

EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

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STATEMENT BY AIR VICE-MARSHAL NGUYEN CAO KY
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM
AT THE MANILA SUMMIT CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 24th, 1966

President Marcos,
President Park,
President Johnson,
Prime Minister Kittikachorn,
Prime Minister Holt,
Prime Minister Holyoake,
Excellencies,
Gentlemen,

The members of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam consider it a great privilege to be here and confer with the heads of governments of the allies of Vietnam and their advisors.

We are grateful to you for being interested in our struggle against the communists, and for having spent so much of your time and energy to find a peaceful solution to the Vietnamese problem.

We are grateful to you and your officials in this room, as well as those in Vietnam and in your home countries, who are devoted to the task of carrying out your policies.

Before defining the position of our country, I should like first to review the present situation in Vietnam.

In the field of the military, the picture is indeed encouraging. In spite of the increasing and constant attempts by the North Vietnamese to infiltrate more men and arms into South Vietnam, and despite their continued efforts at achieving a dramatic victory against our troops,

the communists have so far been successfully checked on every battlefield. The communists' difficulties are due to the extreme alertness and valiance of the allied troops.

The results of our dynamism on the battlefields of South Vietnam and of the continued bombing of military targets and routes of infiltration in North Vietnam have contributed to the lowering of the morale of the communist troops and cadres. The fact that more and more communists are surrendering to our side is positive proof that they are hurt, that they are running into innumerable difficulties.

General Vien, our Chief of General Staff, will brief you in detail on the military situation.

In the field of pacification or rural construction, which we also call Revolutionary Development, we have achieved concrete results. We are conscious that military operations can only clear an area of the communist military cadres and that, in order to really secure such, we have to destroy the Viet Cong political and administrative substructure and replace it with our own. We are also aware that this struggle against the communists is one fought for man's mind, and that success is only measurable in terms of the population that is on our side.

We therefore have been giving top priority to this task of pacification with the best we have. We have stepped up the training of pacification cadres of which we need tens of thousands. We have tried to inculcate in our men the sense of devotion and service which is so important to any pacification effort. Fifty-nine-man teams have been sent to the various parts of Vietnam and have achieved concrete results in the service of the people. Inspection teams are constantly on the move to keep a close check on their work and insure that they

do not stray from the main effort and do not indulge in abuses that would antagonize rather than rally the population.

Progress in this field is constant, although slow. But in spite of our understandable impatience, I submit that activities aimed at winning people's hearts should be slow and sure rather than spectacular and fleeting.

General Thang, our Minister for Revolutionary Development, will detail for you the program of our pacification work.

Turning to our economic and social activities the emphasis of our endeavour during the past year has been geared toward stopping the inflation and creating a better society for our people to live in. Recent measures such as the readjustment of the value of the piaster, the decongestioning of the port of Saigon, the raising of the wages of the civil servants and military personnel and other fixed salaried personnel, the organization of a better system for the distribution of goods, the urgent importation of basic necessity goods, and other measures have greatly contributed to checking the inflationary spiral and improving the welfare of the people.

As far as the internal political situation is concerned, the situation is much clearer. The vacuum that was created after the fall of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime is not yet quite filled. Indeed after eighty years of colonialism and ten years of dictatorship, the people have had to grope in their search for the regime that suits them best. Hence the political instability of the past few years. Nonetheless, the people and the armed forces are now aware of the clear and present threat of the communists, and have come to the conclusion that only a democratic regime and a popularly elected government can bring the country together and enlist the participation of everyone in the affairs of the nation.

The cause of dissensions between individuals, parties, and religions has been the lack of a truly representative government. Therefore to be valid and effective, the regime in South Vietnam must be chosen by its own people. This would also greatly embarrass the communists who have never dared to organize an election. Knowing that our moral strength would be irresistible if and when a National Assembly is established, and a Constitution written, the communists tried their best to sabotage last month's elections. But the overwhelming

percentage of the population taking part in the vote showed once again that the Viet Cong did not control the population at the degree they claimed they did. And the very people whom they claimed they represented did not heed their advice to stay away from the polls.

In a few months, the Republic of Vietnam will have a Constitution, a Legislative Assembly, and a popularly elected government. And then conditions for a much desired permanent political stability will prevail. Of course, there have been and still are differences between the various groups and clashes between individuals, but we submit that these constitute just so many more proofs of a genuinely free political atmosphere in our country.

And we can even safely assume that until the day when we have stability in Vietnam there will be many more internal difficulties. Because the communists and the colonialists will not be defeated until they will have tried every means to create disturbances in order to sabotage our program toward democracy.

For the past sixteen months, due to special historical circumstances, the armed forces have had to take charge of the government. But there has never been any doubt in our minds about the value of the democratic way of life, and consequently we have been doing our best to establish the basic institutions of a future democratic regime.

Among other things, we have doubled the membership of the Directory to include ten civilian members and thus make it possible for prominent non-military patriots to participate in the leadership of the nation.

We have established the Army-People Council made up of leading figures in the country to advise the executive branch of government.

And, as you all know, we have organized absolutely free national elections for a Constituent Assembly.

Our deeds, therefore, have matched our words.

Today, before the leaders of government here assembled, we solemnly reiterate our opposition to all forms of dictatorship, whether it be imperialist, communist or military. We look forward to the day in the near future when the Constitution is completed and Vietnam has a duly elected government. And then, our mission fully carried out, we will be able to return to our genuine military duties in the armed forces.

Excellencies,

Gentlemen,

Through the above review of the present situation in Vietnam you have seen that the basic cause of the Vietnam conflict must be found in the social injustices and

inequities, the social evils and feudal heritage that have plagued our country. Indeed, after years of foreign domination and autocracy, the Vietnamese people yearned for a better life, for a brighter future, and the communists came in time to make their promises about a marxist haven in which all injustices and evils would be eliminated. Vietnam was a good ground for communism to thrive.

To make matters worse, the ailments that afflict all newly emerging nations, namely economic underdevelopment, political immaturity, and the inexistence of an efficient civil service, all good seeds of popular discontent, allowed the communists a measure of success in their armed insurgency.

This armed insurgency in our country which many nebulous intellectuals persist in calling a civil war, but which the communists themselves have named "war of national liberation", is the communist self-confessed test case for their overall scheme of domination of the world's underdeveloped countries.

Our own experiences and those of other countries in dealing with the communists have led to the logical conclusion that the only way to ~~put to~~ the Reds is to wage a merciless war on poverty, ignorance and disease, and to have, no matter what the price, an efficient and clean government.

But what we have to do, what we have decided to do, what we have began to undertake is nothing short of a genuine social revolution. For it is our intention during the remainder of our time in government, to hand over to the duly elected officials of the next government, a Vietnam that will be in the best possible shape.

Within the framework of this social revolution we have to serve first and foremost the interests of the man in the street, of the villager, the farmer, and the laborer. Among other things, we will expend our best efforts to establish village and hamlet self-government through local elections. With your precious assistance we will draft and carry out economic development projects to make our economy as self-sustaining as possible. We will especially improve our agriculture for it is the natural wealth of our nation. We will do all that is in our power so that the military become the genuine brother and protectors of the people.

Turning away from the war toward the problem of peace, let me say at the outset what this government has many a time reiterated: the people and the government of the Republic of Vietnam are for peace. We demand peace, for we have suffered too long from the calamities of war. But if cannot be peace at any price.

It must a peace in honor which we can accept without betraying all those heroes - -aliéd and Vietnamese-- who have died for our liberty. It must not be the surrender of all those principles that we hold so dear as free men. And this peace must be lasting so that future generations may devote themselves to the building of a new and better Vietnam.

We must also distinguish between peace without and peace within our borders. We have to differentiate between our enemies without and the enemy within.

The enemy from beyond the 17th parallel can be dealt with, thanks to the assistance of friends and allies. We have to fight them much in the same way as one would aggressors anywhere. And we will have peace when they give up their aggression and pull back their troops and hard core cadres across the border and stop their infiltration of arms and men into our country.

But even if this were to happen, it does not mean that we will have peace for in lieu of the military contest, a political struggle backed by a subversive guerrilla war will be waged by the enemies from within.

We and our allies have told the external enemy we would stop our actions against them if they stopped their aggression. In the same spirit, this government will very soon offer to all insurgents inside the country and honorable way of giving up their insurgency.

Indeed, we offer to those fighters that have been deluded by the communists full reintegration into the national community and the opportunity to come back safely and contribute to the task of building our nation.

To these true Vietnamese, we shall say once again that there is absolutely no use sacrificing their lives and their well-being for the benefit of Hanoi and Peking communists who are not giving them any credit for what they have done in the past ten years. We want them to see through the communist scheme and refuse to serve any longer a cause that has never truly been theirs. We also hope that they will join us and devote their energy and enthusiasm and the best they have to the service of their own people in the South, to the furtherance of their own ideals, and be among the builders of a new Vietnam of which they can be proud because they will have had a hand in shaping it.

Toward those South Vietnamese who choose the communist way of life, we will even go further and allow them to go to North Vietnam. But those who have made their choice and elected to stay in the South must abide by the law of the land like all other citizens of Free Vietnam.

As for those who persist in bring/misery to
the people because they either want to hold on to special
privileges or intend that the people be the slaves of
their regime, we shall give them no quarter.

But allow me a word of caution here.

While searching for peace and waiting for the
communists to accept peace, we must continue to make
the best of our many advantages. We must continue to hold
on to our initiative on the battlefield. We must push
forward all our efforts at pacification. And we must
also remember that no effort to achieve peace can be
successful if it is not made in consultation with the
people and government of the Republic of Vietnam.

And we must constantly bear in mind that it is
not we that reject peace. It is not we who are the
aggressors. It is not we who have denied all initiatives
for peace.

But what if the communists do not want peace?

Then we have no choice but to continue to fight
the aggressor. For it may be that the communists only
understand the language of force. And if we must carry on
with our present endeavor we ask our allies to continue
to assist us in our struggle for survival and freedom.

Excellencies,

Gentlemen,

I would like to emphasize that the problem confronting us Vietnamese is not so much one of war and peace. The real problem for us is to build a new nation, a new Vietnam for our children, and our children's children. Out of all the varied elements that make up present-day Vietnam, we must build ONE nation, with ONE purpose. For only when we achieve this, can we have permanent peace and a better future for all the Vietnamese.

All of you gentlemen here today represent countries that have gone through the various painful stages of nation-building. The process is a long and painful one. The solutions are dramatic and at time have to be drastic. The people who contribute to it have to be patient and courageous. The obstacles that have to be surmounted are innumerable, and the least is not the avowed communist enemy.

You have helped us in our defensive war against this formidable enemy and you now know the nature of the foe. Our task is not only to save our nation from communism, but also--and more important--to help make this country into a model for all underdeveloped and underprivileged countries of the world to see what the alternative to communism can be.

Indeed, with your assistance, Vietnam can be made into the answer to communism. Vietnam can prove to the peoples of the world that communism is not the only answer, is definitely not the only solution to their apparently insoluble problems.

For indeed the problem of Vietnam is a world problem. There can certainly be another Vietnam, and yet another Vietnam, somewhere else in the world, because the communists have an overall plan of world conquest, just as the Chinese communists have a program for the domination of Southeast Asia. And it should be remembered that the Communists have been perfecting their plan down to the last detail for years. In the face of such a threat there is no reason why we, the free countries of the world, should not directly face the problem, and urgently take concerted and more coordinated measures to efficiently counter and check this dangerous scheme of the communists.

And high on the list of priorities among the concerted and coordinated actions must be a plan for regional cooperation and development for the benefit of all of Asia. In this sphere we Asians are proud of what

has already been achieved through organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, the Asian and Pacific Council, the Mekong River Development Project, and other similar agencies. These are all so many deterrents to communism for they all aim at one goal, and that is the improvement of the welfare of the people in the area.

With assistance and support from more developed countries outside the area, and with yet more cooperation among Asians, we can certainly offer a brighter future to our peoples.

And in order that this be realized, it is our fervent hope that this conference will arrive at a unity of thought that will lead to a unity of action for the achievement of our common purposes.#