

I am writing in regard to an editorial which appeared in The Washington Post on Monday, November 24 ("The U.S.-Vietnam Relationship"), in which you referred to "fifty Americans" being held "hostage" in Saigon by the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

I have just returned from Saigon and I wish to report what I know of United States citizens who are still there.

I am a physician, a United States citizen, and have worked in South Vietnam since 1973. I was working in a civilian hospital in Danang at the time of the change of government in April 1975, and I continued my work for another four months under the new government. At my request I travelled to Saigon in August. I asked to leave Vietnam at that time and finally flew from Saigon to Bangkok on October 7, 1975. I was treated politely and experienced no hardship at any time.

As I have related to the House Subcommittee on International Trade and Commerce, I personally met 14 Americans in Saigon who are still in Vietnam. I heard about three other Americans whom I did not meet. Therefore, I am certain that there are 17 Americans in South Vietnam. It is conceivable that there are ten or so others, but I think it unlikely that there are more than a total of 30 United States citizens in Vietnam today.

Of the 14 other Americans I met all are well, and are able to travel anywhere

within the city of Saigon. Six live at the International Red Cross and receive a food allowance. Eight others live in private apartments in Saigon. Five of these 14 Americans have requested to leave Vietnam and have been granted exit visas, although they have not yet left. The other nine intend to stay for the time being and have not yet applied to leave. One of the three Americans I did not meet is being held in detention by the new government.

Americans and Vietnamese in Vietnam may be contacted directly by letter or telegram, and money may be cabled to them. United States dollars can be cabled to the Thuong-Tin bank (cable address: CREDINAM, Saigon), routed through EUROBANK, Paris. The name and Saigon street address of the recipient must be included.

The Vietnamese American Reconciliation Center at 1322 18th St. NW. Washington, D.C., 20036, can give information about how to contact friends and relatives in Vietnam.

The United States government has imposed a trade embargo against South Vietnam, which means that all letters must be sent via Paris or other country, although telegrams and money may be cabled direct. Lifting the trade embargo would facilitate communication among the people of Vietnam and the people of the United States.

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