

*The Democracy Slate
Pledges*

Vietnam Report XII

The Peace Issue

(Broadcast Talk of September 20, 1971)

My fellow countrymen,
Dear voters,

Today is the second time* that Slate Number One, that is the Nguyen Van Thieu-Tran Van Huong Slate, has the honor of addressing you. The topic we are going to deal with will be our Peace Platform.

The desire for peace

In the past four years, whenever and wherever I had a chance to speak to you I have always clearly enunciated our Peace Platform so that there would be no room for misunderstanding. I have always reiterated my understanding of your yearning for peace after these many long years of war. Your yearning is also our earnest desire.

Being a combatant fighting against the Communists for over twenty years on every battlefield of North, Central and South Viet-Nam, I should and do know what war means--more than anyone else. I saw the inhumanity of the Communist enemy, and I witnessed the sufferings that the population had to endure on their account. Even my own family includes members that were unjustly executed, my own properties have been affected by the war, my parents had to evacuate, my nephews are still in the army fighting and suffering wounds like any other person. Thus, I too do want to see an early end to this war and a prompt return of peace to our Fatherland, so that each family may be reunited and each person attend to his business in a land at peace and in prosperity.

Today, in my capacity as President of the Republic, I should be even more concerned about bringing peace and prosperity to the Fatherland, to the 17.5 million people in our country. This has always been my primary objective. It is for this reason that I have affirmed, the day I succeed in restoring peace to our Fatherland --a peace that does not lead this country into Communist hands--that day I shall immediately request that I be allowed to return to normal life, letting the people choose a new leader. I am willing to do this to show that I do not seek power or the privileges of a high office, that I do not wish to be a President for the sake of the office's privileges, but simply to be a President who would restore peace to the South. For a President and a nationalist who has fought the Communists, this will be, I am convinced, the greatest fulfilment of my life.

* The first address of the Democracy Slate, broadcast nationwide on September 11, can be found in Viet-Nam Report X, "Issues in Viet-Nam's Presidential Election (October 3, 1971)," published by the Embassy of Viet-Nam in September 1971.

Origins and nature of the war

But, my fellow countrymen, when we speak of Peace--the peace to end the present war--we must naturally inquire as to the origins of this war. And when we wonder why Peace has not come to our land up to now, we must ask, How did this war start, who was responsible and why?

You are all aware that since 1945, it was the Communist Viet-Minh who took advantage of the nationwide patriotic movement of struggle against the French for independence to seize power, exterminate all opposition parties and genuinely patriotic elements, and gradually establish Communism throughout Viet-Nam. In 1954, aware that they were not strong enough to win total victory over the French and the anti-Communist nationalists, the Communists made a pact with the French colonialists whereby they divided the country, turning North Viet-Nam into a Communist state as a first move before planning to take over South Viet-Nam.

The Communists themselves signed the 1954 Geneva Agreement, pledging in effect to honor the truce, to renounce interference into the affairs of South Viet-Nam. Painful though it was for us to lose half of our land and our people, the nationalist side had no choice but to agree for we were then still dependent on the French. We did not yet have an elected government with real power in hand that enjoyed the support of all the people, we did not have a strong army on our side, either. In the country at large it was total disorder, a chaotic situation with no organization whatsoever.

In these circumstances, though they signed the agreement and accepted to withdraw their troops to the North, the Communists went on nurturing the malevolent thought of considering the truce as no more than a temporary respite for recuperation purposes while the French would be expelled from South Viet-Nam. This they knew, that the French would be asked away and in the meantime South Viet-Nam would not have the time needed to put its army into shape. This would allow them to infiltrate their men into South Viet-Nam again and take over the country more easily. To prepare for that day, they buried their weapons in the South, they left key cadres in South Viet-Nam, they even recruited South Vietnamese and brought them up North for the purpose of training them, turning them into hardcore elements who, a year or two later, would return to South Viet-Nam and make preparations for the larger reinfiltration.

That this was no conjecture was proven by the fact that after the French had left, the Viet-Cong ordered--in around 1958-59--their guerrilla units into the open, they started sending back "volunteer" cadres into the South. Soon thereafter, they infiltrated regular North Vietnamese troops to intensify the war. Now, hundreds of thousands of them are fighting in South Viet-Nam and neighboring countries, equipped with the most modern weapons and military hardware that Russia, Communist China and other Communist states can provide them with, short of nuclear weapons. Thus, in spite of all our protests, in spite of the very agreements that they signed, in spite of their commitments, in spite of the presence of the International Control Commission, in spite of world opinion even, the North Vietnamese invaders and their creatures in the South, the so-called National Liberation Front, went on pursuing their scheme, murdering, killing and terrorizing people.

Is not all that sufficient evidence that the war in South Viet-Nam since 1958-59 a war waged by North Viet-Nam on South Viet-Nam? It certainly cannot be turned

around, as if the South is now waging war on the North.

Some naive persons would like to parrot the Communists and qualify the present war as an internal affair of South Viet-Nam, a civil conflict, a war of liberation by the South Vietnamese for the sake of independence, to expel the American colonialists and to gain Freedom, Democracy and Happiness. In 1954 we gained our independence, and we have built up a regime of freedom and democracy since. The Americans did not come until the beginning of 1965. They came because all of South Viet-Nam was in danger of a Communist takeover, and also because we asked them to assist us. Today, South Viet-Nam has regained its strength. Consequently, the Americans are leaving, half of them have left, and all of them will go. No American has landed on this shore for any other reason.

Now if one says that South Viet-Nam must be liberated before one can enjoy happiness and be free of want, then one should inquire whether it is in the South or in the North--under our democratic regime or under the Communists--that people enjoy more freedom and democracy, are freer of want and closer to happiness? South Viet-Nam is under no one's domination, to need liberation by the North Vietnamese Communists. People in our land do not suffer from hunger, there is no need for the Communists to come and give us food.

On the contrary, if we had to it should have been us who should go north to liberate our twenty million countrymen still dominated by the Communists with their atheistic doctrine, whom they are bleeding white. The peasants in North Viet-Nam are collectivized, endure uncounted hardships under Communist rule--with a "helping hand" from the Chinese Communists. In fact, we should be up north helping our brothers to gain their liberty and liberating them from hunger as we ourselves are free from want.

My fellow countrymen, is it not clear who started this war?

Why peace has not come

Why to this date Peace has not come?

Clearly enough, the Communists still do not want the end of the war, they do not want to withdraw their troops back to North Viet-Nam. In such circumstances, how can South Viet-Nam have peace?

Let us imagine for a moment what will have become of our country if the army and people of South Viet-Nam had not fought against aggression during all these years. Certainly, we would have been under North Vietnamese Communist rule by now, and our 17.5 million population would have had to endure the same fate as the 20 million people in the North. Collectivization would have come too, disregarding the fact that Communist China could take more than run-of-the-mill interest in our fertile paddy fields--this would help feed its 700 million population--and used the 37.5 million Vietnamese as instrument of conquest of other countries. Under these conditions, Viet-Nam will have been "pacified," with our people burdened with more hardships while millions of our youth will have been forced to participate in infiltration of neighboring lands, dying in foreign territories just as in the case of the half million young men "born in the North but dead in the South" (sinh Bắc, tử Nam).

The question of Peace, then, for Viet-Nam as well as for Cambodia and Laos is, Why isn't it here yet? The obvious answer is because the North Vietnamese continue to infiltrate and wage aggression, refusing to withdraw to their home base. To put the answer in that fashion, however, represents an oversimplification of the problem. We must broaden the outlook, we must understand why the Communists--and not simply the North Vietnamese--still refuse to end the war in South Viet-Nam. The reason is that the target shared by the Russian and Chinese Communists does not simply consist of South Viet-Nam alone, they have their eyes on Cambodia and Laos and the whole of Southeast Asia as well. To take over Southeast Asia, it will be necessary to take first the entire country of Viet-Nam, from North to South, in order to have the people and resources to infiltrate other countries. Once South Viet-Nam is in their ken, it will be much easier to overrun the other countries of the area. For this reason, the Communists consider South Viet-Nam their primary target.

This therefore is proof that no one should believe that once the Communists take over South Viet-Nam, the people will be left to enjoy peace and work in happiness. Above all also, life under the atheistic doctrine of Communism can never be a happy life. Once South Viet-Nam is captured, the entire population of Viet-Nam, from North to South, will be used to infiltrate numerous other countries and thus never know a day of peace. This simply means that the infiltration will continue, the death toll will be higher and go on longer while peace will prove to be an eternal mirage.

The time for peace and its nature

The question we must put then is, When is peace to come? What kind of peace will constitute a genuine peace?

As I have repeated on several occasions, Do we want a peace that brings Communist domination, a peace in which the 17.5 million people of South Viet-Nam will have to suffer the sight of sons condemning their fathers, wives denouncing their husbands while all your property will go into the Communist coffers, a peace in which our children will be drafted into the army to fight endless wars in Malaysia, India, Indonesia? Do we want that kind of peace? In other words, do we want a peace in which we lose everything, our land, our independence, our freedom, our democratic rights, our property, our fields, our rice bowl, our religion and our parents' tombs?

If not, then, what kind of peace do we want? We want and must have the peace that guarantees all these: our land, independence, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom to live our own lives--having what we want compatible with the freedom of others, dressing the way we like, enjoying the fruit of our work, building decent homes, owning our own property, having our children in schools, etc. It is this kind of peace, Peace in Freedom and Democracy, that I am dedicated to bringing to the people of South Viet-Nam.

It is for this reason that I have affirmed to you, Peace must be restored to South Viet-Nam without:

- One, further concession of territory to the Communists
- Two, coalition with them under any guise
- Three, neutralism Communist-style
- Four, the Communist ideology being spread and their party operating freely in South Viet-Nam.

You might ask why we should have all these guarantees before we can have real peace and why we need that real peace to bring freedom and prosperity to the people. The answer is: Should we be forced to accept the four conditions detailed above, or just anyone of them, then we will not be able to say that we have peace because that peace will not be forthcoming. On the contrary, we will have a longer war, or a peace only in the sense of more suffering for our people.

Let me explain. Will the cessation of more land to the Communists bring peace? The answer will obviously be, No. Some people think that if we give to the Communists some provinces they will leave us alone, agree to end the war, and thus South Viet-Nam will have peace. To say so is to believe that we can calm a hungry child by giving him some candies. Things are never that simple. For if the Communists truly cherish peace and respect the agreements they have signed, then why are they now not only in South Viet-Nam but also in Cambodia and Laos?

Suppose that we give them one, two, three, four or even five provinces, will they leave us alone? Or they will take some time out to absorb these provinces and start out again? And if every Communist invasion ended up with a few provinces given to them in the name of peace, then how many times will it take our 45 provinces to go? What would happen then? Where would our 17.5 million people go? Thus, I am certain that the South Vietnamese people will not remain inert and accept any fate reserved to them by the Communists. Surely, we will put up a resistance, and resistance will mean resumption of the war every two or three years. Then our Fatherland will be like a house falling apart a bit at a time, until in the end there is nothing left to protect us from the weather.

Will coalition with the Communists bring peace? An answer to this question should start with an inquiry as to the meaning of the word "coalition." This means the sharing with the Communists of our rule, from the administrative organs to the military and police powers, from the superstructure at the central level down to the level of the village and hamlet infrastructure, from the executive branch to the legislative and judiciary, in short in every field of the economy, social affairs, education and propaganda, etc. That is, they will insist on a directing hand in all these fields.

To the Westerners unfamiliar with the experience of coalition as it happened in Viet-Nam as well as to some nationalists taken in by the Communists, coalition means solidarity, cooperation in the national affairs, a state pleasing to everyone so that the Communists will agree to end the war and so that we can have peace at last. Of course, when the Communists are given a share in the power, in the wealth of the country, in the ruling of the country, there will be peace. But how long will this peace last?

We do not have to take Eastern Europe as an illuminating instance of coalition that leads to perdition. All we have to do is to look at our neighboring country, Laos. Here it was the Communists who signed the 1962 agreement to set up a coalition government. But their signing was simply a scheme to take over the whole country without bloodshed, through political maneuverings. When the nationalists in Laos saw through their trick, however, the Communists resorted to force to seize half of that country. Thus, a coalition that does not permit the Communist takeover of the country will lead to war again. This is why, from 1954 up to now, after seventeen years of so-called independence, neutrality and coalition with two and then three groups, Laos and its people are still engulfed in war.

Let us now go back to the experience of Viet-Nam. In 1945 when the Communists had just seized power they were a numerically smaller, much weaker, group than the major nationalist parties at the time such as the Dai Viet Cach Mang Dang (Revolutionary Dai Viet Party), Viet-Nam Dong Minh Hoi (The League of Viet-Nam), Viet-Nam Quoc Dan Dang (Vietnamese Nationalist Party), etc. They were even weaker than other groups in the country such as the Catholics, the Buddhists, the Cao Dai, the Hoa Hao. And so they advocated the line of national coalition to lure the nationalists into a national solidarity bloc to resist against the French. They divided up seats in the National Assembly, in the Government and invited various personalities to become advisors and ministers--such as the case of Emperor Bao Dai, Mr. Huynh Thuc Khang, Mr. Nguyen Tuong Tam, Mr. Nguyen Hai Than, or in the South the Hoa Hao Pope, Mr. Huynh Phu So, revolutionaries such as Mr. Nguyen Van Sam, Mr. Ho Van Nga, etc. But deep inside their mind they nurtured the idea of exterminating their nationalist allies one day and set up a thoroughly Communist regime. A year later, the Communists did not even hesitate to use the French, let them come back to Viet-Nam to do the elimination job for them. The end result was that the "coalition government" found itself rid of all nationalist elements while somehow all the Communists remained. If realistically speaking, coalition with the Communists is possible, then why is it that to this day there are no nationalists, there is not a trace of non-Communist nationalism left in North Viet-Nam?

It is thus clear that to the Communists, the coalition scheme is no more than a temporary machiavellian device to be used in periods of weakness in order to allow them more time to gather strength, strike at the nationalists and seize total power. Consequently, we should not allow ourselves to be so naive as to think that coalition will be the solution to the war, for the peace that come with it is simply a political trick of the enemy. It is only when they are weak, as in 1945, that the Communists propose the coalition solution. When they were strong, as in 1965, did they ever propose it? This was because they thought they were in a position to take over all South Viet-Nam, to bring the whole country under their rule: In such a case, why should they have a coalition with anyone, for coalition would still mean a sharing of power--no matter how temporary--with the nationalists. They Communists proposed coalition again only in 1968-69 when they were weak, for the prospect of swallowing up the South militarily is no longer there: In this case, the coalition scheme is easier to sell and might even hasten their coming to power.

Does neutralism Communist-style, then, bring us peace? Again, the answer is No. We have to qualify the term "neutralism" with "Communist-style" because the Communists mean to take advantage of the word "neutralism" with its nice ring to deceive those unfamiliar with their vicious mind. The Communists proclaim that "neutralism" means non-alignment, whether with the Americans or the Communists. The Communists, in fact, want South Viet-Nam to be neutral simply to take away from the Americans the main rationale for their being here. With a neutral South Viet-Nam, the Americans will have to leave, undercutting their very effort to strengthen the South and leaving us unprepared for a possible determined onslaught coming from the North. Besides, a neutral status will mean also the end of effective military aid from the Free World. Neutrality will also mean our being strictly forbidden to appeal for help, should we be attacked again. Such an exposure will mean a resumption of fighting with the Communists in Hanoi so close to us, the Red Chinese so intent on refueling the infiltration route and the Russians always so ready to give a hand. And this time, surely the Free World will not intervene again. The Free World might choose to clamor, but clamors alone will not stop them, and the Free World will be face to face with a fait accompli.

Neutrality Communist-style will mean, then, that the Communists wish to isolate us, making it impossible for us to appeal for help or for anyone to come to our assistance in case of danger. Thus, it all amounts to the Communists telling us to lay down our weapons, to let our arms be tied behind our backs so that they can beat us in the face or have our throats slashed.

Again, the examples of Laos and Cambodia are instructive. The Communists themselves signed the agreements honoring the neutrality of these two countries, then they themselves sent troops to flagrantly violate that neutrality. They have yet to leave in spite of all efforts to get them out of there, including those of the United Nations. Should either nation involved complain, they will use force to invade it. This is the present picture of North Vietnamese presence in these two countries: they are being invaded with the prospect of more war and mourning. This, then, is a clear case of Communist-induced neutrality "for the sake of peace": in spite of their commitment to respect that neutrality and peace, they themselves violated the agreements after a couple of years in order to invade these two neighboring countries. Should we then fall into the trap and believe the Communists when they tell us we can have peace at the price of neutrality?

Last, will we have peace should the Communist ideology and the Communist Party be allowed to freely operate in South Viet-Nam? Here too, the answer is No, the reason being that the Communists advocate their doctrine for the entire world, and not just for Viet-Nam alone. There is tranquillity in the world only where their cadres and policies and covers are allowed to work undisturbed. Where the furtherance of their aims runs into trouble, they would start their aggression.

Wherever they have achieved a coalition government, they have manipulated to gain complete power in the end. Wherever there are Communist parties or cadres, or simply people organized by them, they have sought to organize coups d'etat, to overthrow the constitutional and legal governments of the countries involved, and to replace them by so-called revolutionary governments of their brand. It is in this light that we must inquire as to the purpose of the Communist armed invasion of our country in the last ten years. Is it not clear that they wish to bring Communism to the South just as they have done to the North? This is a basic objective which they will never renounce. When armed warfare does not succeed, they ask for a coalition government. When a coalition or neutrality cannot be obtained, then they resort to their last means, they demand that a Communist party be allowed so that they can carry on the indoctrination of the people of South Viet-Nam.

Wherever there are Communists, there is terrorism, demonstrations, continuous public disorder. They will claim that they legally fight for democratic freedoms, they will demand the "right to live," they will organize strikes, create disturbances, disrupt the national order, murder and kidnap people in such a way as to weaken the country's structure while inciting people to rise up and overthrow the legal and constitutional government. These things have all happened and are still happening in South Viet-Nam. What more would we have if now a Communist party should be allowed to work openly and legally, to freely disseminate its doctrine, to organize this or that movement, to create further disturbance in the country at large? How will we have stability then so that the people may make a living and the country prosper? In the long run, the country will be weakened and the government overthrown. At the least, there will be confusion in the country while an invasion may threaten from the outside, combining armed intervention with political struggles, violence with so-called "people's movements."



"The North Vietnamese must realize that the situation has visibly improved in our favor..."

Shown are the downtown areas of Saigon (1971).



In the last analysis, the South Vietnamese people have staked out their lives for a free and democratic society. Why should we accept destruction now at the hands of an alien atheistic doctrine that disregards humanity and all feelings? This would be a truly illogical conclusion to our long-drawn struggle. In short, to tolerate the spread of Communism in South Viet-Nam and to accept the presence of a Communist party in our country will amount eventually to more upheavals, continuous disorders, an enfeebled country which in the end will be lost anyway.

In conclusion, my fellow countrymen, I may say that the four solutions envisaged for South Viet-Nam which I wish to avoid for the country--they are currently called my "four no's"--are nothing but direct or indirect conditions for easing the Communist takeover of our country. Thus, a peace that entails the loss of our nation, our land, our people, our freedoms and our happiness is necessarily a worthless peace.

Why should we voluntarily offer our heads for execution by the Communists, accept their domination, and sacrifice our younger generations to their scheme while even in the Communist countries all around the world people are everyday sacrificing their lives for freedom, when even the twenty million North Vietnamese are longing for their liberation from the Communist yoke? This bad experience is something that even some of you have had five or seven years ago when you were under the temporary rule of the Communists. The recent experiences of the Mau Than Tet Attacks are only the last reminder of Communist cruelty.

The ways to peace

You may then ask me, "If you were reelected for another term, how would you restore peace? Would real peace be brought about?"

I have made my peace platform very clear over the last four years, having elaborated on it on several occasions. It has not changed for the simple reason that it is meant to secure the independence of South Viet-Nam, to prevent its falling into the Communist hands. All other "instant" peace solutions--advanced by demagogues, dupes, or Communist stooges--will end up in the domination of 17.5 million people by the Communists, in which case we had better not have peace at all.

Personally, I have pledged never to sell out my country, I will never betray the sacrifices of our combatants and people. This pledge includes my determination not to be lured by a false and temporary peace hope if that hope only leads to a Communist takeover of South Viet-Nam. Yet I cannot possibly be described as a war-monger that wishes to see the war go on and on, for what gains will I get out of it? What gains will accrue to you?

I have on several occasions reiterated the basic fact of this war, that is, it is a war of aggression by the Communists. The moment they stop the aggression and withdraw to North Viet-Nam, peace will at once be restored. It is as simple as that. On our side, we are merely defending the South, we will never invade the North. In the North, the people can follow whichever leaders they choose to, they can pick the regime they want, provided they leave us alone to live under the free and democratic regime we are building.

We have never asked them to give up any part of their territory. We have never told them to enter into a coalition with us, or to share power with us. We have

never asked them to be neutral in this or that fashion and we have not imposed upon them any ideology or a nationalist party to our own liking. In return, there is no reason whatsoever why the North should ask the South to comply to their unreasonable demands. This is what we call justice, and common sense.

The North is Communist, the South is free. Each has its own way, let us leave it at that; no one has the right to invade the other. If both sides have something to exchange, they can always do so through peaceful discussions. Furthermore, I have clearly stated that the South is ready to discuss the reunification issue with the North but through peaceful means, based on the principle of self-determination of the people and through the democratic process.

In the South, I have offered a concrete political solution towards a settlement of South Viet-Nam's internal affairs as early as July 11, 1969. This solution envisions an end to the war and the restoration of peace on the basis of self-determination of the people of South Viet-Nam, by means of free elections and in the spirit of national reconciliation and solidarity.

I have put it clearly to the Communists that we are willing to discuss with them anything, anywhere, anytime. They can take to the conference table whatever they may wish to put forth or propose, or even to discuss with us in secret sessions, provided these talks are serious. I have also proposed to them an immediate cease-fire, or to discuss the exchange of prisoners with them. We have shown our maximum goodwill by unilaterally releasing their prisoners. Yet, as you have known, for more than two years now--during 129 sessions of the Paris peace talks--we have reiterated almost every week our past initiatives or suggested some kind of concrete action to the other side. All in all, we have taken seven initiatives on the question of exchange of prisoners, but the Communists have never discussed them seriously. Nonetheless, having on six different occasions released North Vietnamese prisoners, we are still ready to release all their sick and invalid prisoners if they wish to accept them back.

As far as the peace initiatives are concerned, we have made ten initiatives in all since the beginning of the talks, not to mention the fact that every week we kept tabling these proposals and inviting them to talk seriously. The most important initiatives include our proposal for an immediate cease-fire in Viet-Nam as well as in the whole territory of Indochina, the one concerning an immediate and unconditional release of prisoners-of-war of the two sides, the one relating to the reunification of the two zones, and the one concerning a political settlement through free elections in South Viet-Nam. Most recently, we have tabled the five-point proposal of October 8, 1970 concerning an international conference for a solution to the war throughout Indochina.

We did not set any precondition to our proposals. On the contrary, the Communist side always sets preconditions forcing us to discuss their proposals on their own terms. For instance, they only accept to discuss a political settlement for South Viet-Nam once its present legal and constitutional government has been overthrown and replaced by people that fit their criteria. They did not agree to a cease-fire either as long as they could not have a disguised coalition government which they denominate a "People's Concord Government." In other words, they want to impose their political objectives first, and they will agree to solve the presence of their troops only with such a government--their own creation. And this one-sided mentality applies in other conditions of theirs: they want conditions set

for the withdrawal of Allied troops from South Viet-Nam, but they say nothing about the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops in South Viet-Nam. Whether willingly or not, the fact still is that the withdrawal of Allied troops is drawing to a conclusion, in great contrast to the continued infiltration of Communist troops into the South. The conclusion is therefore inevitable that the Communists only show more stubbornness for all our numerous initiatives, goodwill and patience.

In such circumstances, how do we bring back peace? How do I propose to restore it? I can answer in all honesty that the past four years have contributed to the restoration of peace in the sense that militarily, we have chased the North Vietnamese out of their sanctuaries, destroyed them near the frontiers, pushed them further away from the borders and kept on their tracks, while through our pacification campaigns we have restored peace and security to every village, hamlet, and ward. People are now free to go anywhere they want to attend to their business, and the rural economy has expanded. The rural areas have thus put on a new face. The fact then is that peace has been gradually restored in South Viet-Nam, from Ben Hai to Ca Mau, from the Highlands to the South China Sea. Peace has been restored through the security and prosperity we bring to all the people.

Yet, we still maintain the door open to peace negotiations, we are ready to discuss these with the other side anywhere they choose to, as long as they act openly and sincerely, for I have always advocated a negotiated settlement to this war. For an early and prompt negotiated settlement would save lives for our soldiers and people. But we will have to continue the fighting as long as the Communists stubbornly refuse to discuss seriously a negotiated end to the war.

The North Vietnamese must realize that the situation inside South Viet-Nam is visibly improving in our favor and that their side has become weaker with every passing day. Their own rear in North Viet-Nam also weakens day by day as their economic and manpower potential slumps in a dangerous way--hardly helped by the recent big floods. The world situation also, I believe, has evolved in a direction favorable to the restoration of peace in this part of the world. Even if the Communists refuse to negotiate, the war will fade away in a few years' time and the peace that has come back to our land will only be further strengthened. And that peace will guarantee our development of the country. If there are still gunshots heard then, they will be very remote, away from the populated areas and near or beyond the borders.

On the other hand, it is not beyond imagination to think that once they realize they can no longer hope to take over South Viet-Nam by force, by military means, the Communists will be resigned to a negotiated peace settlement. Then, we will also be there ready to sign with them that negotiated settlement.

* * *

My fellow countrymen,
Dear combatants and cadres,

I have just presented my peace platform. I have maintained this platform for the past four years. I still think it is valid.

I have on previous occasions dealt with the question of confidence votes in the forthcoming October 3 election. I have clearly stated that if you have confi-

dence in me you should go to the polls and cast a regular ballot and if you do not trust me you should still go to the polls and cast an irregular ballot. Ever since I said that, many questions have propped up regarding how to cast an irregular ballot. Today, I will not hesitate to clearly define the ways in which you can cast an irregular ballot should you feel you have no confidence in me.

If you have confidence in me, you will cast a regular ballot, that is you take the Democracy Slate ballot and put it in the envelope and drop the envelope in the ballot box. If you do not have confidence in me, you will cast an irregular ballot. There are several ways in which you can cast an irregular ballot:

- One, you can drop an empty envelope, i.e. without the Democracy Slate ballot, in the ballot box.

- Two, you can make the ballot irregular in a thousand different ways such as, you may tear the ticket--entirely or partially, you can write on the ticket all kind of things to deface it, etc. These are only a few of the possible ways you can make the ballot irregular; should you want to I am certain that you can come up with many more ways as well.

I wish to tell you frankly that, due to the special character of this election which now carries only one slate, my own, I would like to ask for your clearcut position, whether you have confidence in me or not. I want you to make up your mind on this one issue, so that I may be able to make up mine. Should I be reelected or receive a high majority of the votes, which will allow me to stay on for another four years, then I do not want you to say that you did not know how to show your lack of confidence in me. Then I do not want you to say that because you did not know exactly how to go about casting an irregular vote, I was reelected as a result and could stay in power.

I want to make it clear that I do not wish to stay President for the prestige or privileges of this office. I want to stay President for one purpose only, to bring peace to the nation and thus serve the people. For that reason, if I stay in power it should be on the strength of your clearcut votes, especially now that you know already how to cast regular and irregular ballots. This is one point on which I do not want to see any misunderstanding.

My fellow countrymen,
Dear combatants, cadres and voters,

Besides the objectives of democracy building and improvement of the society, objectives which I also sought to achieve in the last four years and will continue to realize in the next term, the most important thing as I seek your votes will be to show confidence in the peace platform which I have maintained over the past four years. Next, I seek your confidence vote in the ways I have used to gradually bring peace back to the people--the peace that presently exists; and last I seek your confidence in the goodwill I have shown and in the actions I have taken to restore peace for the country, a peace that still lays in the future but in which our beloved South will not fall into the hands of the Communists and the people of South Viet-Nam will not be ruled by atheistic zealots.

Thank you for your attention.



The March of Democracy: Shown above is a polling station on Election Day (for the Lower House) in Saigon City.



Another polling station during the Lower House elections of August 29, 1971 in Saigon.

Above right: The voter has a corner of her card cut off, both to show that she has voted and to make it impossible for her to vote a second time.

Below left: A large turnout.

Below right: Public vote counting.

Next page, overleaf: The preliminary results came in.



KẾT-QUA TẠM THỜI BẦU-CỬ DÂN BIỂU HẠ-NGHỊ-VIÊN

ĐƠN VỊ I

ĐƠN VỊ II

ĐƠN VỊ III

SỐ TT	HỌ và TÊN	SỐ THAM	SỐ TT	HỌ và TÊN	SỐ THAM	SỐ TT	HỌ và TÊN	SỐ THAM	SỐ TT	HỌ và TÊN	SỐ THAM
1	NGUYỄN ĐUU THONG	5842	43	PHAN NGOC HOP	7227	1	PHAM THAI GIU	14412	1	TRUEN DIN NGOC	17687
2	PHU THAI GIU	6167	44	LE DINH CO	5404	2	NGUYEN HUU NGOC	5679	2	LY QUANG TUONG	5326
3	KC NGOC DU	20444	45	LY DINH CHUNG	26787	3	NGUYEN X PHU	14245	3	HUI VAN SU	5259
4	PHAN VAN TUO	2278	46	NGUYEN HUU CHUNG	33370	4	KC THAI GIU	8768	4	LIN THAI	14459
5	PHAM PHUC THAI	3517	47	NGUYEN TH CHUNG	3692	5	NGUYEN NGOC ANH	7194	5	LE THAI GIU	6241
6	NGUYEN DINH UC	3566	48	NGUYEN VAN DUU	5295	6	NGUYEN NGOC ANH	7195	6	PHAM THAI TUONG	4531
7	DU DINH CHUNG	4369	49	BANG KHU NGUYEN	10379	7	PHU X THANH	16723	7	NGUYEN HUU QUANG	4491
8	PHAM VIET DUAN		50	VO VAN TUONG	8304	8	CHU VAN HUNG	8373	8	PHAM THONG VIEN	5321
9	NGUYEN THONG HOC	17239	51	HO DINH TU	4165	9	DUONG NGOC LUONG	4182	9	TRUEN VIEN	
10	TRUEN VAN TUEN	17252	52	HUU CONG NGUYEN	1855	10	A NGUYEN KIEM ANH	3854	10	NGUYEN DINH	5154
11	AN QUOC CHUNG	11641	53	NGUYEN NGUYEN HUU	2220	11	KC LUU LI NGOC	5651	11	KC VO TH BA	5553
12	NGUYEN THONG NGUYEN	2376	54	NGUYEN LUONG HUU	3123	12	HO BA THANH AN THANH		12	LE MINH DUU	9021
13	DINH THONG CHUNG	6283	55	NGUYEN DUU HAO	3547	13	TUNG DUU	9818	13	PHUONG CONG PHU	20331
14	BANG VO LONG	2726	56	PHAM VIET TUEN	8471	14	HO THANH DAN KHO		14	KC THAI DIN THUA	7396
15	TRUEN CONG DUOC	7123	57	VO VAN HAI	7395	15	PHAM TAN CHIEU	3611	15	NGUYEN NGUYEN NGUYEN	7010
16	LE MINH LI	15221	58	NGUYEN XUA	1758	16	KC BANG THAI PHU	3241	16	VO NGUYEN CHU BAN	
17	NGUYEN DUU LAP	11281	59	VO VAN NGUYEN		17	X THANH PHUONG		17	TRUONG DUONG	3266
18	KC THAI THANH VAN HAI	7312	60	VO NGUYEN	2691	18	NGUYEN VAN THAI	3212	18	VO VIET TAN	5107
19	NGUYEN BA BANG	5149	61	NGUYEN VAN THAI	1743	19	TRUONG VI THAI	32932	19	A CHAU THE THAI	2643
20	TRUONG LI	4076	62	NGUYEN NGUYEN THAI	6783	20	KC LUU DINH KIM	3110	20	NGUYEN VAN THANH	3603
21	NGUYEN THANH NGUYEN	8433	63	NGUYEN NGUYEN THAI	6559	21	VO VAN NGUYEN THAI CHU		21	OLEN LIN HUNG	7090
22	VO VAN THAI THANH NGUYEN		64	TRUEN NGUYEN THAI	6559	22	LUU VAN THAI	7813	22	VO VAN PHUAT	35526
23	KC KIM TAN	17131	65	NGUYEN VAN THAI	9545	23	DUONG TAN LUC	3541	23	VO THAI NAI	5873
24	BANG VAN GIU	2057	66	DUONG TAN LUC	3541	24	NGUYEN VAN THAI	1813	24	NGUYEN VAN HUNG	2809
25	NGUYEN VAN THAI	1899	67	TRUEN VAN THAI	1805	25	VO DINH HAI	2397	25	NGUYEN THANH CHU	4781
26	NGUYEN NGUYEN THAI	2353	68	LI DINH THAI	6202	26	NGUYEN VAN NGUYEN	5068	26	NGUYEN VAN THAI	3312
27	VO THANH HAI	1897	69	PHAM HO	3544	27	NGUYEN VAN NGUYEN	5068	27	NGUYEN A CAN	4653
28	KC NGUYEN HAI	2455	70	TRUEN VAN BA	5563	28	NGUYEN THANH KIEM	4226	28	NGUYEN VAN THAI	10321
29	A PHAM NGUYEN HAI	1728	71	NGUYEN DINH HAI	2631	29	BANG THANH TANH	4334	29	NGUYEN VAN NGUYEN	6668
30	VO VAN THAI		72	VO VAN NGUYEN		30	KC BANG NGUYEN		30	NGUYEN DINH HAI	10908
31	KC VO VAN THAI		73	NGUYEN DINH HAI	2425	31	TRUEN VAN THAI	2618	31	VO VAN NGUYEN	41377
32	VO VAN THAI THANH	3031	74	NGUYEN THANH	7265	32	TRUEN VAN THAI	5012	32	KC NGUYEN NGUYEN	31656
33	NGUYEN DINH THAI		75	NGUYEN VAN PHUONG	5442	33	CHU VAN NGUYEN	1706	33	VO VAN NGUYEN	8744
34	PHAM DINH THAI	3620	76	HUU NGUYEN PHAM		34	NGUYEN VAN NGUYEN	1689	34	LE TUNG LIN	7711
35	TRUEN DINH THAI	1502	77	NGUYEN NGUYEN	2347	35	NGUYEN NGUYEN THANH	7101	35	TRUEN THANH HUU	10286
36	NGUYEN VAN TAN	4915	80	NGUYEN VAN LIN	3302	36	NGUYEN LAM THU	5327	36	TRUEN VAN SONG	5508
37	TRUEN THANH TRUEN	1674	81	NGUYEN VAN COU	2484	37	TRUEN LONG LUEN	8950	37	DINH TRUONG KY	5405
38	NGUYEN DINH CHU	2761	82	PHAM VAN DUONG	8891	38	VO VAN THUAN	3497	38	TRUONG DINH TEN	6293
39	BANG THANH DU	2550	83	PHAM VAN THAI	3217	39	NGUYEN VAN TU	12861	39	NGUYEN VAN THUAN	4635
40	NGUYEN VAN HUU	6529	84	TRUEN VAN THAI	3605	40	NGUYEN VAN TU	2407	40	LE PHU PHUONG	4864
41	NGUYEN VAN THAI	7302	85	TRUEN THANH NGUYEN	1677	41	NGUYEN VAN TU		41	NGUYEN DINH	5275
42	NGUYEN VAN HAI		97	VO VAN NGUYEN		42	TRUEN VAN HUU	3123	42	TRUEN LIN	2784
43	NGUYEN CAO THANH					43	VO VAN NGUYEN	7622	43	VO VI	4714
44	VO VAN NGUYEN					44	VO VAN NGUYEN	6801	44	TRUEN LIN	2784
45						45	VO VAN NGUYEN	1203	45	TRUEN LIN	2784
46						46	VO VAN NGUYEN	3161	46	TRUEN LIN	2784
47						47	VO VAN NGUYEN	3314	47	TRUEN LIN	2784
48						48	VO VAN NGUYEN	3314	48	TRUEN LIN	2784
49						49	VO VAN NGUYEN	3314	49	TRUEN LIN	2784

Social - Economic Issues

(Broadcast Talk of September 27, 1971)

My fellow countrymen,
Dear combatants, cadres and voters,

The last time, we have talked to you about our peace platform. Today, I wish to mention the progress achieved in our country in the past four years and define the programs and policies I have planned for the next four years in the eventuality I receive your full confidence.

The restoration of peace

Four years ago, I listed three essential tasks to be accomplished for our nation. Because they were essential, I have considered them to be the three national objectives to be attained. They were: to solve the war, to build democracy, and to better our society.

To solve the war meant that we must try, first of all, to preserve the independence of South Viet-Nam and prevent it from falling into Communist hands. The country could be lost militarily because we let them win the military struggle, or it could be lost politically simply because our cowardice and defeatism would lead us to surrender to their demand for a coalition government, a pro-Communist neutral government, or a solution in which they could work to overthrow our government and replace it with a regime of their choice. But to solve the war also meant that peace should be restored to South Viet-Nam. There were two ways to restore peace. We could defeat the Communists and once they realized the hopelessness for them to win over us, militarily or politically, then they would conclude the war and accept serious discussions. In the other instance, they could choose to prolong the war stubbornly, then we must restore a practical state of peace on our own by making the war fade away. We have pursued both ends simultaneously.

Thus, today, peace is nearer to us, from both points of view. We have, in the absence of the Communists' willingness to discuss a negotiated settlement, succeeded in restoring much of a practical state of peace--a state that we shall continue to consolidate. We have, in the meantime, proposed a negotiated settlement for the entire Indochinese conflict. For South Viet-Nam alone, we have proposed a political solution spelled out on July 11, 1969, which we stand ready to discuss with them. Today, the Communists are seriously weakened, both militarily and politically, in South Viet-Nam while in North Viet-Nam, the economy is being paralyzed by the effects of ten years of warfare, by the bombings that went on a few years back and by the most devastating flood ever to have occurred in the Red River delta. All these have cost the Communists millions of people, they have generated over a million and a half homeless refugees, and destroyed their crops. Furthermore, world developments have also pointed to a situation favorable to the restoration of peace in Southeast Asia. Thus, sooner or later--at the latest it will be

next year or the year after--the Communists will have to negotiate seriously with us the end to the war in South Viet-Nam.

Our problem, as you see, is no longer what it was five or six years ago. In other words, there is no fear that South Viet-Nam would be lost, should the Communists refuse to negotiate. The important thing now is how to expand and consolidate the practical situation of peace that we have achieved, and how to maintain that peace as long as the Communists refuse to negotiate. In other words, we should not let any parcel of land fall to the Communists or allow their creatures or defeatist persons on our side to get into the government and agree to a political solution amounting to selling out our country.

How about a negotiated settlement? Here, I have repeatedly stated that I am no war-hawk profiteering from the war. More than anyone, I should know the devastations brought by war to our land, having been a combatant in the army for twenty-three years and in every battlefield. I do know what the people long for. They long for peace. That is why it is my responsibility, as leader of the nation, to offer all the peace proposals that may lead to genuine peace: I have offered several, including an immediate cease-fire (for this evening, or tomorrow, as they please), but the Communists have adamantly refused. They refused because they see no advantage to their side; consequently, they turned them down, demanding instead the overthrow of the present government and the establishment of a coalition government as preconditions for negotiation. This is obviously unreasonable. We can, for instance, cut a piece of South Viet-Nam and give it to them; we can agree to a coalition government or to a pro-Communist neutral state; or we can let them freely operate in South Viet-Nam: in these cases, I am sure, they will immediately agree to negotiate. However, we shall lose the country, sooner or later, directly or indirectly.

For that reason, we cannot agree. I cannot agree. I have said repeatedly that I do not surrender to the Communists, I will not sell out our country, I will not betray the sacrifices made by our people and our soldiers. I must defend the country on the people's behalf because the people have given me that responsibility. I refuse the Communist preconditions because the people want so, not because I am stubborn or love the war, but because this land belongs to 17.5 million people who do not want Communism.

The only remaining solution, then, is the restoration of a practical state of peace. As far as this is concerned, we have achieved nine-tenth of what must be done. Practical peace means territorial security, security of movement throughout the country, security as far as making a living in the countryside is concerned. A peaceful and prosperous life has gradually returned to the villages and hamlets of our country, to the 2,162 villages, 11,000 hamlets and 17.5 million people of South Viet-Nam.

Regarding this, you who live in the villages and hamlets in the countryside must have noticed the difference in the security, freedom of movement, tranquillity obtained in making your living, and this year's prosperity as contrasted to the lack of security and hardships of four or five years ago. This is your experience. I do not deceive you, nor how can I?

Today, throughout South Viet-Nam, there remain only 52 hamlets still outside our control out of a grand total of 10,626 hamlets, which means that 99.2 percent

of our hamlets are secure, and out of a population of 17,835,600 people only some 25,000 living in remote areas are not yet under our control. We will englobe them under our control by the end of this year. Now if we compare this with 1965, we will see that back then we controlled only about half of the territory and its population. Exaggerating a bit, the Communists claimed they had control over 3/4 of the territory and 2/3 of the population in South Viet-Nam. For the past two years, though, they have kept silent or acknowledged the fact that they have lost that land and that population. They do not even hold areas that were traditionally theirs, such as U Minh, Dong Thap, War Zone C and War Zone D. They have even been chased out of our territory into Cambodia and Laos, where even here they are on the run and decimated.

In comparison with the darkest period of our history, from both military and political viewpoints, only five or six years ago when the rural areas were controlled by the Communists and the cities deep in anarchy, or compared to the period of the Mau Than Tet Attacks, today we have a good situation that has been developing for more than three years now.

If four years ago, the Communists had the capability of launching big attacks almost throughout the land, today they have the capacity to wage guerrilla warfare only, to initiate scattered shellings that have no effect whatsoever on the rhythm of our activities, including periods designated by the Communists as "high points."

Four years ago, the people were greatly hampered in their movement in a large part of the country, including many areas which were off-limits to them. Today, from Ben Hai to Ca Mau, from the highlands to the coastal areas of Central Viet-Nam, they can go by night or by day to even the farthest and remotest hamlets.

Four years ago, a great part of our Armed Forces were on the defensive, unable to take the initiative. Today, not only our regular forces have given the chase to the Communist regulars right into Cambodia and Laos, but our Regional and Popular Forces also take the initiative in every battlefield of the country while our People's Self-Defense Forces represent a source of worry for the other side.

Four years ago, the United States and other allies had to maintain half a million troops in Viet-Nam to protect us, forcing the American government to spend 20 billion dollars annually on the war. Today, the American and Allied forces are reduced to less than half, corresponding to a similar reduction in the war expenditures; they will continue to be reduced because our Armed Forces have become increasingly stronger and more capable of our own protection.

In short, today the Communists' dream of victory in South Viet-Nam represents little more than a mirage. The morale, from that of the leaders in Hanoi to their cadres and soldiers in South Viet-Nam, has sapped in despair as a result. Over 600,000 Communists have lost their lives in South Viet-Nam, more than 250,000 weapons have been seized so far while 187,000 have rallied to our side. The Communists have thus lost both the land and the people. A fish out of water cannot live on. Once the rural areas have come into our hands, the Communists no longer have the supplies and manpower needed, they no longer can find even a place to hide.

The building of democracy

To build democracy means, on the one hand, to respect and materialize the in-

stitutions prescribed by the Constitution while on the other hand, to concretize the people's right to direct participation in the governmental process, in the activities and decisions of various government organs.

In the implementation of the Constitution and the building of constitutionally prescribed organs, you must have noticed that all the institutions that the Constitution called for have been set up, from the central level such as the Senate, the Lower House, the Supreme Court, the Economic and Social Council, the Culture and Education Council, etc. to the local level such as the provincial councils, the village councils, the hamlet administrative bodies. All the periodically called for elections have also been held correctly and democratically, in which the people have participated in large numbers and actively. In this respect, we have made a gigantic stride in comparison with any country in the world that may be called progressive, that may have enjoyed independence for a long time and that may have been free of the horrors of war.

In other words, we have completely transformed the political system, from the central to the local levels. We have moved from a colonial background to totalitarian institutions (under the Viet-Minh) and dictatorial institutions, under which the people had no choice but to bow their heads and listen, to a regime where the people truly share in the power of government, in which the people in the villages, hamlets and wards directly participate in the administrative machinery so as to decide matters of security and development within the framework of the policy of local self-defense, self-administration and self-help. As a result, in four years we have come to have 97 percent of the villages (2,106 out of 2,162) and 98 percent of all the hamlets (10,410 out of 10,626) throughout the country run by popularly elected officials, and these officials are regularly replaced by newly elected ones according to a set schedule of elections.

The provincial councils also have been elected and more power given to them for the control of the local administration and for direct participation in the decisions regarding pacification and development programs in their own provinces. A major reform of revolutionary nature has been instituted with regard to separation of power, not only at the central government level but also in the provinces, villages and hamlets, so that more power for decision would come into the hands of the elected bodies.

We have sought not only to improve our organization, we have also trained all our cadres at the National Training Center as well as in provincial training centers: This is what should make us proud over even the more developed nations. In our own country, this has never been done throughout several regimes. After the training, our cadres get a thorough acquaintance with the policies of the nation and better management principles that will help them administer their villages and hamlets and serve the people better. To date, close to 200,000 village and hamlet officials, including those from the highland regions, have been trained or have taken refresher courses.

The reorganization of the administrative machinery meant to simplify the red tape, to increase the productivity of our administrative cadres, was partly carried out in the various ministries at the central level and down into the provinces and districts in order to improve the speed and efficiency of services to the people and to do away with intermediaries who not only obstruct the administrative process but also breed corruption. This effort has been implemented and will be completed in the coming year.

As far as the activities of political parties are concerned, both those in the opposition for opposition's sake and those responsibly opposed to the government should recognize--at least to themselves--that no other regime in Viet-Nam has been this democratic and that more than in any earlier regime, the nationalist political parties and professional groups have been free to carry out their activities and express their views. Who can say now that repression of political parties still exists? Can anybody claim now that critics of the government are put in jail or suppressed, so long as they act within the framework of the Constitution and the laws of the land?

However, the political parties are still too weak because they do not want to shake off their lethargy, because they lack unity, because they fail to get together so as to consolidate their strength and grow into major parties leading, for instance, to a majority status in the National Assembly or in Government. This is the only way they can operate more effectively in a correct and progressive democratic system which logically should obtain in our country.

The improvement of society

Having undergone many centuries of imperialistic yoke, our country has had to endure a subversive war immediately thereafter. For this reason, our society has suffered an enormous amount of devastation and suffering, countless malpractices and injustices. The government under the Second Republic is determined to solve all these.

In the past four years, though we had to face the Communist threat by diverting a great part of our human and natural resources to this effort, we still pursued our pacification and reconstruction efforts to bring security and stability to the people while trying to heal the wounds of war and develop the nation--thus bringing not only a normal life to the people but also a prosperous one. Consequently, the objective described as "social improvement" will mean, first of all, a solution to the economic and social difficulties of the people.

My program to improve society involves five major areas. I can say with pride that a great deal has been achieved in all five areas and that further progress is on the way. The five fields are:

- 1) Economic and financial
- 2) Land and production means ownership for the peasantry
- 3) Increased production
- 4) Cultural and social development
- 5) Expansion of public facilities and utilities.

I.- Economic and financial problems

Our economic and financial situation in the past few years is necessarily related to the subversive war of the Communists, that is, the Government has had on account of the war to increase its expenditures quite significantly to maintain a powerful armed force capable of defeating the enemy. Also on account of the war, the people, especially those in remote rural areas, were not able to clear much new land or vastly increase their production. We had only limited means with which to rebuild while the enemy relentlessly sought to destroy our reconstruction programs.

In that extremely difficult situation, the Government has put into application

a number of practical economic and financial programs meant to stabilize the people's livelihood and to mobilize all necessary resources for the people's struggle while at the same time implementing urgent social improvement projects.

It goes without saying that the economy can truly be stabilized and strongly developed only once security has been entirely restored in the land. But in spite of some inevitable temporary disturbances, the economic and financial situation from the beginning of 1970 up to now has been a generally encouraging one.

First, the inflation which is but a natural consequence of wartime conditions has been halted. Two years ago, the economic troubles had so piled up that the people no longer believed in the economy and the value of the piaster. Instead of hoarding or spending it all on consumption, people today have begun to save and deposit their money in the banks in order to benefit from the high interest rates (savings deposits have tripled in the past twelve months). Besides, the contributions of the people to the national budget under various guises have helped reduce the budget deficit, thus decreasing the necessity of issuing additional piasters.

The supply of goods has also improved noticeably. The speculation and hoarding of imported goods, a problem which was quite serious two years ago, have been reduced to the minimum thanks to a logical import policy. Imported staple commodities such as sugar, milk, flour, pharmaceutical products, etc. have been supplied regularly and are now sold freely in the towns as well as in the countryside. Domestic staple commodities have also increased vastly thanks to the development of agricultural and industrial production. The prices of consumer goods have as a consequence either not been disturbed or increased but insignificantly. Machinery, especially the agricultural machinery, and industrial raw materials have been made available to the maximum in order to strongly and effectively boost production and improve the people's standard of living.

In addition to the economic stabilization and development programs, the Government has concerned itself with the living conditions of the civil servants, the military personnel and their families. This constitutes the main worry of the Government. As I have repeatedly said, whenever our resources permit, the Government would always find ways to improve their living conditions. Along with the pay raise measures, the Government has put emphasis on the supply of staple commodities at reduced prices for the civil servants and military personnel by expanding the military commissaries, the supply services, the cooperatives and the General Supply Office.

In the case of the invalids and war widows, the Government is implementing a large-scale assistance program. Beside the generous pensions already provided by the law, the Government has actively built veterans' villages with increased expenditures upward of 20 billion piasters per year, free educational facilities for war widows and orphans, and has strongly carried out vocational guidance and training while assisting the veterans in the finding of jobs.

In the case of the peasantry, along with measures of encouragement and the mechanization of agriculture, the Government has implemented a large-scale and the most progressive land reform program to help millions of tenants acquire ownership over their lands. At the same time, we have invested large sums of money to the long-term development of agriculture and fisheries so as to eventually transform the look of our countryside and raise the living standard of the rural population.

As these programs have been raised to the rank of national policies, no one can truthfully deny the fact that today the living standard of the countryside has vastly improved: good security, well kept roads, agricultural machinery, "shrimp-tail" (outboard) motors, electric generators, etc. All these have come to even the remotest areas of our land.

The Government has mobilized every resource of the nation as well as the assistance given us by foreign countries to make these great strides. But all these efforts are obviously only the first step in a large-scale plan to revive and expand the national economy. With security being strengthened throughout the country, the Government has completed a long-range development plan for all areas of our national life with particular emphasis on the economic and financial question in the next few years. 1972 will thus open the way to a new phase in the economic reconstruction of our country. In this attempt, the Government has asked for and is still trying to obtain aid from allied nations and international organizations. The Government also wants to attract foreign investors so that they may bring capital to Viet-Nam and contribute towards the industrialization of our country. The United States Government has pledged to continue increased economic aid to South Viet-Nam so that we may have the means to implement our national development policy and gradually emerge as an independent economic power.

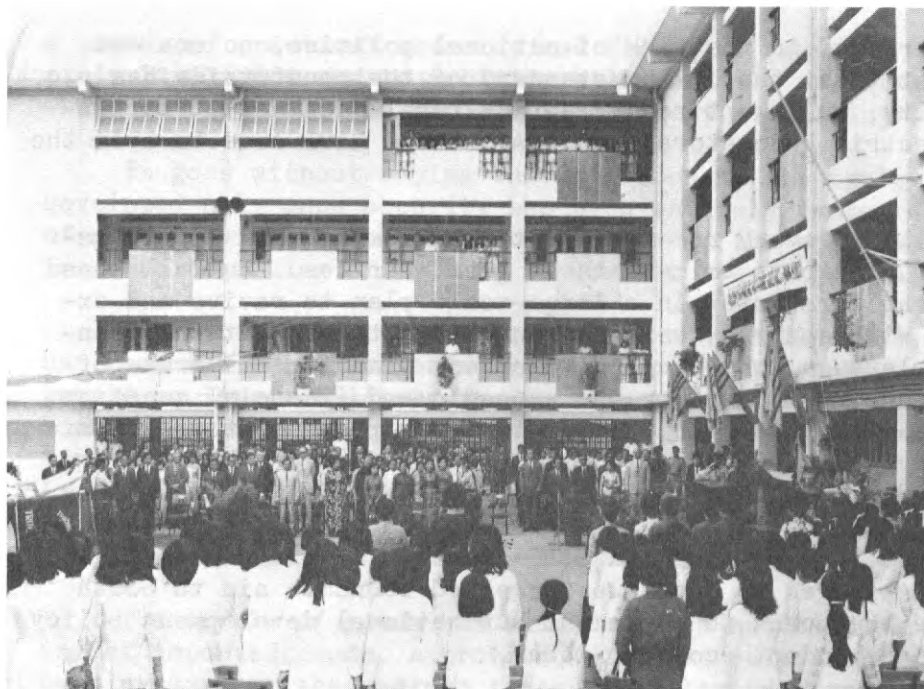
II.- Ownership programs for the peasantry

The land reform program was carried out but reluctantly in the years preceding the Land-to-the-Tiller Program. From the end of 1967, in outlining my aim of improving society, I have directed that a truly vigorous and revolutionary land program be implemented. This was the genesis of the Land-to-the-Tiller program. The tillers were granted land free of charge and became the actual owners of the land on which they have been working.

Carried out mostly towards the end of 1970, this land reform program has in a period of less than one year and a half secured land for 355,000 peasants, totalling 420,000 ha altogether. As I have promised, the Land-to-the-Tiller Program will be continued and the distribution of one million hectares of land to 800,000 peasants' families will be completed by the end of 1972.

As for the land identification program benefiting the highlanders, to date there have been more than 20,000 families from the ethnic minorities whose land have been identified for a total area of 52,000 hectares. Other programs will also help people acquire ownership over their land, such as the distribution of land at resettlement centers and the distribution of land for reclamation: In these programs, 83,000 hectares have been acquired by over 95,000 persons. In the coming four years, nine hundred Highlanders hamlets will remain to have their boundaries defined together with another 80,000 hectares that need surveying. Both of these tasks will be completed before 1975. Also before 1975, we will complete the distribution of 270,000 ha of land available to the land development and resettlement centers while the tilling of community-owned land will also be regularized.

Besides acquiring property, the new landowners received assistance and guidance to properly exploit their lands and increase production. Those who have not acquired property but still want to live on agriculture are encouraged and assisted in acquiring new land by clearing virgin areas. Most specifically, the civil servants and military personnel could apply for and be granted 10 ha of land each so that they can make a living upon discharge or retirement.



More schools:
Shown is the Suong Nguyet Anh
High School for Girls.



Hospitals:
The newly-built "Vi Dan" Hospital
(inaugurated September 4, 1971).

Apartment housing:
The Minh Mang Apartments com-
pleted January 6, 1970.



Veterans' villages:
The Thu Duc disabled veterans' village, as seen from the air (1971)



Other citizens, especially those belonging in the land clearance cooperatives or companies, charity organizations or associations, will get special assistance if they wish to clear virgin lands for a profit. In the case of the ethnic minorities, along with the land and boundary identification of their villages and hamlets, they will continue to get assistance in their agricultural development programs so as to raise their standard of living to the same level as that of other citizens of Viet-Nam.

III.- Increased production

One of the programs designed to increase rice production so that we can cease importing rice has been the miracle rice production program. From a modest total of 40,000 hectares of cultivation in 1968, the miracle rice area has continuously increased during the past four years to reach 750,000 hectares in 1971. For that reason, domestic rice production has risen enough to meet domestic demands. Beginning this year, we have stopped importing rice because our rice production has reached 5.7 million tons, the highest figure since 1955.

In the field of animal husbandry, thanks to the rapid development of hog and poultry breeding, we have now reached a total of 35 million birds and four million hogs, thus no longer necessitating the import of frozen chicken and pork as it was the custom a few years back. The fisheries, too, have been rapidly mechanized. Out of 80,000 fishing boats, only 23,000 were furnished with motors four years ago. Today, the number has risen to 43,000. This explains why the catch has soared from 400,000 tons four years ago to almost 600,000 tons this year. This effort to increase food production has basically solved the problem of regularly providing food for daily consumption while keeping the cost of these items from excessive hike.

To support rural economic development programs and increase the people's income, the agricultural credit program has been expanded also. Four years ago, Government-granted loans to the farmers and fishermen amounted to 756 million only. By the end of this year, they will reach 9,500 million. To date, the Government has loaned to the farmers and fishermen a total amount of 22,613 million piasters.

Finally, the Government has spent a large sum of money to implement hydraulic projects designed to help the peasants expand the cultivated acreage and increase the rice and crops yield. Four years ago, the Government had spent only 72,500 million for hydraulic projects. By 1971, it has already spent another 1.6 billion, thus raising the total spent to 2.4 billion piasters.

IV.- Cultural and social development

Socially, in the past four years, the Government has concentrated on the task of helping and rehabilitating a great number of war victims whose figure for the entire war has climbed to 5,848,000 people. As a result of increased security, however, the majority of refugees has gradually returned to their former villages. Thus, from the beginning of 1968 to the middle of this year, a total of 1.2 million people have returned to their home villages. One noteworthy achievement of the Government in the year past has involved the repatriation and relocation of over 200,000 Vietnamese residents of Cambodia. All this has been done in a record time. By now, the Government has helped most of them resume a normal life.

Besides those who fled the Communist zones, the Government also had to cope

with emergencies caused by natural disasters such as the 1970 flood in Central Viet-Nam in which over 250,000 people lost their homes and crops. Timely and efficient help had assisted the victims to resume a normal life in a short time. The cost came to 834 million piasters, in addition to the loans granted by the Government--without interest--which totalled another 250 million. All this has helped the people start afresh.

Alongside these two tasks, the Government has also given special attention to the orphans, war widows and disabled veterans whom the endless war with the Communists has spawned and whose number reaches a significant figure. The number of Government-supported orphanages has soared from 87 three years ago to 113 this year and that of day-care centers, from 62 to 96. Neither has the Government neglected the poor laboring people in the various urban centers. Thus, one of the projects being implemented includes assistance to popular low cost restaurants throughout the country. For the past three years, the Government has spent over 92 million piasters to that effect, to provide 12 million individual rations to poor working people.

In the field of social welfare, the compensation to veterans has become a national policy. Law No. 008/70 has entirely renovated the regime of pensions to the war disabled and their families. Pensions are calculated on the basis of active duty salaries. Family allowances are kept intact as in the case of servicemen on active duty. In addition to the pensions, Law No. 008/70 also provides many privileges regarding health, social welfare, education, life insurance and such privileges as those reserved for the associations of war veterans, war disabled and war widows. The most evident proof of this concern has been the construction of housing for the invalids now being carried out feverishly throughout the land. A special fund of 4.4 billion has been released by the Government in the first phase of construction, which will involve 9,620 units for the invalids. Up to July 15, 1971 7,800 such units have been completed.

The number of national wards enrolled in the School for the Nation's Wards has in the past four years soared from 2,427 to 4,267 children. Over two hundred scholarships for study abroad have also been granted to outstanding war veterans, national wards and war orphans.

Efforts are also made to actively help the war veterans to make a living or find employment. From early 1969 to the middle of this year, 10,860 veterans have found jobs with the assistance of the Government. Over four thousand veterans have been integrated into government service without having to take a test. With regard to health and social insurance, the Government has refunded 18 million piasters for hospital care to war veterans and spent over 25 million piasters for invalids in recuperation centers. In the rehabilitation field, efforts are also actively being made to produce and distribute orthopedic equipment. Thus, over 14,000 artificial limbs have been distributed together with other orthopedic equipment such as wheel chairs, wooden crutches, steel crutches, and walking tools, etc.

As far as the education field is concerned, our national education has developed steadily, witness:

- The number of primary school pupils has climbed from 1.754 million four years ago to 2.718 million this year, that of primary school teachers from 30,347 to 52,194.

- The number of secondary school pupils has climbed from 418,000 four years

ago to 711,000, that of secondary school teachers from 10,212 to 21,221.

- The number of university students has soared from 30,302 to 56,608. In particular, the number of students in technical, professional and agricultural schools has mounted from 9,796 four years ago to 27,038 this year.

- To meet the needs of the increased number of students, more schools are being built also. Thus, in the past four years, using all available means and resources at our disposal, we have built 2,047 more primary schools, thus raising the number of 5,937 schools existing four years ago to 7,984 in 1971. During the same interval, the number of secondary schools rose from 644 to 886. Furthermore, recently with a view to launching basic university education with transitory programs to specialized junior college courses and developing specialized university education with special programs that truly would meet the needs of the community, the Government has authorized on August 15, 1971 the creation of a community college system. First among these community colleges are the Duyen Hai University in Khanh Hoa Province and the Tien Giang University to be built in Dinh Tuong. This, of course, does not include a number of other private universities that are also Government-supported.

In the health area, along with the development of medical care, the number of hospital beds has risen from 17,303 four years ago to 26,999 beds at the present time. The number of maternity clinics in the districts, villages and hamlets has also increased steadily, especially the maternity clinics and drug dispensaries at hamlet level which four years ago stood at zero but today total 437. This modest beginning will eventually provide useful and efficient assistance to hamlet residents who no longer have to make long and expensive trips to the district clinics. In the rural areas, the number of health cadres was 3,523 four years ago, but since has climbed up to 3,980. In the same period, the number of rural midwives has increased from 987 to 1,986.

V.- Utilities and public facilities expansion

Also within the framework of social improvement, the Government has endeavored to increase utilities and public facilities projects such as road construction, electrification, irrigation, housing, post office, and telecommunications projects, etc.

Thus, as far as roads and communication lines are concerned, the bridges of which 8,000 meters were destroyed at the end of 1967 have since been not only repaired, but also renovated and enlarged. Two thousand kilometers of road have been renovated and asphalted in the last three years while another 2,500 kilometers were repaired in the same time. Ten big ferry boats were constructed, thus doubling the number of ferry boats in use four years ago. The construction of the My Thuan bridge has also begun in 1971 and is expected to cost 22 million U.S. dollars. In addition, during the same period, runways have been expanded at the Ban Me Thuot and Quang Ngai airfields while construction at the airfields of Chau Doc and Bao Loc has been completed.

As far as water and electricity are concerned, shortages and interruptions were very frequent and severe at the end of 1967. Today, electric power reaches one billion kilowatts, thus almost the double of that of four years ago. At the regional level, 33 electricity distribution centers are being operated, also the double of what we had four years ago. In 1971, electrical power increased by 71,000 kilowatts while the Danhim electrical network was being expanded and a 33,000-kw

distribution center built in Can Tho.

The same thing applies in the case of water. Four years ago, water distribution was inadequate. Yet by the end of 1970, the Dong Nai River water supply system capacity already reached 480,000m³ daily, or in excess over the needs. In 1971, the system's output will be further increased to 600,000m³ daily. At the regional level, 32 water supply centers with a combined capacity of 43,000m³ have been built. In the rural areas, 127 wells have also been drilled in the same period, 134 meters of water pipes installed, and 30 water reservoirs built. The water supply systems at Bien Hoa (15,000m³ daily) and Da Nang (daily output 7,000m³) have also been completed in 1971 while the one in Can Tho (20,000m³) is on the way towards completion.

The housing situation shows a severe limitation four years ago when the budget earmarked for it had to be reduced and building materials were scarce. But by the end of 1970, 7,063 housing units had been completed for the benefit of war victims while another 2,872 units in Saigon and 1,300 in the provinces completed for servicemen and civil servants, not counting the 7,800 units built for disabled veterans at a cost of 4.4 billion piasters. Besides, two hundred million have also been loaned to housing cooperatives while another 180 million were loaned to individuals for the same purpose. Finally, the renovation of the entire Thu Thiem district has also been implemented during 1971 so as to reduce the problem of land scarcity in the Capital.

To sum up, during the past four years, true to what it advocates and despite the innumerable difficulties created by the war, the Government has endeavored to realize its goal of renovating society and achieved the many good results presented above. But the renovation of society is a task that must be carried out permanently--it cannot be completed in four years' time. It requires the mobilization of vast means and extraordinary efforts, not only on the part of the Government but also from each one of us, especially in the context of a war of aggression directed by the Communists at our country.

However, the Government's determination to build a progressive society for the people and its sincere dedication having been proved in the last four years, it is fairly certain that the improvement of society will see vast and greater success still in the years to come. To support these programs of social improvement, the Government has earmarked a vast sum of money amounting to a cumulative total of 69.9 billion in 1971, a sum that stood at 5.6 billion only three years ago. For the next four years, the Government plans to increase that total to 473.4 billion so as to continue pursuing this goal of improvement of the people's living standard.

Pledges for the next four years (1971-1975)

My dear countrymen and voters,

The achievements we have just reviewed regarding our three national objectives have been the result of the efforts, sacrifices and patience on the part of the entire people and the Army in our task of saving and building our land. These results represent hardwon gains built on the sacrifice and tears of each one of us, of the 17.5 million people of South Viet-Nam, and owed to the supreme sacrifices of our country's innumerable and valiant combatants. Thanks to all these factors, our country has now survived and become stronger than ever.

This is not the time to stop, however. In fact, we do not have the right to stop now on our road to progress. For the country is still at war, our people still in poverty while many social injustices still remain, our abundant natural resources still remain to be exploited to the full. We must find ways to develop our land further, to bring prosperity to the people, and to make justice prevail in our society.

I have on many occasions expressed my deep yearning to see South Viet-Nam saved from falling into Communist hands and peace restored to our land with guarantees of freedom and prosperity for its people. Today, I wish to reiterate this aspiration because it happens to be the same shared by the entire people and army, by all the 17.5 million people of South Viet-Nam. The reason why I must couple peace with freedom and prosperity is because I conceive that peace cannot be restored and maintained if it is not a peace based on freedom, prosperity and justice.

Consequently, I solemnly pledge:

In case I win your confidence on this coming October 3, I shall lead the country through a profound economic and social revolution, so as to bring back security, prosperity and justice to our land.

The Communists may stubbornly refuse to negotiate seriously to end their aggression, thus requiring further efforts and sacrifices on our part in regard to national defense, we can nonetheless affirm that a relative degree of peace has been restored to our land, thus enabling us both to consolidate our national defense and to actively implement the development of our country. It is my firm conviction, and I have reiterated this many times also, that the danger of our country's being overrun no longer exists and that, with the peace that has been restored, we have come to the second phase of the war. I consider 1971 to be the transition year, the turning point between the two phases. Phase One lasted from 1959 up to now, it is characterized by fierce fighting that helped save our land. Phase Two starts this year, it will be the phase of peace-building and vigorous national development. In other words, we have achieved victory on the military front. From now on, we must begin to win on the economic and social fronts.

The economic task that I emphasize here will not simply mean increased crop production, more medicine, clothes, housing, roads or greater price stability, financial stabilization or reduction in the trade deficit. It will and must include another no less important facet, and that is the restoration of a social equilibrium, the rebuilding of normal standards and values as well as the noble traditions bequeathed by our ancestors from times immemorial. We must restore and cultivate these values now, after all these years of troubled warfare when they could not help being impaired and adulterated, we must revive them and develop them much more vigorously.

Should I have your confidence, then, the economic and social fronts will constitute the major objectives of my program during my second term of office. I shall propose a comprehensive program with forceful and urgent measures meant to bring back prosperity to the country in the present circumstances, that is, without waiting for the war to be over.

Among the major points of my proposals, first priority will be given to the drawing up and immediate implementation of a long-term, four-year economic program beginning in 1972 and ending in 1975. This program will involve:



Scenes of the October 3 election in Viet-Nam: Above is shown a polling station in Saigon. Below: Inside the station.





Scenes of the October 3 election in Viet-Nam: Above is a polling station.
Below: International observers.



1) Rapidly increasing agricultural and industrial output so as to bring a relatively satisfactory economic standard to the 17.5 million people of South Viet-Nam, while at the same time saving part of our resources to maintain that living standard and progress towards the day when we can stand on our two feet. This production level must also be high and sufficient to finance our national defense needs.

During the years of economic rehabilitation, we shall pay special attention and give priority to agriculture. This will not mean simply to increase annual production to seven or eight million tons, it will encompass also a program of agricultural transformation so that in addition to rice and rubber, tea and coffee, we will vigorously push the production of such commodities as shrimps and lobsters, fish, coconut oil, bananas, peanuts, vegetables, cattle, and above all lumber.

In industry, we will concentrate on the processing and light industries so as to produce import substitutes as fabrics, pharmaceuticals, sugar, milk, and paper, etc. The handicrafts will also be given special attention as the products we export happen to be valued quite highly on the world market.

Moreover, should oil exploration off our coasts bring results, we will seek all appropriate and efficient means of exploiting it, using it as the backbone of our economic transformation program.

The key program which our slate pledges to implement in the coming years will remain the Five-Year Rural Economic Development Plan which I launched on the last Farmers' Day, on March 26, 1971, meant to continue the remarkable trend of development we have achieved in the last four years in agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry. According to this plan, the rice production for 1971-72 will reach over 6.6 million tons, covering not only our domestic needs but also leaving out some 600,000 tons for export. By 1975, the amount of surplus available for export may reach 1.48 million.

Rubber production will increase from 37,000 tons in 1971 to 70,000 tons in 1975 while the productivity will increase from 800 kilograms per hectare to 1,000 kilograms per hectare and the cost of production decrease from 300 U.S. dollars to 240 on the average for each hectare, so that our rubber will become more competitive on the world market. Also, within the next four years, we shall be able to export every year 2,000 tons of tea and coffee each.

As far as animal husbandry is concerned, we shall no longer need to import any cattle, we will also implement a program to increase by half the number of hogs and poultry available for consumption in the next four years while launching a large-scale program for breeding milk cows and meat buffaloes, thus enabling us to export meat to neighboring consumer markets.

Also, in the next four years, the fisheries will be given even more attention than before. I advocate using modern fishing equipment, motorized boats, and nylon fish nets; I support the building of fish-breeding centers so that we can provide fishermen with selected breeds, I am all for repairing and building more fish markets and renting foreign fishboats to study high-sea fishing while at the same time encouraging private concerns to build boats and manufacture nylon nets. By 1975, sea and river products will exceed 900,000 tons or almost the double of the present figure.

Taken altogether, income from agriculture, the fisheries and animal husbandry will increase by 13 percent every year, or 84 percent between now and 1975. This high increase rate will bring an ever more bountiful life to the people in the countryside.

2) Ever more support services to the rural population such as:

- Increased credit to poorer compatriots in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and animal husbandry.
- Mechanization of agricultural production.
- Further implementation of many more hydraulic projects.

As far as agricultural credit is concerned, if four years ago the Government had loaned to the farmers only a cumulative total of 1.7 billion piasters, by 1970 this total had reached 6.7 billion. However, the needs of the poorer compatriots in agriculture and fisheries being great, I will try to help you obtain 15 billion in loans in 1972 and even more in the following years; by 1975, the amount of agricultural credit loaned out will reach 40 billion piasters.

Our farmers are now in possession of a good deal of agricultural machinery. If four years ago, only some 200,000 horse-power in agricultural machinery were in use, by 1970 the figure has reached more than 900,000 horse-power, representing an increase of 250 percent. To alleviate your exertions in agricultural production and in fishing operations while making them more productive, I shall forward the mechanization of agriculture by making more loans available to the farmers so that they may buy more machinery. I will have maintenance and repair shops established and encourage private investors to set up agricultural machinery assembly and production plants.

Besides the mechanized means, agriculture will need be supported by hydraulic projects for irrigation or water regulation purposes. If four years ago the Government had spent only 73 million piasters for hydraulic projects, in 1971 this sum has reached 1.6 billion piasters. This sum will be doubled in the next four years so that the area benefiting from water regulation will increase from 300,000 hectares as of today to 700,000 hectares in 1975.

The concept of balanced development

The above-described program to help people acquire property and to develop the rural economy belongs in a comprehensive national policy to develop our economy and society. This national policy includes three principal features, as I have described and announced at An Giang on March 26, 1971:

- Economic development should proceed in parallel with the realization of social justice, that is once the economy has been developed everybody should have a share in it, and not only just a minority. Only then can we claim that we have social justice.
- Together with social justice and social progress, the economic development should help build a new society in which every citizen can be well off and thus, the middle class will form the majority.
- Once the people have a relatively well off standard of living, with enough to feed and to clothe themselves, the country will have been self-sufficient in food. From then on, agriculture, or the foundation of our economy, will have to produce abundant raw materials for light industry, thus starting our country towards large-scale industrialization and modernization.

Besides production, we must also solve at once the question of product distribution inside the country: the rice of the delta must be made available to the Highlands and coastal areas, the fruits and vegetables of the Highlands must be shipped to the plains; agricultural products must reach the cities and pharmaceuticals and fabrics must be shipped to the rural areas from the cities.

Investments, stabilization through economic liberalism

To achieve these objectives, we will have an important investment program, carried out with our own resources as well as with foreign capital. Our resources include manpower, the national budget expenditures and private savings as well as the capital accumulated by industry. Foreign resources include investments from international business circles, economic assistance from friendly nations as well as other important funds that we may have through long-term loans.

In addition to the production and distribution schemes, we must have also an urgent stabilization program meant to restore the equilibrium of our economy to a satisfactory level by 1975. Ever since 1945, inflation has been like a virus in our blood, causing innumerable social disparities and bearing down heavily on our national production capacity. Thus, we must strive to reduce this spiraling price system if we do not want our economic recovery to proceed in a confused price context.

Furthermore, our policy of economic liberalism will in the coming years have to rely quite a bit on the market and price mechanism in order to guide in the selection of production and distribution targets. In this case, only when prices have been relatively stabilized can we effect this guidance process. Everything will be brought to bear to obtain this objective, including every possible monetary, credit, budgetary and trade mechanism.

Parallely with the above measures, we will have a program designed to change and render our trade picture somewhat healthier. On the one hand, we will try to increase export while on the other, thanks to our increased agricultural and industrial production, we will try to reduce the import level just as we will restructure the import program so that our trade will serve the economic expansion program. How will our trade deficit be reduced and total equilibrium be achieved? This cannot be achieved in any other way than through encouraging export, reducing import, and guiding the national economic reconstruction in such a way as to have domestic prices correlate with prices abroad.

All these economic measures will no doubt have important repercussions on the social front. But, in addition, we will pay attention to such essential facets as:

- The simplification of the administrative process so as to eliminate corruption.
- The implementation of a more adequate and effective social insurance system.
- The setting up of more hospitals and clinics.
- At the same time, our national education system shall be reformed so as to produce a new generation fit for the needs of a new era.

My fellow countrymen,
Dear combatants, cadres and voters,

The measures that I have just proposed constitute the main points of an econo-

mic and social revolution which I advocate for the coming years. If they get implemented, these measures will mark the second stage of our road towards complete freedom and democracy, towards the building of peace and prosperity.

We have gone through the first portion of our road, that is we have halted the red waves and defeated the Communist aggressors in South Viet-Nam. Today, we can start on the second portion, that is, on the one hand we will carry the weapons to protect our land, but on the other we will hold the seedlings needed to transplant on this beloved soil of ours.

After all these years of devastation, it is time that our nation be consolidated, our homes be rebuilt, our children have a happy and prosperous life, both materially and spiritually, and not the destitute life full of despair that is the lot of twenty millions of our compatriots in the North.

My dear fellow countrymen and voters,

Should we have your confidence in the upcoming October 3 election, we shall devote all our efforts to begin, together with the entire people of South Viet-Nam, a new portion on the road to peace-building, freedom and prosperity.

Thank you.

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