

Pope Cites Threat To World Peace, Urges Negotiation

By PAUL HOFMANN

Special to The New York Times

ROME, May 11 — Pope Paul VI appealed today for the avoidance of a big-power challenge over Vietnam and in the Middle East "at all costs."

Addressing a crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square to receive the papal blessing on the occasion of the Feast of the Ascension, the pontiff said: "This is a day of trepidation in the history of the world."

The Pope was understood to be alluding to the East-West tensions over the United States decision to mine North Vietnamese coastal waters.

"Rumblings of uncertainty and danger are spreading everywhere, and in some areas are heavy with menace," the Pope declared.

He continued: "What is happening, particularly in the Middle and Far East, seems to be taking a serious turn, not only for the affected regions, but also for the peace of the world. We must hope that the aggravation of dangerous situations, the escalation of challenges in questions of prestige and intemperate self-interest will diminish."

Pope Paul warned also that an "extreme trial of strength" must be shunned, and reasonable negotiations must continue.

Also today, Italian officials were briefed by Martin J. Hillebrand, United States Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

Mr. Hillebrand was substituting for Secretary of State William P. Rogers, who had cut short a European tour.

Mr. Hillebrand did not see Foreign Minister Aldo Moro, who was reported absent from Rome, or any other cabinet member. He was received by Roberto Gaja, a senior official of the Italian Foreign Ministry, and aides.

U.S. Troops and Advisers Start To Leave Pleiku as Enemy Nears

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE

Special to The New York Times

PLEIKU, South Vietnam, May 11—The United States today began moving out many of the 2,800 American advisers and support troops stationed here as the North Vietnamese offensive came closer to this Central Highlands city.

By noon some American compounds stood all but deserted, with the doors of empty barracks banging in the wind. Trucks and buses carried a procession of Americans, mostly soldiers, to the airport for the transfer to Nhatrang, on the coast.

Pet dogs wandered around, searching for their hastily departed masters.

A spokesman described the reduction as "a low-key thin-out" that would proceed if the situation continued to deteriorate but would be reversed if the offensive was halted.

Every America unit in Pleiku was told yesterday to cut its staff to the bone, not only to curtail the number who would have to be evacuated but also to reduce the need to supply those remaining in case Pleiku is besieged.

Post Offices and Banks

Among the many services closed were post offices, banks and finance offices, and recreational facilities.

At communications centers staffs were so reduced that shifts of 12 hours a day instead of 8 hours were being enforced.

Even helicopter units were being trimmed. Spare parts and assemblies were being shipped to Nhatrang, as were personnel not regarded as essential. Operational and intelligence offices were sending advance parties to Nhatrang to set up shop there in case of a final evacuation of Pleiku, which is the headquarters of Military Region II.

A minor but clear indication

of the situation is that most of the Vietnamese washerwomen who worked for American servicemen have left. New ones have been recruited from the montagnard tribesmen who fled the Communist advance in northern Kontum Province.

One said she felt it was safe enough to stay in Pleiku for the time being, but she intends to move quickly if Kontum City, to the north, falls.

Old, Comfortable Bases

The American bases at Pleiku are among the oldest of their kind in Vietnam. The area has been developed over the years as a center for American advisory and combat operations, and its barracks, mess halls, and recreational facilities are as comfortable as any in the country.

The Americans in Pleiku still enjoy free nightly movies and live Saturday-night floor shows at the service clubs—although these are sometimes interrupted by rocket attacks or alerts, for, despite the rear-echelon atmosphere, Pleiku is within a few miles of enemy forces.

There were intense Communist attacks in 1965, with heavy losses of American lives and damage to buildings and aircraft at virtually no cost to the enemy.

Today the American bases are much more strongly fortified and guarded, and new secret weapons were brought from the United States last week to toughen them. But the enemy is also stronger than ever, and the commanders believe that Pleiku should be prepared for the worst.

"Let me take one last look at this place," a soldier said as a bus carried him toward the airport. "Maybe if I get a good mental image of this rotten place, I won't have nightmares about it in later life."

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