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PRESIDENT THIEU SPEAKS AT AIRPORT ON DEPARTING FOR U.S.

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1112 GMT 31 Mar 73 S

[RVN President Thieu's speech at a farewell ceremony at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport on 31 March prior to his departure for the United States--recorded]

[Text] Dear compatriots, brothers and sisters:

We are profoundly touched and sincerely thank the compatriot brothers and sisters for coming in such a mass to see us off.

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM

Before boarding the aircraft, I want to say a few words to the compatriots of all walks of life and to the brother and sister officers and troops throughout the country.

Responding to the invitation by the President of the United States, I am now leaving on a 6-day official visit to that country where I will have talks with President Nixon. This is my first official visit to the U.S. continent, a visit which I have wanted to make for the past many years, but have had no opportunity. On this journey I want to represent 18 million southern compatriots in expressing the profound gratitude of the RVN people for the great contribution of the U.S. Government and people, and for the great sacrifice and heroic struggle of the U.S. combatants in our country.

Today is the 60th day following the signing of the agreement on the cease-fire and on restoring peace in Vietnam. Today is also the day when the last U.S. soldier has just departed Vietnam after a protracted and most difficult and delicate struggle for the American people. This is also the day when all U.S. POW's have been released and are on the way home to meet their families once again. This is also the reason why I choose this period of time to leave for the United States to express our Vietnamese people's gratitude.

My official visit takes place in a new phase marked by the cessation of the war and the reestablishment of peace in Vietnam, for which the Vietnamese and American peoples have fought side by side for many years and have shared sacrifices and efforts and weal and woe. What I am going to discuss with the President of the United States and to present to the American people of all walks of life will be aimed at establishing a new foundation in consonance with the new situation--a situation of peace and a post-war situation. The common goal of ourselves and our allies is from now on to consolidate peace, and our common policy and efforts are aimed at achieving mutual assistance and cooperation in peace.

Within the scope of our principal task, our allies will cooperate with us not in solving the war, but in solving the peace. This involves consolidation of the peace which has been achieved in conformity with basic principles and the agreement so that this peace can become a true and stable peace in this area and also in the entire world. Only if a true and stable peace is achieved will we be able to speak of and achieve a cooperation so as to develop common happiness and prosperity for all nations.

Therefore, on this trip to the United States, I will also visit a number of other nations. And in the future I will visit other nations. I term this trip one designed to achieve cooperation in peace. I will discuss with the leaders of these nations the problem of consolidating peace in this area of the world and of achieving developmental cooperation in the postwar period.

Before departing, I convey my regards to all the compatriots and brothers and sisters throughout the country. Compatriots and brothers and sisters, please pray that I may be astute and clear-sighted so that I can satisfactorily fulfill the mission that you have entrusted to me. Thank you compatriots and brothers and sisters.

SAIGON RADIO REPORTS THIEU'S ARRIVAL, FIRST DAY IN U.S.

First Day Activities

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 0500 GMT 3 Apr 73 S

[Test] RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu has been officially received by U.S. President Richard Nixon with the full ceremony accorded to a chief of state at the western White House at San Clemente, California.

At 1030 local time on 2 April--that is, 0230 Saigon time this morning--a special helicopter carrying the RVN president and his wife from Los Angeles landed on the lawn of the western White House on a warm sunny morning. Five minutes earlier U.S. President Richard Nixon and his wife awaited them at a red-carpeted pathway. While President Nixon moved forward to shake hands with President Nguyen Van Thieu, a 21-cannon salute resounded, and the two chiefs of state and all the distinguished guests stood up to salute the colors of the two countries. A big group of people made up of both Americans and Vietnamese nationals was also on hand, waving U.S. and Vietnamese flags to greet and hail the RVN president.

In his speech welcoming the RVN president U.S. President Richard Nixon said: The present objective of our two countries is to orient ourselves toward building peace. However, there still remain obstacles to be overcome before a true and lasting peace can be achieved. He went on: The South Vietnamese people now have a powerful army able to defend their territory and right of self-determination.

In his reply speech the RVN president said that the purpose of his visit to the United States this time was to lay new foundations for peaceful cooperation between the two countries following the signing of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam. He stressed that a quarter-century after World War II the United States still maintains a force of more than 300,000 troops in Europe, while now there are no U.S. troops in Vietnam. He expressed his deep gratitude for the generous and impartial U.S. assistance in the fight against communist aggression so that peace with honor can be achieved now.

The welcoming ceremony at the western White House lasted more than half an hour. The two presidents and their two aides then held the first U.S.-Vietnam summit conference, which lasted nearly one and a half hours. Meanwhile the two U.S. and RVN delegations also held a private session under the guidance of their foreign ministers.

At 1230 California time, that is 0430 Vietnam time this morning, President Nixon and his wife escorted the RVN president and his wife to their car, then both of them and the RVN delegation went to a U.S. Marine Corps officers' club 15 kms away to a dinner hosted by U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers.

At 1500 local time, that is 0700 Saigon time today, the RVN president flew back to Los Angeles in a helicopter to relax, while the RVN delegation continued to meet with the U.S. delegation.

Tomorrow night in California, that is, about tomorrow noon in Saigon, the RVN president and his wife and the RVN delegation will go to the western White House at San Clemente for a state banquet hosted by the U.S. President and his wife.

Saigon Radio Commentary 2 Apr

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1100 GMT 2 Apr 73 S

[Commentary]

[Text] Upon his arrival in the U.S. allied nation, RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu devoted the first minutes of his official visit to meeting hundreds of Vietnamese residents and college students in California. These Vietnamese, away from their country, gathered at the Los Angeles International Airport on Monday morning to welcome their leader coming from across the Pacific.

A recorded reportage filed by our three radio correspondents from Los Angeles gives you listeners a picture of the cordial, enthusiastic and emotional welcome extended to the RVN president by our Vietnamese residents in Los Angeles. In a brief interview by our correspondents, one or two of the welcomers extended their happy feelings to the compatriots back home while they were hailing the RVN head of state in Vietnamese and holding aloft Vietnamese flags and banners bearing slogans in Vietnamese. The world Vietnam [as received] which is shining with a militant will and the fire of victory, again resounded when the RVN head of state arrived in Los Angeles on the afternoon of 1 April, western U.S. local time. This burning feeling was expressed by our Vietnamese nationals in the United States in an emotion-filled scene of a great encounter between people who are of one mind and who are pursuing the same ideal--to defeat the communists to preserve freedom.

Living away from Vietnam for 2 years, one of our Vietnamese nationals told Vietnamese radio reporters that RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu represented Vietnam when he came to the United States, and that in welcoming the president with their sincerely expressed joy, our Vietnamese nationals here have expressed their ardent love for their native land. He also said that our Vietnamese residents' joy in welcoming their head of state upon his arrival in the allied U.S. nation shows the world that, wherever they live, our Vietnamese residents abroad are always determined to stand behind their head of state--whose trip around the world involves a lofty, peaceful mission. With their hand-and flag-waving and with their applause resounding throughout the international airport to welcome their president who remains resolute in the struggle and sincere in cooperating for peace, our students and Vietnamese residents in the United States have fully expressed their most sincere feelings.

Obviously, the Americans and other peoples throughout the world can, on the basis of this manifestation, concretely and profoundly understand why a small nation has been able to fight for 18 consecutive years and has defeated the entire communist bloc. Surely, once again these sincere feelings expressed by people of the same blood and same frontline in a nation where countless noble sacrifices have been devoted to helping Vietnam counter the communists, show the American people that they were right to provide the Vietnamese people with spiritual and material support to defeat the communists in that part of the world very distant from their country.

These warm feelings of the Vietnamese living far away from the fatherland and their countrymen directly engaged in the country-preserving struggle, prove all the more clearly that the communists were right in being apprehensive about the RVN president's official trip to the United States and four other friendly free world countries. The communists were afraid that the Republic of Vietnam would distinguish itself in the eyes of the free world nations and, that as a consequence, what lies behind the mission of the South Vietnamese head of state would gain the interest and support of other heads of states. Therefore, a rather long time ago, the international communists influenced a number of people in the United States and other countries to cause difficulties during the RVN president's present official trip. The reality of the welcome accorded RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu by our Vietnamese residents in the United States as soon as he disembarked from his plane that bore the inscription "cooperation in peace," is enough to demonstrate that the communists' efforts will be to no avail.

This bright and strong feeling expressed by Vietnamese who are sharing weal and woe, who are pursuing the same ideal, has defeated and will defeat all dark schemes aimed at lessening the brightness of the aura of victory of the person who symbolizes victory--RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu.

By means of this moving support on the part of our Vietnamese nationals during the first meeting in our friendly nation, the RVN president has himself proved the success he has scored in the first step of his entire undertaking to struggle for a truly lasting peace in a noncommunist Vietnam. Highly encouraged in his first step, in the foremost free world nation our chief of state will express to and gain support for his determination to build a truly peaceful era from the U.S. President when the latter welcomes him at the western White House.

Initial Commentary 30 Mar

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 0500 GMT 30 Mar 73 S

[Text] According to a news bulletin released by the presidential press secretary, on 31 March RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu and his wife will leave Saigon and begin his official tour of some friendly nations such as the United States, Italy, Britain, the Republic of Korea and Nationalist China.

The president's journey will last half a month, terminating in mid-April. Accompanying the president on his official trip are important figures such as Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam and his wife; Economy Minister Pham Kim Ngoc; Finance Minister Ha Xuan Trung; Lt Gen Cao Van Vien, chief of the RVNAP Joint General Staff; Special Presidential Assistant for External Affairs Nguyen Phu Duc; RVN Ambassador to the United States Tran Kim Phuong and his wife; Ambassador Bud Diem and Presidential Press Secretary Hoang Duc Nha.

A look at the composition of the official delegation accompanying the head of state on his first official journey early in the season of peace clearly reveals part of the purposes of this important official journey. In addition to its diplomatic purpose of developing the friendship between our nation and people and the friendly nations and peoples, the president and his close economic and financial associates will also discuss sincere allied cooperation in postwar economic development in the RVN.

The president and his entourage will make their first stopover in the United States, one of the most important and closest friendly nations that has fought shoulder to shoulder with us against the aggression initiated and fostered by the North Vietnamese communists for nearly 20 years. At the invitation of U.S. President Richard Nixon, RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu and his wife and our delegation will officially visit the United States for 6 days, from 2 to 7 April.

According to the schedule for his visit, on the first 2 days of his itinerary President Nguyen Van Thieu will hold talks with President Richard Nixon at the western White House in San Clemente, California. This will be the first Vietnamese-U.S. summit since the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam was signed on 27 January in Paris. On 4 April the president and his wife and our delegation will go to Washington and remain there for 3 days.

During their stay in Washington the president and his wife will contact Vietnamese college students and other Vietnamese nationals. He will lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and will establish contacts with U.S. Vice President Spiro Agnew, U.S. congressional leaders, newsmen and radio and television reporters, and business and trade unions circles of the friendly country. The RVN president and his wife will also go to Texas to visit former U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's grave and Lady Byrd Johnson on 7 April.

After their visit to the United States, the RVN president, his wife and his entourage will go to Italy where they will call on Pope Paul VI on 9 April. President Nguyen Van Thieu will confer with the president of Italy. Subsequently, the RVN president will visit Britain on 10 April, the ROK on 11 and 12 April and Nationalist China on 12 and 13 April before returning to Saigon.

In these countries, the RVN president will confer with their leaders on the general situation and on their cooperation with the RVN during the postwar period.

By looking at the itinerary and composition of the delegation we can see that the United States is the central point of the trip. Throughout the war period, the United States has assisted our people in every field to check the communist waves. Companionship and friendship between the two peoples have become closer. President Richard Nixon, when dealing with the present situation and future of Vietnam, has always manifested the U.S. Government's and people's warm support for the RVN Government and people and asserted that the United States recognizes only the RVN Government--the only constitutional and legal government of South Vietnam which is the genuine and worthy representative of 18 million South Vietnamese people and which is led by President Nguyen Van Thieu.

For this reason, in wartime, the U.S. and Vietnamese countries, governments and peoples have closely cooperated in pursuing a common objective and ideal: That is, struggling for freedom and democracy and building a genuine, lasting peace on this land on the basis of respect for the 18 million South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination and of international mutual cooperation.

The Paris agreement has been signed and a new page in the history of Vietnamese-U.S. diplomatic relations has opened. The cooperation between the two countries is now founded on a new basis and aimed at new objectives: Preserving past successes, making joint efforts with a friendly spirit to secure welfare and happiness for both nations, and cooperation in the economic sphere to attain postwar prosperity.

In this sense, President Nguyen Van Thieu's official trip in the early days of the period of peace assumes a profound significance of considerable importance.

On 31 March, the leader of our armed forces and people will start his historic official journey. We hope that the RVN president and his entourage will have an uneventful trip and will achieve glorious successes for our entire country.