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SAIGON NETWORKS SHUN DISCLOSURES

Ministry Recommends That Radio and TV Stations Ignore Vietnam Study

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, July 1—The radio and television networks here, which are controlled by the Government, have virtually been directed to ignore all mention of the contents of the Pentagon papers.

Radio broadcasts from Hanoi and the National Liberation Front, however, continue to give prominence to the documents, quoting parts that the Communists feel reflect most harshly on American officials.

In response to questions today, Vu Khanh, an official of the Information Ministry, said that the radio and television networks here "agreed with the idea that the substance of the Pentagon papers as reported by The New York Times and other American papers do not have news value for the local public."

"It is thus recommended that this not be carried by the networks," he said.

Order Is Denied

Other officials denied that any order had been issued to the networks, but it was clear that the Saigon Government is determined to keep the news of the documents from the bulk of the population during this sensitive presidential election year.

South Vietnam's newspapers have carried reports and comments on the substance of the documents, but they reach only about 300,000 people, mostly in the cities. About 90 per cent of the 17 million South Vietnamese have radios, however, and about 65 per cent watch television.

So far there has been no official comment from the South Vietnamese Government on the documents, except for a brief remark by Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam. He told reporters that the disclosure of the secret papers was "shocking" and had left him wondering "whether the Americans can still be trusted."

The blunt comment did not please other officials, who have suggested that the documents are of little significance to South Vietnam. Privately, however, some have expressed concern that the revelations will intensify demands for the faster withdrawal of American troops and will endanger South Vietnam's chances for long-range economic and military aid.

Moreover, high officials are apprehensive over what the documents might reveal about 1968, the first full year of Nguyen Van Thieu's presidency. They are worried not only about the possible embarrassment to the President but also about revelations concerning military contingency plans under study at the time.

Termed 'Past History'

"The information in the papers does not concern the Vietnamese," one high official commented. "The radio and television programs are designed primarily to give local news and only some of the international. Most of the people just consider it all past history anyway."

Asked for his comment, an official of the national television network commented: "There are truths that are not to be told."

In explaining the decision to ignore the contents of the documents in radio and television news broadcasts, Mr. Khanh said that many of the "things reported in the New York Times have been well known by the Vietnamese for years." He noted, however, that the newspapers were free to publish from the documents and that no paper had been confiscated for doing so.

Although the radio and television newscasts have avoided mentioning the substance of the documents, they have briefly noted their existence. On June 15, two days after the first of the articles appeared in the New York Times, the television news reported that The Times had the Pentagon study, but did not go into detail. A day later the radio announced that the United States Government was moving to stop publication. Only one or two short news items on the controversy have followed.

Editorial Comment

In contrast, the newspapers, in particular those opposed to the Government, have reported the contents of the documents and have been free in their editorial comment. Some have relied almost entirely on the dispatches of news agencies. A few obtained copies of The New York Times series and published brief excerpts from the documents.

A favorite excerpt of the opposition papers is the transcript of the conversation between Ambassador Maxwell Taylor on Dec. 24, 1964, when he scolded South Vietnamese military officers, including the then General Thieu, and said that "you people have broken a lot of dishes."

Taking his cue from that text, Nguyen Huu Duc, a deputy in the lower house, commented: "Now the Americans are breaking all the dishes and I am afraid we will be left behind to pick up the pieces."