 Sept National Assembly elections, postponed under martial law from 31 August, were held without incident throughout South Vietnam
- 2 Oct US mission returned to Washington. Statement issued that the military effort against the Viet Cong continued to make progress, and that the bulk of US forces might be withdrawn from South Vietnam by end of 1965.
- 5 Oct A sixth Buddhist self-immolation took place in Saigon. Three US newsmen on the scene were assaulted by plainclothesmen. A South Vietnamese airforce pilot defected to Cambodia, later attributing his act to the political situation.

- 6 Oct US Congressional mission arrived in Saigon.
- 7 Oct UN General Assembly opened debate on the question of human rights in South Vietnam, agreed the next day to send observers invited by South Vietnam. Madame Nhu arrived in the US.
- 8 Oct GVN reopened Hue University and released some 132 Buddhists.
- 17 Oct Ngo Dinh Nhu told foreign newsmen the US had initiated a "process of disintegration" in South Vietnam and repeated charges of CIA plotting with Buddhists.
- 24 Oct UN observer group arrived in South Vietnam.