

Saigon Aide Blames U.S. for Chau Trial

By The Associated Press

SAIGON, South Vietnam, March 6 — A top official in the South Vietnamese Government sought today to divert criticism of the conviction of Deputy Tran Ngoc Chau to the United States Embassy.

Cao Van Tuong, liaison minister with the National Assembly, said at a news conference that Mr. Chau might have escaped prosecution if the embassy had confirmed publicly his claim that he had worked with the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Chau was convicted yesterday of having held illegal meetings with his brother, Tran Ngoc Hien, a North Vietnamese intelligence officer. Mr. Chau said that he had passed on information from these meetings

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to the C.I.A. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

"We only have heard Mr. Chau's own declaration," said Mr. Tuong. "We cannot, on his own declarations, take or start any action in order to go to his defense. Instead, we waited to the American Embassy here. "Had we heard from these authorities, then we might have adjusted or taken action accordingly. But so long as we had not heard anything from the American authorities or the American Embassy here, we could not start any action to go to his defense."

No U.S. Comment

The United States Embassy has made no public comment on the case.

The news conference made it clear that the Government considers the case closed even though Mr. Chau's lawyers have appealed to the South Vietnamese Supreme Court. The appeal, which is awaiting a ruling, questions the legality of the resolution by the National Assembly that removed Mr. Chau's legislative immunity.

Mr. Chau's lawyers contend that the resolution was fraudulently adopted that at least one signature on it was forged, and that two deputies did not know what they were signing.

Maj. Nguyen Dinh Tri, the military prosecutor in Mr. Chau's trial, told the newsmen that no appeal was possible from the verdict of the court,

which has jurisdiction in national security cases.

Even if the Supreme Court decides the Assembly resolution was invalid, he said, "this ruling will have no bearing whatsoever on the verdict already handed down by the military court."

U.S. Silent but Angry

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 6— The Nixon Administration was publicly silent but officials here were privately angered today by the conviction of Deputy Chau on charges of consorting with the enemy.

The trial, which ended yesterday, has already caused friction between the United States and the Government of President Thieu. Administration sources said that the Administration did not favor political prosecution and that this view had been made known to President Thieu.

Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker reportedly tried to persuade President Thieu to desist from prosecuting Mr. Chau but his protests were brushed aside.

Mr. Chau was sentenced to 10 years at hard labor for meeting with his brother, Tran Ngoc Hien, who was earlier sent to jail for being a North Vietnamese intelligence agent. Mr. Chau did not deny the meetings but said he furnished intelligence information obtained from them to the United States.

Reports from Saigon today said the Vietnamese government might have escaped prosecution if the C.I.A. had publicly confirmed that he had given them information. The agency, following its custom, had no comment here.