

SENATE PRESIDENT CALLS ON PEOPLE TO UNITE TO DEFEAT ENEMY

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[Text] Saigon (VP) April 7--Senate President Tran Van Lam called upon nationalists to unite closely and forget all petty rivalries for national salvation.

In his address at the inaugural meeting of the Senate's first regular session, Mr Lam stressed there was but one way left: To unite and resist the enemy for survival.

Dealing with the restoration of peace based on the Paris agreement, the Senate president said: On this forum, we have often called for the implementation of the peace accord and realization of national reconciliation and concord.

But, he went on, the North Vietnamese communists, disregarding the RVN people's goodwill, had cold-bloodedly waged internecine war. They openly tore off the Paris agreement, pushed their military drive across the four military regions, annexed nearly all MR's I and II, killed mercilessly fugitives on the way to the land of freedom. The RVN National Assembly noted in this third general offensive, the communists poured out all they had, including reserve units supported by a large-scale logistic service. This was a telltale sign that the North Vietnamese communists never dropped their dream of annexing South Vietnam.

In the face of such large-scale communist invasion and in the wake of millions of people in central Vietnam fleeing the communists, the Senate president added, we should understand and commiserate with the mental disorder suffered by the population after the retreat from Pleiku and Kontum. Let us feel for these people as we witnessed their evacuation miseries. Let us just fancy we were in their place, desirous to go yet unable to go. We won't blame some militarymen for trying to bring their families to safety. Much the same we won't put the blame on some military commanders believed to lack courage in a trek filled with blood and tears, from the highlands to the coastal region or from central Vietnam to the south.

"No: We won't do poor justice. The RVN militarymen or civilians are the brave ones. We feel sure they remained much the same, from victories of Tri Thien, of Quang Tri, [the] old citadel, of An Loc, Kontum, etc., such names of places having been etched in the people's fighting history. After 25 years of coping with the Reds in all conceivable forms, their choice was clear. They will never change in their determination to fight for the freedom of the nation".

The Senate president concluded: "The RVN militarymen and civilians showed maximum efforts but there was a limit to human endeavour. The current deficit was in line with out being badly hamstrung, wasn't it?"

"That is why we are reviewing the happenings objectively and fairly. And in that light, we find the RVN Armed Forces and people accepted sacrifices, paid dearly for the self-defence warfare, for national survival, but the losses in human lives and properties of the RVN Armed Forces and people shall not be a worship offering for the policy of detente between east and west."

On this occasion, Senate President Lam announced that in the April session, seven drafts should be discussed and decided, relating to the territorial waters of Vietnam, the national social security fund, the modification of political and opposition parties status, the modification of the press code, entertainment tax and income tax.

Before ending the inaugural meeting, Sen Lam read out the message of President Nguyen Van Thieu wishing success to the National Assembly in its session. The president will talk to the assembly on national situation and policy.