

Tran Van Lam Letter to V. Rockefeller: Jan 1975

W FILE / SUBJ. Hist
DATE 1/75 SUB-CAT.

3. BEGIN TEXT. THE HONORABLE NELSON ROCKEFELLER, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WASHINGTON, D.C. EXCELLENCY, AS THE NEW 94TH AMERICAN CONGRESS NOW STARTS ITS SESSIONS I SHOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TO YOU THE GREETINGS OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM.

I HOPE THAT IN THE COMING YEARS THERE WILL BE MORE CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO LEGISLATIVE BODIES. I SHOULD LIKE ALSO TO EXPRESS TO YOU PERSONALLY MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR TAKING OVER THE HIGH OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT OF THE USA AND CONSEQUENTLY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE US SENATE, A UNIQUE POSITION WHICH ALLOWS YOU TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AS WELL AS WITH THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF YOUR GREAT COUNTRY.

AS YOU CERTAINLY ARE AWARE, MY COUNTRY NOW IS FACING A VERY SERIOUS SITUATION RESULTING FROM THE POLICY OF RENEWED AGGRESSION BY NORTH VIET-NAM IN TOTAL DISREGARD OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THE PRESENT SITUATION IS TOO SERIOUS TO BE OVERLOOKED. THEREFORE I AM TAKING THE LIBERTY TO PRESENT TO YOU THE CANDID PICTURE OF EVENTS, AS MY COUNTRYMEN AND MYSELF SEE IT FROM OUR NATIVE LAND.

IN THE SPRING OF 1973, WE SIGNED THE PARIS AGREEMENT WITH GREAT HOPES. AFTER A QUARTER OF CENTURY OF ENDLESS FIGHTING WE WELCOMED THE PARIS AGREEMENT. WE HOPED THAT THIS AGREEMENT WOULD BRING ABOUT A TRUE CEASE-FIRE AND ALLOW THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE TO DECIDE THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURE IN EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. WE WERE GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT SHOULD IT COME TO THE WORST AND SHOULD THE NORTH VIETNAMESE RESORT AGAIN TO THE USE OF FORCE, WE WOULD BE PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE MEANS TO DEFEND OURSELVES.

TWO YEARS HAVE ELAPSED AND I AM AFRAID THAT WHAT WAS ONLY OUR INSTINCTIVE APPREHENSION AT THAT TIME, HAS NOW BECOME A BRUTAL REALITY: THE COMMUNIST SIDE HAS TOTALLY IGNORED THE AGREEMENT AND HAS EMBARKED AGAIN UPON THE COURSE OF RENEWED AGGRESSION.

SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING THEY HAVE BLATANTLY VIOLATED ALL PROVISIONS CONCERNING THE CEASE-FIRE AND THE REPLACEMENT OF WEAPONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. AN ENORMOUS COMMUNIST MILITARY CAPABILITY HAS BEEN BUILT UP, AIRFIELDS REFURBISHED, NEW ALL WEATHER ROAD NETWORK CREATED DEEP INSIDE

SOUTH VIET-NAM TO THE CAMBODIAN BORDER. EVEN A NEW OIL PIPELINE IS ESTABLISHED FOR THE USE OF THE 600 NEW TANKS BROUGHT DOWN INTO SOUTH VIET-NAM AFTER THE CEASE FIRE.

ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, THEY HAVE SUSPENDED SINCE THE NEGOTIATIONS AT LA CELLE ST CLOUD DESPITE ALL OUR REITERATED APPEAL FOR RESUMPTION OF TALKS WITHOUT ANY PRECONDITIONS. AS RECENTLY AS LAST OCTOBER THE COMMUNISTS WENT BACK TO THEIR OLD HARDENED POSITION OF 1969, ASKING FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM BEFORE ANY FURTHER NEGOTIATION CAN TAKE PLACE.

MEANWHILE COMMUNIST ATTACKS AGAINST OUR OUTPOSTS AND POPULATION CENTERS INCREASE TO THE HIGHEST TEMPO. THE RECENT CAPTURE OF THE PHUOC-LONG PROVINCE IS NOT ONLY A MASSIVE VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT. IT IS ALSO A GESTURE OF DEFIANCE TO THE FREE WORLD AND A CHALLENGE PUT FORTH TO TEST THE WILL OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND I DARE SAY, THAT OF THE U.S.A.

IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS NOW THAT HAVING GOT WHAT THEY WANT MOST FROM THE PARIS AGREEMENT, THAT IS THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF ALLIED TROOPS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THEIR ACCOMPLICES IN THE SOUTH ARE NOW ACTUALLY PROCEEDING TO THE CONQUEST OF SOUTH VIET-NAM, CAPITALIZING ON WHAT THEY MISREAD AS US INDIFFERENCE TO WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO SOUTH VIET-NAM AND ESPECIALLY ON THE SHARP REDUCTION OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO OUR GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS ALREADY LARGELY IMPAIRED OUR DEFENSE CAPABILITY.

IN THIS NEW MILITARY ADVENTURE THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH ENCOURAGED, I DARE TO SAY, BY SOME ACTIONS OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND OF THE AMERICAN CONGRESS. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT TOO MUCH AID TO SOUTH VIET-NAM WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE US TO PROLONG THE WAR AND NOT TO SEEK ANY POLITICAL SOLUTION. I CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL SAD AND FRUSTRATED BEFORE SUCH TORTUOUS INTERPRETATION OF OUR INTENTION AND SUCH TOTAL IGNORANCE OF COMMUNIST STRATEGY. THE RECORD HAS SHOWN THAT SINCE THE REDUCTION OF MILITARY AID TO VIET-NAM BY THE CONGRESS, COMMUNIST ATTACKS HAVE INCREASED IN TEMPO AND INFLICTED TO OUR PEOPLE MORE CASUALTIES THAN EVER BEFORE. THE RECORD ALSO SHOWS THAT WHEN IT WAS

2

KNOWN THAT SUFFICIENT AID TO SOUTH VIET-NAM WILL NOT BE FORTHCOMING, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BECOME BOLDER AND MORE INTRANSIGENT. THEY STOPPED ALL CHANNELS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND THUS BLOCKED ANY POSSIBLE PROGRESS TOWARDS A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

IT IS ALSO QUITE OBVIOUS THAT AFTER SUCCEEDING IN GETTING THE AMERICAN TROOPS OUT OF VIET-NAM, THE COMMUNISTS ARE NOW AFTER THEIR SECOND MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE OBJECTIVE THAT IS TO HAVE MILITARY AID TO SOUTH VIET-NAM SHARPLY REDUCED AND THUS MAKING SOUTH VIET-NAM MORE VULNERABLE IN THE BATTLEFIELD.

MR. PRESIDENT, OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN ALLIES FOR MANY DECADES AND IN THIS LONG DRAWN OUT WAR TWO NATIONS HAVE MADE HEAVY INVESTMENTS BOTH IN FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND IN HUMAN LIVES. OUR PEOPLE HAVE FOUGHT GALLANTLY FOR OUR OWN FREEDOM AND ALSO FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM OF OTHER PEOPLE IN THE FREE WORLD. THIS IS WHY WE GLADLY WELCOMED ALL ALLIED TROOPS ON OUR SOIL AND HEARTENED BY THIS SOLID AND CONCRETE SOLIDARITY OF THE FREE WORLD WE WERE READY TO MAKE EVERY SACRIFICE AND SUSTAIN EVERY DESTRUCTION WHICH WE KNOW WAR WOULD BRING TO OUR OWN COUNTRY AND PEOPLE.

THESE LONG YEARS OF FIGHTING TOGETHER, SHOULDER TO SHOULDER, HAVE DEVELOPED CLOSE RELATIONSHIP AND ESPECIALLY MORAL OBLIGATIONS NOT ONLY TO OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS BUT ESPECIALLY TO THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN IN THE FIELD OF HONOR. IT WOULD BE A BETRAYAL TO

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ICES OR BELFAST MINUTE FALTERING OF OUR WILL WZC
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COMMUNISTS TO HAVE THEIR OWN WAR IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

THIS IS WHY TODAY I APPEAL TO YOU, MR. PRESIDENT AND TO ALL YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE US SENATE TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO HELP US FIGHT THIS NEW GENERALIZED COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE. IT IS NOT IN THE AMERICAN TRADITION TO LET DOWN AN ALLY IN NEED TO DEFEND ITSELF AND I HOPE THAT DESPITE THE FACT THAT ALL AMERICAN TROOPS HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN OUT OF VIET-NAM, WE IN SOUTH VIET-NAM CAN STILL LOOK INTO THE FUTURE WITH THE GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE.

I WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE MR. PRESIDENT IF YOU COULD COMMUNICATE THE CONTENTS OF MY LETTER TO YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE SENATE AND IN THE MEANTIME I WISH YOU ALL A VERY SUCCESSFUL SESSION. SINCERELY
YOURS, TRAN VAN LAM, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM.

THE HONORABLE CARL ALBERT, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON, D.C. HONORABLE AND ESTEEMED COLLEAGUE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE 94TH CONGRESS, I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN OUR COLLEAGUES ALL AROUND THE WORLD TO WISH YOU AND THE NEW HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EVERY SUCCESS.

PERHAPS NO OTHER CONGRESS HAS EVER BEEN BURDENED WITH SO MANY TASKS AS IT RESUMES AND CONTINUES THE WORK BEGUN TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO BY THE FOUNDERS OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC.

AS A VIETNAMESE PARLIAMENTARIAN, MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY WHICH COINCIDES WITH THE COMING SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 27, 1973 TO BRIEFLY REVIEW THE ROAD THE VIETNAMESE AND AMERICAN PEOPLES HAVE GONE ON TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD PEACE IN INDOCHINA AND EVERYWHERE BY INSURING THAT AGGRESSION WHOULD NOT BE REWARDED. AS ALLIES AND CO-SIGNATORIES OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT I THINK IT IS OUR COMMON RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE TO IT THAT THE STRUCTURE OF PEACE SO ELABORATELY CONCEIVED THROUGH OVER FOUR YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS DO NOT COLLAPSE THROUGH MORE NEGLIGENCE OR LAST-MINUTE FALTERING WILL.

AS VIETNAMESE, WE WELCOMED THE PARIS AGREEMENT TO END THE WAR AND RESTORE PEACE IN VIET NAM FOR WE WERE CONVINCED THEN - AS NOW - THAT, CORRECTLY IMPLEMENTED, IT WOULD PROVIDE A SOLID BASIS FOR THE RESTORATION OF PEACE IN OUR LAND.

ONLY THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS ON OUR TERRITORY MADE US APPREHENSIVE THAT HANOI WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO VIOLATE THE CEASEFIRE. THIS FEAR WAS SOON MATERIALIZED. RIGHT ON THE EVE OF THE CEASEFIRE, HQE NORTHVIETNAMESE TROOPS LAUNCHED MASSIVE ATTACKS TO TRY TO TAKE TAY NINH AND STRANGLE OUR COMMUNICATION LINES. THEY WERE DEFEATED BUT THAT DID NOT DISCOURAGE THEM FROM FURTHER VIOLATIONS WHICH TO THIS DAY AMOUNT TO OVER 75,000 CASES OF WHICH THE CAPTURE OF PHUOC BINH, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF PHUOC LONG, IS ONLY THE LAST, IRREFUTABLE PROOF OF THE ENEMY'S WILL OF CONQUEST.

LEAVING ASIDE THE INCREDIBLE HUMAN COST AND THE TREMENDOUS SOCIAL DISLOCATION THAT SUCH A BRUTAL POLICY OF CONQUEST WOULD ENTAIL IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER TO ABIDE BY THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT, LET ALONE TAKING STEPS TOWARDS A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN SOUTH VIET NAM TO INSURE SELF-DETERMINATION TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE.

THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BOYCOTTED THE LA CELLE-ST CLOUD MEETINGS, OUT OF WHICH A POLITICAL SOLUTION SHOULD EMERGE TO FULFILL THE SECOND STAGE ENVISIONED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT AFTER THE CEASEFIRE IN PLACE. THEY HAVE ALSO REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE TWO-PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION IN SAIGON WHICH WERE MEANT TO IRON OUT

4

DIFFERENCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASEFIRE. THEY SHOOT AT ICCS PLANCES AND REFUSE TO PAY THEIR DUES TO KEEP THE INTERNATIONAL BODY OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION IN OPERATION. THEIR SYSTEMATIC OBSTRUCTIONS HAVE LED TO THE DEPARTURE OF CANADA FROM THE ICCS. SINCE THE REPLACEMENT OF CANADA BY IRAN, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ICCS STIL HAS NOT IMPROVED MOSTLY BECAUSE OF THE ABSOLUTE REFUSAL OF THE TWO COMMUNIST MEMBERS - HUNGARY AND POLAND - TO EVEN GO AND OBSERVE VIOLATIONS, LET ALONE INVESTIGATING AND TAKING ACTIONS

5

IN THE FACE OF SUCH OBSTINACY AND OBSTRUCTIONISM, IT WOULD BE FOLLY TO LET DOWN OUR GUARD. WE HAVE GONE TO THE EXTREME LIMIT OF GOODWILL WHEN THE UNITED STATES WITHDREW ITS LAST FIGHTING MAN OUT OF VIET NAM, FOLLOWED BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL OTHER ALLIED MILITARY FORCES WHO EVER FOUGHT ON THE SIDE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM, PLUS THE RETURN OF OVER 26,000 PRISONERS OF WAR AND 5,081 CIVILIAN PRISONERS TO THE OTHER SIDE.

THE COMMUNISTS CHOSE TO ANSWER SUCH EVIDENCE OF OUR GOOD FAITH BY INFILTRATING OVER 100,000 MORE TROOPS, PLUS 800 TANKS AND INNUMERABLE ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND ARTILLERY UNITS, BUILDING OR REBUILDING TWELVE AIRFIELDS, CREATING A WHOLE NEW NETWORK OF HIGHWAY TRANSPORT FOR THEIR TROOPS AND PIPELINES FAR DOWN THE CAMBODIAN BORDER, IN TOTAL AND FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF VERY CONCEIVABLE INTERPRETATION OF THE ONE-TO-ONE REPLACEMENT PRINCIPLE EXPRESSLY WRITTEN INTO THE AGREEMENT. TO MAKE SURE THAT NO ONE WOULD HAVE THE REMOTEST CHANCE OF MONITORING THESE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, THE COMMUNISTS TO THIS DAY REFUSE TO DISCLOSE ALL SIX PORTS OF ENTRY WHICH THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO COMMUNICATE TO THE ICCS FROM THE BEGINNING AND TO LET LOCAL ICCS TEAMS BE STATIONED IN THEIR ZONE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SYSTEMATIC SABOTAGE OF THE PEACE IN VIET NAM STARTS FROM THE VERY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASEFIRE PROVISIONS, MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVEN THE START OF ANY NEGOTIATED POLITICAL SOLUTION, THE SECOND ENVISAGED STEP OF THE C

PARIS AGREEMENT.

SUCH BEING THE CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING IN VIET NAM AT THE PRESENT TIME, IS IT ANY WONDER THAT THE COMMUNISTS FEEL MUCH ENCOURAGED IN THEIR AGGRESSION, THEIR APPETITE WHETTED EVEN MORE BY THE REALIZATION THAT THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM IS GETTING LESS AND LESS MILITARY AID FROM THE UNITED STATES, OUR MAIN ALLY, NOT ONLY IN DOLLAR AMOUNT BUT EVEN MORE SO IN REAL TERMS. A SITUATION OF INCREASED INPUT ON THE COMMUNIST SIDE AND DRASTICALLY REDUCED INPUT ON OUR SIDE CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING: THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN VIET NAM IS GRAVELY IMPERILED. WE ARE NOW FURTHER FROM PEACE THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT.

CLEARLY THAT CANNOT BE THE INTENT OF THE U.S. CONGRESS IN ITS REDUCTION OF MILITARY AID TO VIET NAM. AS VICTIMS OF THIS LONG DRAWN OUT WAR, WE SHOULD KNOW MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE THE DESIRABILITY, NAY THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF PEACE IN OUR LAND. WE CAN THEREFORE FULLY APPRECIATE ALL THE EFFORTS ENGAGED IN ON OUR BEHALF, ESPECIALLY IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, TO OBTAIN PEACE FOR OUR SUFFERING HOMELAND. THE QUESTION BOILS DOWN TO A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO ALTERNATIVES: A DISGUISED DEFEAT WHICH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT BECAUSE THEY ARE DENIED THE MEANS OF SELF-DEFENSE - FOR LET US NOT FORGET, THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARE NOT IN NORTH VIET NAM, CAMBODIA OR LAOS, WAGING WAR AND SOWING RAVAGES AMIDST AN UNWILLING POPULATION - OR A BALANCED SCALE OF FORCES WHICH BY ITS VERY NATURE WOULD NOT FAVOR ANY SIDE AND THEREFORE INSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASEFIRE?

FOR THIS IS HOW WE UNDERSTAND THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THAT IS WHY WE SIGNED IT AND EVEN NOW STILL SUBSCRIBE TO ITS PRINCIPLES.

IT FOLLOWS FROM THE ABOVE THAT A UNILATERALLY IMPOSED REDUCTION OF FORCES ON OUR SIDE - WEAPONS WITHOUT AMMUNITION, PLANES GROUNDED FOR LACK OF FUEL, EQUIPMENT LEFT TO RUST FOR WANT OF SPARE PARTS, ETC.

- WILL NECESSARILY ONLY ENCOURAGE MORE AGGRESSION, MAKING EVERY PROSPECT OF PEACE RECEDE EVEN FURTHER. THIS, I SUBMIT, IS NOT AND CANNOT BE WHAT OUR TWO NATIONS ARE SEEKING.

BESIDES, HAVING BEEN ALLIES THROUGH THE THICK OF THE WAR, IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT WE SHOULD STAND ALSO AS ALLIES ON THE

7

ROAD LEADING TO PEACE. IN SIGNING THE PARIS AGREEMENT, THE UNITED STATES ALREADY GAVE US THE FIRM ASSURANCE THAT IT HAS EVERY INTENTION TO DO SO, FOR THE NOBLE AIM OF INSURING PEACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IT IS OUR SINCEREST HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT SPARE A LAST EFFORT WHEN ARE SO CLOSE TO THE GOAL. IT IS ALSO IN THIS SPIRIT THAT WE APPEAL TO YOU, MR. SPEAKER, TO PLEASE CONVEY TO YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE NEW CONGRESS OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE VERY SERIOUS SITUATION NOW PREVAILING IN SOUTH VIET NAM AS THE RESULT OF INADEQUATE SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT NECESSARY FOR OUR SELF-DEFENSE.

SUPPLEMENTAL AID IS NEEDED NOT BECAUSE WE INTEND TO DO LIKE NORTH VIET NAM, FIGHTING OUTSIDE OUR FRONTIERS. WE ASK FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE ONLY TO INSURE THAT THE STRUCTURE OF PEACE AS ENVISIONED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT HAS A CHANCE TO SUCCEED. MEANTIME, TO INSURE A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE VIET NAM CONFLICT, WE ALSO ASK THAT THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS BRING ALL PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE NORTH VIETNAMESE SIDE SO THAT TALKS MAY BE RESUMED AND LEAD TO THE FINAL STAGE ENVISIONED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN VIET NAM.

ALL OUR PRAYERS ARE IN THAT DIRECTION. ALL OUR ACTIONS ARE ALSO AIMED AT ONLY THAT ONE GOAL, PEACE AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AS EXEMPLIFIED BY OUR NUMEROUS CALLS FOR UNCONDITIONAL RESUMPTIONS OF TALKS.

IN CLOSING, MAY I ON BEHALF OF THE LOWER HOUSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM SEND TO YOU, MR. SPEAKER, MY PERSONAL AND VERY BEST WISHES OF GOOD HEALTH AND SUCCESS. HERE ALSO, MAY I REITERATE TO YOU AND THROUGH YOU TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS THAT IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY'S MILITANT BELLIGERENCY, WE THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE REAFFIRM OUR UNWAVERING STAND FOR PEACE. SINCERELY, NGUYEN BA CAN, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM. END TEXT.