

FLF Hosts Reception for Vietnamese Congressmen

Neil Salonen

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From 'The Rising Tide'



S. Vietnamese Senator talks with reporter from student newspaper.

The Freedom Leadership Foundation held its first major social event in Washington, D.C. on as it hosted an immensely successful reception for 17 Senators and Congressmen visiting the United States from Vietnam.

The South Vietnamese legislators were in town to make contact with their counterparts on Capitol Hill and to educate the American people through the news media about the reality of the situation in their country. The FLF reception provided a valuable opportunity for the Congressmen to meet with a variety of leaders of the US. Despite concurrent inaugural celebrations at the Watergate, a crowd of 210 guests attended.



English IFVC Pres. Dennis Orme

FLF President Neil Salonen said he thought the reception was a "milestone" in FLF's history. He also said he was delighted that the Vietnamese legislators were able to meet with such a wide variety of the Washington diplomatic and political community. "I feel we have really done something here to serve the cause of freedom on the international level," Salonen commented.

Seven Southeast Asian nations sent official representatives to the reception. Attending were His Exe. Sonn Voeunsai, ambassador of the Khmer Republic (Cambodia); His Exe. Dong Jo Kim, ambassador of Korea; His Exe. Phagna Pheng Norindr, ambassador of Laos; His Exe. Anand Panyarachun, ambassador of Thailand; His Exe. Tran Kim Phuong, ambassador of the Republic of Vietnam; and Minister Tai-chu Chen of the Republic of China.

The Vietnamese delegation included seven Senators and ten Congressmen, not all of whom supported the Thieu government but who expressed their unanimous sentiment that no peace could come to Vietnam without adequate assurances of North Vietnamese compliance with any ceasefire agreement.

One of the Senators, Nguyen Van Ngai, had been imprisoned both by the Communists and the Diem regime as well as by the French. He was vehement in his opposition to Communism, stating that he hoped President Thieu would be firm in his determination to refuse a ceasefire without adequate enforcement insurances.

Ngai said he hopes the United States would commit heavier support to the South Vietnamese defense effort than it is now willing to commit. He stated that South Vietnamese armaments from the U.S. are inferior to those the North Vietnamese receive from the Soviet Union on nearly every level from rifles to tanks to fighter planes.

Protestors

Potential trouble arrived with a group of "Vietnam Veterans Against the War," who gathered outside the

reception and threatened to disrupt the proceedings. Beyond calling names and passing out leaflets, the protestors did not succeed in causing any trouble, as police arrived quickly at the scene.

FLF was pleased to welcome many new faces at the reception as well as numerous old friends. The atmosphere was festive but serious -- the general feeling being that recent U.S. Policy has come dangerously close to undermining this nation's mission as the crucial leader in the worldwide struggle against Communism. Conversation was lively; many new contacts were made for all those involved.

Two European representatives from FLF's affiliate organization, the International Federation for Victory over Communism (IFVC), greeted guests at the reception with FLF President Neil Salonen. Dennis Orme, President of the English federation, and Reiner Vincenz, head of the French chapter, spoke urgently of the increasing leftward trend in Europe.

At a private meeting for FLF members later that weekend, Vincenz said he thought France had a "50-50" chance of going Communist in its next election and that U.S. groups must make a "100% effort to defeat the enemy in America by projecting the highest possible standard of sacrificial determination."

Both men stressed that the situation in Europe is most critical. They said they expected an increase of violence in Europe and that intense, widespread suffering was nearly inevitable. "You American members had better work sacrificially to keep the same thing from happening here," Orme declared.



White House Aide talks with South Vietnamese Senator

Other notable reception guests included nationally syndicated columnist Holmes Alexander, American Peace Society Secretary James D. Atkinson, American representative of the International Human Rights Committee Constantine Boldyreff, journalist Allan Brownfeld, Associated Press Asian affairs reporter Spencer Davis, US Youth Council President David Dorn, National Security Council aide Dolf Droge, former U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Eldridge Dubrow, American Council of World Freedom Secretary Lee Edwards, Senate Chaplain Rev. Edward Elson, President of the American Security Council John Fisher, Hungarian Freedom Fighter leader Istvan Gereben, U.S. News and World Report diplomatic reporter Howard Handelman, Seapower Magazine editor James Hessman, Accuracy in Media leaders Reed Irvine and Abraham Kalish, Research Institute on Korean Affairs Director General Young Hoon Kang, White House aide Sven Kramer, American Council of World Freedom Chairman Gen. Thomas A. Lane

(Gen. Lane arranged for the excellent "Sky Room" at Washington's Army and Navy Club), political warfare expert Gen. Edward Lansdale, Capitol Hill aide David Martin, Asia specialist Prof. Franz Michael, George Washington University Slavic Studies Chairman Dr. Charles Moser, U.S. Marine Corps General Ernest Reid, Georgetown University political scientist Dr. Joseph Schiebel, Vietnam Veterans for a Just Peace leader Glenn Siegal, former Young Americans for Freedom Executive Director Randal Teague, World Affairs magazine Associate Editor Father Joseph Thorning, novelist Freda Utley, and a host of others, all of whom deserve more than casual mention.

Several Congressional offices sent representatives, and many sent regrets at their inability to attend due to the inaugural preparations. A number of professors from George Washington University's Sino-Soviet Institute and American University's Department of Internal Service also attended. The reception seemed to be enjoyed by all who attended.

It was the unanimous feeling of the FLF staff that the results were well worth the effort.

To foster communication and cooperation of groups with a common commitment to freedom has always been one of our major goals. We hope this event will be only a first step of a major contribution on our part toward the ultimate victory which we know the forces of freedom will eventually gain.