

MNR

Movement for National Reconciliation

TO SEARCH FOR A JUST PEACE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

August 15, 1972

WHAT IS MNR?

MNR, the Movement for National Reconciliation, was recently originated by non-Communist South Vietnamese, civilian and military, young and old, from major religious faiths in South Vietnam. They are senators, deputies, officers, civil servants, businessmen, teachers, students, who all believe in the necessity to stop the war in Vietnam as soon as possible and to reconcile Vietnamese in the search for a peaceful settlement which would allow people in both North and South to live.

At present, because of the prevailing political repression against anti-Thieu elements the MNR cannot operate openly in South Vietnam. For this reason only a few of its Central Committee members who are abroad can be publicly identified.

* **WHY** the Movement for National Reconciliation now?

Because there has been too much killing and suffering in Vietnam and because MNR responds to the real desire of the majority of South Vietnamese to end the hopeless war in their country.

Because the reconciliation among Vietnamese or even the beginnings of such a move is needed in view of the

recent international changes which affect the fate of the Vietnamese people as a whole, both in North and South.

Because only through direct communication among Vietnamese can an understanding be reached on which the political solution to end the Vietnam war may be based. It is important for the Vietnamese themselves to be primarily concerned about their future and to find the most suitable formula to stop killings and dispel the mutual fear by both sides. Only Vietnamese can detect details which help separate truth from propaganda so that realistic and practical solutions may be found. For instance, is a provisional government composed of three groups: representatives from Thieu, from the NLF and from the 'neutral' group practical? How would the "representatives" of the "neutral" group be identified and selected, on what criteria? If these were to hold the balance of power between Thieu's and NLF representatives, aside from the numerical distribution of governmental positions, how would the government be divided so the real influence of each group could be evenly calibrated?

Because the present corrupt and inefficient pro-war Thieu government in Saigon does not represent the South

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PEACE PROPOSALS

9 Point Peace Proposal

Translation of the 9 Point Peace Proposal from the Movement for National Reconciliation

Realizing that the present war in Vietnam, both in the North and the South, only leads the Vietnamese people into extreme misery and a fratricidal massacre which will probably end in racial extinction. Realizing that only a political solution based on the national spirit and the mutual trust and assistance among the Vietnamese may help the people in SVN achieve real peace, independence, freedom and democracy. The Movement for National Reconciliation proposes the following nine point peace program:

1. Cease fire and stop hostilities. It is necessary to reach a cease fire as soon as possible and to stop all war activities on the whole of Vietnam, both North and South, in order to initiate the program of political reconciliation between the two sides.
2. Political reconciliation. People in SVN need peace and security as well as real freedom and democracy. Consequently a program with political, economic and social contents meeting those popular aspirations must be implemented immediately in SVN in order to create the favorable conditions needed for the political reconciliation of both sides and for the preparation of a new general election in SVN which will truly reflect the aspirations of the entire population.

3. Military activities in SVN. All the military forces in SVN, immediately after the cease-fire order, must right away lay down their weapons; thus only the patrol units composed of the representatives from both sides are authorized to carry weapons to keep order and security in the areas which are presently involved in war activities. It is necessary to establish a demilitarized zone along the borders of SVN in order to prevent any military activity which may lead to a border violation.

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PRESS COVERAGE New York Times

The New York Times
Thursday, August 3, 1972

The Paris Bureau Chief of the New York Times, Mrs. Flora Lewis, wrote a special story which was published under the title:

"Unofficial Vietnamese Contacts in Paris Clarify Political Issues"

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9 Point (Cont. p. 1)

4. Military forces in both North and South.

All the existing military forces, including personnel, equipment and installations used for war purposes in both North and South Vietnam, must be reduced to a maximum extent so that a balance of military forces may be reached between the two sides. For that reason, neither side will receive any supply which may be related to or used for war purposes.

5. Exchange of POW's and liberation of political prisoners.

In conformity with Point 2 about political reconciliation, a program for the liberation of all political prisoners in SVN must be implemented. Prisoners of war from both sides will be exchanged according to mutually agreed to conditions and humanitarian practices.

6. Reunification of VN and relations between North and South.

In principle, the spirit of the 1954 Geneva Agreement can be applied for the eventual reunification of the two regions. Such a reunification of North and South must be achieved within the respect for the right of self-determination of the people in each region and by peaceful means through negotiations and consultations. In the meantime, both regions will seek an agreement on the conditions to normalize the economic, social and cultural relations between the two regions.

7. Foreign policy of SVN

The foreign policy of SVN will be based on the principles of assuring the happiness and prosperity for the people of SVN and of respecting its national sovereignty. Consequently SVN may maintain friendly relations and cooperate with any country, regardless of its political or social system, provided this is not contrary to the needs and aspirations of the people of SVN.

8. Post war reconstruction of VN.

To rebuild the country which has been destroyed by war, the Vietnamese people, with the help from the U.S.A. and other countries, must implement quickly a large scale program of post-war reconstruction in the economic and social fields.

9. Respect and guarantee for the agreements to be signed.

To respect and implement the agreements which will be signed, the concerned parties must agree on the necessary international guarantees involved.

7 Point Peace Proposal By The Vietnamese Communists

Presented by Mrs. Nguyen-Thi-Binh on July 1, 1971. (This is a summarized translation of the originals in Vietnamese.)

Because of their importance, the translation of points 2 and 3 were left verbatim.

1. Schedule of complete U.S. troop withdrawal.

The U.S. must set a date for complete withdrawal from Vietnam in 1971 of all U.S. and Allied troops, and remove all U.S. and Allied weapons from South Vietnam, dismantle its bases and stop the Vietnamization program to end the Vietnam "war of aggression." Release of American POW's will begin and end on the same dates as the U.S. troop pullout begins and ends. As soon as an agreement is reached on withdrawal, cease-fire with U.S. and "foreign" Allied forces will be implemented by the "people's liberation armed forces in South Vietnam."

2. The problem of government in South Vietnam.

The U.S. must really respect the self-determination of the people of South Vietnam, stop interfering into the internal affairs of South Vietnam, end the support for the pro-war group headed by Nguyen Van Thieu who are in power now in Saigon, renounce all maneuvers, including the trick of fake election to maintain in power the puppet Nguyen Van Thieu.

Through any means possible the political, social, religious forces in South Vietnam who want peace and national concord will set up in Saigon a new government which will support peace, independence, neutrality and democracy. The Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam will immediately negotiate with that new government in order to solve the following problems:

a. To form a government of broad national concord composed of three groups which will be in charge from the time peace returns to the general election and in order to organize the general election in South Vietnam. Immediately after the national concord government is formed, the cease-fire will take place between the people's liberation armed forces in South Vietnam and the armed forces of the Saigon government.

b. To implement concrete measures, with the necessary guarantees to prevent terrorism, retaliation and discrimination against those who collaborated with either side; to guarantee the democratic freedoms for the people of South Vietnam; to release immediately those who were arrested for political reasons; to dismantle concentration camps and to abolish all the formalities designed to regiment the people, so that they may be free to return to their villages and freely find work.

c. To stabilize and to gradually improve the livelihood of the people, to create the conditions to permit everyone to contribute talents and efforts to the task of binding the wounds of war and reconstructing the country.

d. To agree on the ways to guarantee a really free, democratic and fair general election in South Vietnam.

3. Problems of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam.

The Vietnamese sides will together solve the problem of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam in the spirit of national concord, equality, mutual respect, without foreign interference, in conformity with the post-war situation and in order to alleviate the contribution of the people.

4. North and South Vietnam will negotiate step-by-step reunification of the country. Pending agreement, So. Vietnam will be neutralized and must refrain from any foreign military alliances.

5. South Vietnam will establish diplomatic and economic relations with all countries — Communist and non-Communist alike.

6. The U.S. must bear "full responsibility" for war damage in both North and South Vietnam.

7. North and South Vietnam will agree on the kind of international guarantees needed to keep the peace.

8 Point Peace Proposal By President Nixon On January 25, 1972

1. U.S. and Allied forces will withdraw totally from South Vietnam within six months of an agreement.

2. All prisoners of war will be released beginning and ending at the same time as troop withdrawal.

3. Internationally supervised presidential elections will be held in South Vietnam with all political elements, including the Viet Cong, eligible. President Nguyen Van Thieu and his Vice President will resign one month before elections. The U.S. will remain completely neutral and will abide by the results. North and South Vietnam will negotiate reunification of the country without outside interference.

4. Both sides will respect the 1954 Geneva Accords on Indo-China and the 1962 Agreement on Laos. There will be no foreign intervention in any Indo-Chinese country.

5. The four nations in Indo-China: North and South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia — will settle "existing problems" by themselves, including the pull-back of North Vietnamese military forces to their homeland

6. A general cease-fire will be declared throughout Indo-China once the agreement is signed.

7. The cease-fire, prisoner release and withdrawal of U.S. and North Vietnamese forces will be supervised by an international body.

8. Both sides will agree to participate in an international conference to guarantee "fundamental national rights" of the Indo-Chinese peoples and countries.

MNR ANALYSIS OF THE VIETNAM SITUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

For the purposes of this analysis, it is here assumed that:

- A. The present and long range interests of the U.S. and world peace would be best served by the continued presence of the U.S. in Indochina and S.E. Asia within the context of a new U.S. policy of "positive disengagement." This policy would aim at creating new conditions in SVN so that the unpopular U.S. military involvement there would be no longer necessary while it would permit the U.S. economic and strategic presence in S.E. Asia to be maintained for the benefit of world peace and the peoples in the area.
- B. The U.S. policy of "Vietnamization" is mainly designed to help the non-Communist South Vietnamese become self-sustaining and independent and to create favorable conditions for peace in the area.

II. WHAT IS GOING ON IN SVN?

A. Military Activities In SVN.

Despite massive U.S. air support, military operations by ARVN are stalemated while:

1. ARVN loses its best troops (average weekly 500 dead and 2,000 wounded);
 2. Communists are taking over the countryside as garrisoned ARVN troops are pulled away from formerly pacified areas to fight at places like An Loc and Quang Tri.
 3. As a result, millions of peasants are fleeing to the cities to become unproductive refugees living on handouts from U.S. aid without any hope for a better future;
 4. SVN's strategic reserve is exhausted and no decisive end of the fighting is in sight.
- B. On the psychological front in SVN. The South Vietnamese people are deeply in despair, despite all the proclamations to the contrary of Thieu's propaganda machine.
1. Soldiers.
Except for a small group of corrupt generals and officers favored by Thieu and Khiem, the majority of the ARVN soldiers cannot even live on their miserable salary because of the inflation and high cost of living. There is neither hope nor future for the ARVN soldier if he is not a part of the corruption rackets of Thieu-Khiem and Company.

Before the Communist attacks this year, the ARVN soldier at least had some chances to stay alive; but since the attacks he feels he is daily exposed to fighting and death which he considers as both useless and unfair. He doesn't know what he is fighting for; he is discouraged by the bad examples of corruption by his superiors; he sees that nobody really cares for him and his family if he is wounded or killed; he is demoralized when he hears the Communist propaganda talk about peace while Thieu allows South Vietnamese to talk only about war and more war. This psychological situation becomes even more explosive when the young, honest and capable officers in their despair rightly or wrongly identify the U.S. with Thieu-Khiem and Company.

2. Religious Masses.

Except for a few individuals who have been bought by Thieu, the majority of the Buddhists, Christians, Cao Dai and Hao Hao in SVN are worried about the corruption of the present Saigon government and its incapacity to cope with the Communist threat. And since Thieu does not know how nor dare to ask them to cooperate in a national salvation program (because of his mistrust), the religious leaders and their followers adopt a wait-and-see attitude while trying to find out how they can best accommodate to the changing political tides in order to preserve their religious faiths and followers without getting committed to Thieu.

3. Political Parties and Groups.

Before martial law was imposed by Thieu's fraudulent tactics, the political parties were active and had hopes that Thieu's government might be changed through reforms or through constitutional elections. With the imposition of martial law and dictatorial policies of political repression by Thieu, no reforms or elections could be expected, so the political parties are forced into clandestine activities against Thieu instead of any constructive loyal opposition.

C. On the Political Front in SVN.

Thieu as President and Khiem as Prime Minister are becoming more distrustful and more isolated politically as the SVN situation be-

comes more critical. They have to rely more and more on a small group of corrupt and inefficient followers who try to discourage the cooperation with Thieu of any capable and honest element in order to preserve their own influence on him. Thus Thieu and Khiem have to tolerate and to become more involved in the corruption of their followers.

Fake campaigns against corruption (entrusted officially to senile and uninformed Vice President Huong) and make believe punishments are given to scapegoats (e.g. recently ousted Defense Minister Vy in the Military Bank scandal) in order to cover up the real culprits close to Thieu and Khiem. In their isolation Thieu and Khiem have become more and more reluctant to act on any good advice for the good of the country, even when it is given by U.S. advisers. They only follow U.S. advice when it serves their purposes and whenever they feel it is needed for their maintenance in power.

III. WHAT COMMUNISTS ARE DOING IN VIETNAM.

A. In North Vietnam.

The massive bombings in NVN, though very destructive, fail to break the will of the Communists to fight. On the contrary, from all indications available it appears that:

1. The Communists are more determined than ever not to surrender military pressure.
2. Their morale is high because they are gaining strength with the support of international public opinion increasingly leaning in their favor and against the evident corruption of the present Saigon government.
3. NVN was prepared for the resumption of bombings; the main cadres and services were evacuated to safe areas; despite the U.S. blockade, military supplies were getting into NVN and infiltrated into SVN.
4. The massive bombings in NVN encouraged Communists to move southward into the mountainous areas (which are safe from bombings) bordering Laos, Cambodia and SVN. Well entrenched, they seem ready and able to wage a long war and the longer the fighting drags on, the more territory they will be able to control in Indochina.

B. In South Vietnam.

As mentioned earlier, because of the inefficiency and corruption of the present Saigon government, Communists are gaining political strength. Their

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MNR Analysis (Cont. p. 3)

troops and political cadres are infiltrating many parts of the countryside left vacant by the withdrawal of ARVN troops from rural areas and sent to the defense of places like An Loc and Quang Tri and other battlefields chosen by the Communists. This infiltration is made easier by the absence or inaction of politically active non-Communist South Vietnamese (either jailed or demoralized by Thieu's political repressions). Communist troops control the access roads to the main cities and Saigon; they can easily stop the food supplies into these cities, thus further disrupting the already precarious economic situation of South Vietnam.

IV. The Only Solution Possible: Political Change in Saigon

A. New government in SVN is needed. From the above analysis, it is clear that the VN war cannot be concluded by a military victory or a just peace for SVN and the U.S. if Thieu-Khiem government continues to run SVN the way it has been doing. A new government team is critically needed for SVN now. Can this happen on Thieu's initiative? Obviously no, because of the very nature of the Thieu regime and its inability to reform itself.

B. New approach and policies needed with new government for SVN. A mere change of faces in the Saigon government will not improve the situation. A new approach and new policies must be introduced in order to make the new government effective.

1. Instead of refusing to even discuss peace or political compromise with Communists, SVN must actively seek peace with conditions which can guarantee its survival as a non-Communist entity.
2. Instead of excluding people, the new government must include all patriotic elements capable of serving the country. It must adopt an open approach in governmental affairs to permit the maximum participation of the people.
3. Instead of relying and depending on U.S. aid to the point of becoming an embarrassing burden for the U.S. the new government must make all efforts to be self-sustaining and independent. However, it will welcome post-war foreign aid, especially from the U.S. for the rebuilding and developing of SVN, within the framework of mutually agreed programs benefitting the countries involved.
4. Instead of running after the daily problems of the war which keep multiplying faster than they can be

coped with, the new government will implement urgently an overall program designed to provide for the livelihood of the ARVN soldiers in order to boost up their morale and to settle permanently the millions of refugees according to a plan which will defend the territory of SVN and assure its survival as a non-Communist country (the details of this important program will be presented later upon request).

C. Wrong Objections To Political Change in SVN.

Three false reasons are often advanced to oppose any proposal for political change in SVN:

1. "No changing horses at midstream": In fact, the present dead horse in Saigon is obviously dragging its rider down and unless the latter gets rid of it quickly he will himself drown for sure.
2. "Look at what happened after Diem in 1963": In fact, the unpleasant aftermath of Diem's overthrow in 1963 was possible only because of the hesitations of policy-makers before and during 1963. Now, in 1972, the lessons of Diem's mistakes and his inevitable downfall must be carefully reviewed and preparations for an orderly political change and transition in SVN must be taken in the light of past experience.
3. "We need stability in SVN": In fact, stability should not be the prolongation of a wrong, impossible and explosive situation which is detrimental to the interests of the U.S., SVN and world peace. Such a false conception of stability only creates more instability in reality and in the long run. True political stability for SVN should lie in the steady implementation of basic policies and programs designed to keep SVN free from Communist take over and to increase the chances for peace in the area, regardless of the individual local leaders involved. Whenever the latter are no longer willing or capable of achieving these basic goals, the need for true stability for SVN demands their replacement as soon as possible in an orderly and well planned process.

D. Orderly Ways for Political Change in SVN Exist

The ways and means for that orderly change in SVN exist and it is understood that these ways and means will aim at respecting, as much as possible, the following two principles:

1. Everything will be done to ensure that the U.S. cannot be criticized for interfering into the internal affairs of SVN as the non-Communist South Vietnamese involved must

make the final decision on their own.

E. Hope With Change.

With a new government in Saigon implementing new policies for SVN, peace should be achieved through a fair political settlement with the Communists. If, however, a peaceful settlement is impossible (this alternative seems most unlikely) then a meaningful struggle for the survival of a free SVN may be waged under different conditions with the participation of the majority of the South Vietnamese people, with renewed morale and determination because all possible approaches to peace will have been explored. On the contrary, if the status quo in Saigon (with Thieu Khiem in power) is maintained at any cost by policy-makers bent on covering up past mistakes, then no matter how much aid is given to SVN, senseless and useless killings will continue for no purpose and surely within a few years, Indochina will be ripe for the Communists to take over.

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Note: This analysis of the Vietnam situation was made recently by the MNR (Movement for National Reconciliation)

(Ref. New York Times, Aug. 3, 1972)

Press Coverage

New York Times (Cont. p. 1)

PARIS, Aug. 2 — A series of unofficial contacts is taking place here among Communist and non-Communist Vietnamese, alongside the sterile official negotiations.

They have not produced any clear statements so far. But, according to sources involved, they have provoked some clarification from the Communist side on the stages of a possible political settlement for Vietnam. This has led the non-Communists to say, "We have the impression that we are not very far apart."

The latest private non-Communist proposal was brought to Paris 10 days ago on behalf of a group said to have been formed recently in South Vietnam to try to end the war.

This non-Communist proposal was brought here by Nguyen Thai and his wife, Nguyen Tuyet Mai. Mr. Thai is a former South Vietnamese government official who worked both for the late President, Ngo Dinh Diem, and for President Nguyen Van Thieu as Deputy Minister of Information and as a special adviser to Saigon's delegation at the Paris talks in 1969.

The main difference between the results
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Times (Cont. P.4)

of these unofficial contacts and the Communist position as stated in talks with the United States is the understanding that a non-Communist "transitional" government could be formed in Saigon to negotiate the next stage, a three-part coalition.

The South Vietnamese concerned said they believed there would be no special conditions imposed by the Communists on the composition of such a government provided President Nguyen Van Thieu and Premier Tran Thien Khiem were replaced.

Thieu is Main Issue

The main sticking point, common to the official peace talks and these private contacts, is that President Thieu must be ousted. The South Vietnamese who have been involved in these contacts oppose Mr. Thieu. They have been more than willing to agree that he must go, but they concede that they have no way of getting rid of him.

Only the Americans have the power to depose the President, they say. The American position is that Mr. Thieu will step down at an undetermined date after a cease-fire and release of prisoners and one month before general elections in South Vietnam. Presumably he would be free to seek re-election under voting rules prepared before his resignation.

While the position of Mr. Thieu remains a point of impasse, the unofficial soundings have produced the impression that non-Communist Vietnamese would not find it difficult to get Communist acceptance of a "transitional" government that they might assemble to replace him.

Mr. Thai brought a nine-point plan on behalf of the Movement of National Reconciliation, a group that he said was formed recently by non-Communists in South Vietnam. It represents civilian, military and major religious elements, he said.

The proposal calls for a cease-fire, without mention of international supervision, and for all arms to be "laid down" immediately afterward. Only patrols composed of "the representatives from both sides would be allowed to carry weapons to maintain order.

Without specifying how a new South Vietnamese government be formed, it calls for rapid execution of a program to satisfy "popular aspirations for peace and security as well as real freedom and democracy."

The only names attached to the pro-

posal, however, were his own and that of Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, now in exile in the United States, as members of the movement's central committee. General Thi is a former commander of South Vietnam's northernmost military region and is widely respected as an incorruptible nationalist. He tried to return to Saigon early this year, but was not permitted to land there.

'Repression' in Saigon Cited

Mr. Thai said that the movement "can not operate openly in South Vietnam because of the prevailing political repression policies in Saigon." Therefore, adherents residing in their own country cannot now be identified, he said.

Another group in Paris, called the Committee for Peace and Renovation issued a somewhat similar proposal on July 7, over the name of Nguyen Van Con, a founding member of the committee. That group has had frequent contacts with the Communists, and feels confident that it could negotiate successfully if the problem of Mr. Thieu were solved.

Its statement that an ad hoc committee of non-Communist, South Vietnamese, both inside the country and in exile, could designate "a transitional team capable of replacing the current leadership in Saigon."

Mr. Thai and his wife have returned to the United States. Their intention is to make their proposal public in the hope that it can gain some support from the American Administration.

The International Herald Tribune Friday, August 4, 1972

This influential newspaper published in Europe with the cooperation of The New York Times and The Washington Post carried the same story by Flora Lewis with emphasis on the important conclusions that South Vietnamese non-Communist nationalists opposed to the Thieu regime may be able to find ways to reach an understanding with the Communists to end the war in Vietnam. The International Herald Tribune's story entitled "Vietnamese Reds adamant on coalition without Thieu" concluded:

"The United States has long sought both in formal and secret talks, to get from the Communists a clear idea of whom they would and would not consider acceptable in a post-Thieu government. Failing to obtain such details, Washington has assumed that the Communists are insisting on a veto that they would use to assure their own domination of the government.

That is not at all the impression of the non-Communist groups here.

Their "probings" have led them to believe that a broad spectrum of prominent, non-Communist nationalists would be acceptable provided only that the figures involved were not directly or indirectly beholden to Mr. Thieu and determined to safeguard his power."

Chinh Luan (Right Opinion) Sunday-Monday, August 6-7, 1972

The largest circulation daily in SVN which is generally considered anti-Communist, reported at some length about the MNR Paris contacts with Communists.

Chinh Luan mentioned a Paris dispatch quoting Nguyen Trieu Dan, spokesman of the South Vietnamese delegation saying that the "private persons" involved in the political contacts with Vietnamese communists in Paris "had no official connection and nothing to do with the Delegation of the Republic of Vietnam".

Chinh Luan also mentioned AFP and BBC reports about the Paris political contacts by the MNR representatives. Chinh Luan quoted the BBC report that there were "unofficial political meetings in Paris between Communist and non-Communist Vietnamese in an effort to find agreement about the government that some political parties in South Vietnam have in mind as a possible replacement for the present government of the Republic of Vietnam."

The BBC report quoted by Chinh Luan added that "Mr. Nguyen Thai representing the MNR had discussions about a political settlement for South Vietnam in Paris ten days ago and that he brought from Saigon proposals about a cease fire and peace settlement."

United Press International Saturday, August 5, 1972

UPI confirmed "talks between Vietnamese in Paris" and quoted that: "A Saigon official said Friday private talks were going on in Paris between non-Communist and Communist Vietnamese aimed at ending the war but he emphasized his delegation had nothing to do with them."

"The official, Nguyen Trieu Dan, spokesman of the Saigon Delegation at the Vietnam Peace Talks." UPI reported, "said contacts were held between South Vietnamese 'private persons' and officials of the Hanoi and Viet Cong delegations. But he said that according to reports he had seen, the Communists showed no signs of budging from their demand for the ouster of South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu as part of their price for peace."

Why MNR (Cont. P. 1)

Vietnamese people, their voices for peace must be heard so that a prompt ending of the war may be found. Because the South Vietnamese, who are tired of a hopeless fight without issue, yearn to see some rays of hope in a future of peace when people in North and South Vietnam may live and rebuild their devastated country.

* WHAT the Movement for National Reconciliation stands for.

The MNR thinks that the only obstacle to peace in Vietnam lies now in the question of a new government to replace the Thieu regime and to offer the necessary guarantees for both sides so that their fear of mutual extermination be dispelled. Therefore it is essential to explore relevant possibilities and details with all concerned. To this effect MNR brought to Paris a nine-point peace proposal (translation of the full text in Vietnamese on page 1.)

Past experience in the politics of South Vietnam and tragic mistakes in its contemporary history clearly prove that individual leaders, (however well intentioned and powerfully supported) left to themselves without control and guidance, too easily degenerate into corrupt and isolated dictators who end up dragging the country into policies contrary to the aspirations of the people. The sad examples of South Vietnamese governments from Diem to Thieu amply illustrate this point. South Vietnamese, like people anywhere, yearn for real freedom and democracy. Unfortunately, thus far they have gotten only the outward trappings of free and democratic institutions. The real essence of these is to communicate to the leaders the true aspirations and legitimate desires of the people through Parliamentary bodies like the Senate and the House. Instead of representing and communicating the will of the people, these Parliamentary bodies have been grossly exploited by the Saigon dictators to echo their own voices and to eliminate any difference in political opinion however constructive or legitimate. Because of these lessons, the MNR stands for the elimination of one man dictatorships and for the establishment of a responsible type of collegial leadership which will be composed of patriotic elements in the South Vietnam of tomorrow who are Vietnamese first and foremost, who have realistic experience in government and who have enough revolutionary spirit to risk

MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION MEMBERS IN THE UNITED STATES Biographical Sketches

GENERAL NGUYEN-CHANH-THI

Born in 1923 at Phu Vang near Hue Nguyen Chanh Thi comes from a Buddhist peasant family of Central Vietnam in which frugality and honesty are a part of the family tradition. During the troubled period preceding World War II, Thi enlisted for military service in 1941. He came up through the ranks quickly; in 1949 Thi was promoted to the rank of captain of a paratrooper unit and as a fighting soldier he saw action on the most bloody battlefields of Indochina prior to the Geneva Agreements of 1954.

When Ngo Dinh Diem came to power in 1954, battalion commander Nguyen Chanh Thi was one of the first Vietnamese officers to rally behind Diem. After his successful campaign against the Binh Xuyen Rebels, Major Thi was promoted to Colonel and Commander of the crack paratrooper brigade in 1956. He held that important command until 1960 when he staged a coup on November 11 to pressure President Diem into changing the unpopular ways of his family dictatorship. After seizing military control of the capital Colonel Thi, ill-advised by opportunistic politicians, was outmaneuvered by Diem's devious schemes. Thi sought political asylum in Cambodia for three years. After the Diem regime was overthrown on November 1, 1963, Colonel Thi went home.

Upon his return to Saigon, because of his popularity among the troops and the people, Colonel Thi was sent away to the northernmost region near the demilitarized zone. Thi managed to do his job well enough under

innovations for SVN's improvement.

Pledged to open policies and programs of action which are designed to benefit the people of South Vietnam as a whole and contribute to the maintenance of peace in S.E. Asia, this COLLEGIAL LEADERSHIP in S. Vietnam will avoid the mistakes and policy deviations which are too frequent with one man rule and will at long last do something good for the people in their country.

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ideology.

adverse conditions, so from Colonel and Deputy Commander of I Corps he was promoted to Brigadier General and Commander of the First Division then to Major General and Commander of the I Corps. In 1966 Gen. Thi's popularity and prestige was at its peak and after ousting Gen. Nguyen Khanh, Thi could have assumed political power if he wanted to. His colleagues in the Military Revolutionary Council voted for him to replace Gen. Khanh as the top man of South Vietnam, but as a true soldier Thi refused political power and decided to return to I Corps to assume his military duties in that dangerous zone.

As one of the most popular soldiers of South Vietnam, Gen. Thi was involved in all the important political events during the period 1963-66. It was Gen. Thi's decisive intervention which stopped the abortive coup of February 19, 1965 and which eventually prepared the ouster of unpopular "strong man" Gen. Nguyen Khanh, who was wrecking the country by his divide and rule maneuvers among the religious and political groups. It was Gen. Thi's refusal to assume political power which led to the emergence of Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky as the new prime minister. Soon afterwards, Gen. Thi's straightforward honesty and uncompromising nationalism clashed violently with Gen. Ky's opportunistic policies. So in 1966, under the pretext that Gen. Thi was acting like an independent "warlord" in I Corps (because he took his responsibilities and made his own decisions), Premier Ky demanded the resignation of Gen. Thi as I Corps Commander and his exile from Vietnam. In Central Viet-

nam a revolt erupted, involving the Buddhist population and the military personnel in I Corps. As the revolt threatened to plunge South Vietnam into anarchy, Gen. Thi decided to leave for exile in the U.S. in September 1966.

In the U.S. since 1966, General Thi has spoken out against the massive military American involvement in S. Vietnam which was destroying the country while helping only corrupt and opportunistic elements in power. Instead, he advocated political reforms and changes in Saigon to permit the emergence in South Vietnam of a nationalist government which would be more responsive to the aspirations

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Biography - Gen. Thi (Cont. P. 6.)

of the people, especially their desire to end the useless killings and to bring peace to South Vietnam. Several times General Thi has tried to return to Vietnam but the Ky and Thieu governments have always opposed his return because of his uncompromising honesty and his widespread popularity with the troops and the masses, especially the Buddhists and Central Vietnam people.

General Thi's latest attempt to return to Vietnam in February 1972 was dramatically stopped by Thieu who sent troops to surround the PAA 747 and force it to take off immediately with Gen. Thi as the only passenger. Realizing that South Vietnam cannot be saved by the pro-war policies of Thieu and that the lives of the best soldiers in the ARVN who are his friends and comrade-in-arms are being wasted uselessly by Thieu, General Thi with other non-communist nationalists in South Vietnam recently decided to promote the Movement for National Reconciliation to save South Vietnam from Thieu and war. Gen. Thi is one of the founders and a member of the Central Committee of the MNR.

MR. NGUYEN THAI

Born in Hue on January 30, 1930, Nguyen Thai comes from a prominent mandarine family in Central Vietnam. He attended Providence Institute and Khai Dinh Lyceum in Hue until the Revolution in 1945. After a brief tour of duty with the Revolutionary Army in Laos, he resumed his studies in Saigon and in 1950 left for the U.S. where he was offered a scholarship by the Institute of International Education. After completing his B.A. in 1952, he obtained a fellowship from the Southeast Asia Program of Cornell University (New York) where he received an M.A. in Government. In 1954 he returned to Vietnam and served in the administration of Ngo Dinh Diem in various capacities (Presidential Press Officer, Assistant Administrator for American Aid, Special Assistant for Information, Vietnam press News Agency Director General). In 1961, convinced that there was no hope to reform the Diem family dictatorship from within, he left for Harvard University. There he was granted an Associate Nieman Fellowship in Journalism. (1962-3). Because Diem cancelled his passport, Mr. Thai had to teach journalism briefly at the Univ. of Missouri Journalism School in Columbia until Diem's overthrow in November, 1963. Then he returned

to Vietnam immediately and as a civilian, he tried to work with the generals in Saigon until 1965 when, discouraged with the military governments in SVN, he decided to become a private businessman. He founded a thriving motorcycle import business in Saigon, but in 1967, wounded by a terrorist attack and a leg amputated, he took the opportunity to go abroad for medical treatment to renew his foreign contacts, especially in the U.S. to find a solution for the Vietnam war. Since 1967, Mr. Thai travelled extensively and frequently between Vietnam and the U.S. In 1969 he accepted to help the Paris Peace Negotiations as a Special Adviser to the South Vietnam Government, but he soon realized that there could be no serious peace negotiations for South Vietnam under the corrupt pro-war government of Thieu and Khiem, so in 1971 and 1972, Mr. Thai actively promoted the program of action for peace in South Vietnam advocated by the non-Communist nationalists in the Movement for National Reconciliation of which he is one of the founders and a member of the Central Committee.

Mr. Nguyen Thai is a member or founder of many international and Vietnamese professional and civic organizations (e.g. he is an international member of Stanford Research Institute, a lifetime Senator of the Junior Chamber of Commerce International, a member of Lions Club, a founder of the Vietnamese American Cultural Association etc.) Mr. Thai has published newspapers (The Times of Vietnam in 1956) written books (Is South Vietnam Viable? 1962; Asian Newspapers' Reluctant Revolution, 1971). Mr. Thai is listed in the Who is Who in Asia (1960).

MRS. NGUYEN TUYET MAI

Born on March 22, 1931 into an upper middle class Catholic family of North Vietnam, Nguyen Tuyet Mai was born in Central Vietnam (Nha-trang) and grew up mostly in South Vietnam (Bien-Hoa). As a young girl she attended the French "College des Jeunes Filles" in Saigon until 1945 when the anti-French colonialist revolution broke out. Like some idealistic young people who wanted to contribute to the nationalist cause regardless of the political orientation of its sponsors, Mai joined the National Salvation (Cuu Quoc) Movement organized by the Viet-Minh. As fighting broke out against the French later, Mai joined the Liberation (Giai-Phong) Army and served in enemy-occupied territory. In 1946 she walked with her unit from South Vietnam to Central Vietnam

first to Quang-Ngai and later to Danang where she was selected to attend a special training session on Marxism and techniques for organization of women's groups.

After completing that training, she operated for a few months in the Tuy-Hoa area where she went into villages to organize women's groups. On the basis of her experience and achievements as a young cadre, Mai was selected in late 1947 by the famous Nguyen Son, then Viet Minh Commander of the Central Vietnam Region, to go to Hanoi to be sent for advanced training in Moscow. But as Mai found her family (who had moved from Saigon to Hanoi under trying circumstances) broke and sick, she felt obliged to refuse the trip to Russia to stay home and assist her family. In 1952 Mai was offered a scholarship to study at an American university. While a student in the U.S. Mai kept an active interest in Vietnamese politics. She spoke out against French neo-colonialism in Vietnam and its local puppet regimes; instead she advocated the emergence of a genuine Vietnamese nationalist government. Her straightforward views attracted the attention of the American press and some progressive U.S. Senators concerned with Vietnam at the time, such as the late J.F. Kennedy and Senator Mike Mansfield even had Mai's press interviews inserted in the Congressional Record. In 1954 Mai completed her education in the U.S. and after the Geneva partition of Vietnam, consistent with her own political convictions, she returned to Saigon. She organized the student volunteer groups (Thanh-Nien Tinh - Nguyen Phuc-Vu Xa-Hoi) to help the masses of refugees who fled North Vietnam to settle in the South and to assist such international humanitarian projects as operation Brotherhood. In 1956 Mai travelled extensively in Asia to observe successful social welfare projects in the Philippines, South Korea and Japan. In 1957 to promote a better understanding of Vietnam by Americans Mai worked as the Vietnamese Co-Director of Cultural Activities at the Vietnamese American Association in Saigon. To propagate progressive ideas on the participation of women in changing society, Mai published in 1957 her magazine for women entitled "Chi cung Em" (Sister to Sister). In 1959 to test the Diem regime which turned into a family dictatorship, Mai ran in the election for National Assembly in the Bien Hoa region, where she grew up and knew many leaders among the Catholic refugees. She actually won

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Biography N. T. Mai (Cont. p. 7)

the election, but the Diem regime had to fake the results in order to support a pro-Diem candidate. Convinced then that the Diem regime no longer represented the nationalist aspirations of the people in South Vietnam, Mai left for the U.S. in 1961 and started speaking out against the Diem regime. Mai published a documented account of her electoral experience in 1959 to show the undemocratic and dictatorial nature of the Diem regime and its inability to rally popular support (Asian Survey November 1962). When the Diem regime was overthrown in 1963, Mai returned again to Vietnam but disappointed with the military governments from 1963 to 1965, she joined private business in 1966 and has since been an associate and director of an import-export and investment company. Since 1967 Mai has travelled extensively especially between Saigon and Paris in order to contact concerned parties interested in the search for a solution to the war in Vietnam. Mai spent most of 1971 and 1972 contacting religious, political leaders, and women's organizations in SVN to promote the program for peace of the Movement for National Reconciliation (MNR). She left Saigon in May 1972 when Thieu began to crack down on political opposition elements, especially those who speak in favor of peace for a non-Communist S. Vietnam. Mrs. Nguyen is a member of the Central Committee of the MNR.

MEMBERS OF THE MNR IN VIETNAM

We earnestly hope that very soon the political repression will end and conditions will permit our Central Committee members who are now operating clandestinely in Saigon at considerable personal risks to openly engage in political activities. When their life is

no longer endangered, then we shall publish the biographies of those South Vietnamese whose life was dedicated to the search for a solution which can bring freedom and peace to the people of South Vietnam.

MNR BULLETIN TO BE PUBLISHED

"Just Peace," the information bulletin of the MNR will be published in September 1972 to present a forum for the free discussion of ideas to reach a just peace in S.V.N. Among the contributors to "Just Peace" will be:

Publisher & Editor (USA): Nguyen Thai, member of the MNR Central Committee.

Co-Editor (PARIS): Dr. Nguyen Van Con, writer and politician. One of the founders of the "Committee for Peace and Renovation of South Vietnam" formed in Paris, 1963.

Contributing Editor: (PARIS) Nguyen Van Thoai. Professor and scientist at the College de France, former Minister of Planning and Economy under the late President Diem, 1954. (Biographies of Dr. Ng. Van Con and Dr. Ng. Van Thoai will be published in the first issue of "Just Peace").

The MNR welcomes any suggestions or contributions. For further information please write to:

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