

W  
LGS  
3188

U.S. Sen. Comm. on For.  
Reis: Background on SEA  
and VN. March 1968.

**TEXT OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE MANILA SUMMIT CONFERENCE, MANILA, THE PHILIPPINES OCTOBER 24, 1966<sup>1</sup>**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. In response to an invitation from the President of the Republic of the Philippines, after consultations with the President of the Republic of Korea and the Prime Ministers of Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam, the leaders of seven nations in the Asian and Pacific region held a summit conference in Manila on October 24 and 25, 1966, to consider the conflict in South Vietnam and to review their wider purposes in Asia and the Pacific. The participants were Prime Minister Harold Holt of Australia, President Park Chung Hee of the Republic of Korea, Prime Minister Keith Holyoake of New Zealand, President Ferdinand E. Marcos of the Philippines, Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn of Thailand, President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States of America, and Chairman Nguyen Van Thieu and Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky of the Republic of Vietnam.

**BASIC POLICY**

2. The nations represented at this conference are united in their determination that the freedom of South Vietnam be secured, in their resolve for peace, and in their deep concern for the future of Asia and the Pacific. Some of us are now close to the actual danger, while others have learned to know its significance through bitter past experience. This conference symbolizes our common purposes and high hopes.

<sup>1</sup> White House press release dated Oct. 25, 1966.

3. We are united in our determination that the South Vietnamese people shall not be conquered by aggressive force and shall enjoy the inherent right to choose their own way of life and their own form of government. We shall continue our military and all other efforts, as firmly and as long as may be necessary, in close consultation among ourselves until the aggression is ended.

4. At the same time our united purpose is peace—peace in South Vietnam and in the rest of Asia and the Pacific. Our common commitment is to the defense of the South Vietnamese people. Our sole demand on the leaders of North Vietnam is that they abandon their aggression. We are prepared to pursue any avenue which could lead to a secure and just peace, whether through discussion and negotiation or through reciprocal actions by both sides to reduce the violence.

5. We are united in looking to a peaceful and prosperous future for all of Asia and the Pacific. We have therefore set forth in a separate declaration a statement of the principles that guide our common actions in this wider sphere.

6. Actions taken in pursuance of the policies herein stated shall be in accordance with our respective constitutional processes.

#### PROGRESS AND PROGRAMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE MILITARY EFFORT

7. The Government of Vietnam described the significant military progress being made against aggression. It noted with particular gratitude the substantial contribution being made by free world forces.

8. Nonetheless, the leaders noted that the movement of forces from North Vietnam continues at a high rate and that firm military action and free world support continue to be required to meet the threat. The necessity for such military action and support must depend for its size and duration on the intensity and duration of the Communist aggression itself.

9. In their discussion, the leaders reviewed the problem of prisoners of war. The participants observed that Hanoi has consistently refused to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross in the application of the Geneva Conventions, and called on Hanoi to do so. They reaffirmed their determination to comply fully with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 for the Protection of War Victims, and welcomed the resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the League of Red Cross Societies on October 8, 1966, calling for compliance with the Geneva Conventions in the Vietnam conflict, full support for the International Committee of the Red Cross, and immediate action to repatriate seriously sick and wounded prisoners of war. They agreed to work toward the fulfillment of this resolution, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and indicated their willingness to meet under the auspices of the ICRC or in any appropriate forum to discuss the immediate exchange of prisoners.

#### PACIFICATION AND REVOLUTION DEVELOPMENT

10. The participating governments concentrated particular attention on the accelerating efforts of the Government of Vietnam to forge a social revolution of hope and progress. Even as the conflict continues, the effort goes forward to overcome the tyranny of poverty, disease, illiteracy and social injustice.

11. The Vietnamese leaders stated their intent to train and assign a substantial share of the armed forces to clear-and-hold actions in order to provide a shield behind which a new society can be built.

12. In the field of Revolutionary Development, measures along the lines developed in the past year and a half will be expanded and intensified. The training of Revolutionary Development cadres will be improved. More electricity and good water will be provided. More and better schools will be built and staffed. Refugees will be taught new skills. Health and medical facilities will be expanded.

13. The Vietnamese Government declared that it is working out a series of measures to modernize agriculture and to assure the cultivator the fruits of his labors. Land reform and tenure provisions will be granted top priority. Agricultural credit will be expanded. Crops will be improved and diversified.

14. The Vietnamese leaders emphasized that underlying these measures to build confidence and cooperation among the people there must be popular conviction that honesty, efficiency and social justice form solid cornerstones of the Vietnamese Government's programs.

15. This is a program each of the conferring governments has reason to applaud recognizing that it opens a brighter hope for the people of Vietnam. Each pledged its continuing assistance according to its means, whether in funds or skilled technicians or equipment. They noted also the help in non-military fields being given by other countries and expressed the hope that this help will be substantially increased.

#### ECONOMIC STABILITY AND PROGRESS

16. The Conference was told of the success of the Government of Vietnam in controlling the inflation which, if unchecked, could undercut all efforts to bring a more fulfilling life to the Vietnamese people. However, the Vietnamese leaders reaffirmed that only by constant effort could inflation be kept under control. They described their intention to enforce a vigorous stabilization program, to control spending, increase revenues, and seek to promote savings in order to hold the 1967 inflationary gap to the minimum practicable level. They also plan to take further measures to insure maximum utilization of the Port of Saigon, so that imports urgently needed to fuel the military effort and huttress the civil economy can flow rapidly into Vietnam.

17. Looking to the long-term future of their richly endowed country, the Vietnamese representatives described their views and plans for the building of an expanded postwar economy.

18. Military installations where appropriate will be converted to this purpose, and plans for this will be included.

19. The conferring nations reaffirmed their continuing support for Vietnamese efforts to achieve economic stability and progress. Thailand specifically noted its readiness to extend substantial new credit assistance for the purchase of rice and the other nations present reported a number of plans for the supply of food or other actions related to the economic situation. At the same time the participants agreed to appeal to other nations and to international organizations committed to the full and free development of every nation, for further assistance to the Republic of Vietnam.

## POLITICAL EVOLUTION

20. The representatives of Vietnam noted that, even as the Conference met, steps were being taken to establish a new constitutional system for the Republic of Vietnam through the work of the Constituent Assembly, chosen by so large a proportion of the electorate last month.

21. The Vietnamese representatives stated their expectation that work on the Constitution would go forward rapidly and could be completed before the deadline of March 1967. The Constitution will then be promulgated and elections will be held within six months to select a representative government.

22. The Vietnamese Government believes that the democratic process must be strengthened at the local as well as the national level. The Government of Vietnam announced that to this end it will begin holding village and hamlet elections at the beginning of 1967.

23. The Government of Vietnam announced that it is preparing a program of National Reconciliation. It declared its determination to open all doors to those Vietnamese who have been misled or coerced into casting their lot with the Viet Cong. The Government seeks to bring them back to participate as free men in national life under amnesty and other measures. Former enemies are asked only to lay down their weapons and bring their skills to the service of the South Vietnamese people.

24. The other participating nations welcomed the stated expectation of the Vietnamese representatives that work on the Constitution will proceed on schedule, and concurred in the conviction of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam that building representative, constitutional government and opening the way for national reconciliation are indispensable to the future of a free Vietnam.

## THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

25. The participants devoted a major share of their deliberations to peace objectives and the search for a peaceful settlement in South Vietnam. They reviewed in detail the many efforts for peace that have been undertaken, by themselves and other nations, and the actions of the United Nations and of His Holiness the Pope. It was clearly understood that the settlement of the war in Vietnam depends on the readiness and willingness of the parties concerned to explore and work out together a just and reasonable solution. They noted that Hanoi still showed no sign of taking any step toward peace, either by action or by entering into discussions or negotiations. Nevertheless, the participants agreed that the search for peace must continue.

26. The Government of the Republic of Vietnam declared that the Vietnamese people, having suffered the ravages of war for more than two decades, were second to none in their desire for peace. It welcomes any initiative that will lead to an end to hostilities, preserves the independence of South Vietnam and protects the right to choose their own way of life.

27. So that their aspirations and position would be clear to their allies at Manila and friends everywhere, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam solemnly stated its views as to the essential elements of peace in Vietnam:

(1) *Cessation of aggression.*—At issue in Vietnam is a struggle for the preservation of values which people everywhere have cherished since the dawn of history: the independence of peoples and the freedom of individuals. The people of South Vietnam ask only that the aggression that threatens their independence and the externally supported terror that threatens their freedom be halted. No self-respecting people can ask for less. No peace-loving nation should ask for more.

(2) *Preservation of the territorial integrity of South Vietnam.*—The people of South Vietnam are defending their own territory against those seeking to obtain by force and terror what they have been unable to accomplish by peaceful means. While sympathizing with the plight of their brothers in the North and while disdaining the regime in the North, the South Vietnamese people have no desire to threaten or harm the people of the North or invade their country.

(3) *Reunification of Vietnam.*—The Government and people of South Vietnam deplore the partition of Vietnam into North and South. But this partition brought about by the Geneva Agreements of 1954 however unfortunate and regrettable, will be respected until, by the free choice of all Vietnamese, reunification is achieved.

(4) *Resolution of internal problems.*—The people of South Vietnam seek to resolve their own internal differences and to this end are prepared to engage in a program of national reconciliation. When the aggression has stopped, the people of South Vietnam will move more rapidly toward reconciliation of all elements in the society and will move forward, through the democratic process, toward human dignity, prosperity and lasting peace.

(5) *Removal of allied military forces.*—The people of South Vietnam will ask their allies to remove their forces and evacuate their installations as the military and subversive forces of North Vietnam are withdrawn, infiltration ceases, and the level of violence thus subsides.

(6) *Effective guarantees.*—The people of South Vietnam, mindful of their experience since 1954 insist that any negotiations leading to the end of hostilities incorporate effective international guarantees. They are openminded as such guarantees can be applied and made effective.

28. The other participating governments reviewed and endorsed these as essential elements of peace and agreed they would act on this basis in close consultation among themselves in regard to settlement of the conflict.

29. In particular, they declared that Allied forces are in the Republic of Vietnam because that country is the object of aggression and its government requested support in the resistance of its people to aggression. They shall be withdrawn, after close consultation, as the other side withdraws its forces to the North, ceases infiltration, and the level of violence thus subsides. Those forces will be withdrawn as soon as possible and not later than six months after the above conditions have been fulfilled.

30. All the participants agreed that the value of a meeting among the seven nations had been abundantly demonstrated by the candid and thorough discussions held. It was further agreed that, in addition to the close consultation already maintained through diplomatic channels, there should be regular meetings among their Ambassadors in Saigon in association with the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. Meetings of their Foreign Ministers and Heads of Government will also be held as required.

31. At the close of the meeting, all the visiting participants expressed their deep gratitude to President Marcos and to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for offering Manila as the conference site, and expressed their appreciation for the highly efficient arrangements.

## EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN PRESIDENTS JOHNSON AND HO CHI MINH <sup>1</sup>

### LETTER FROM PRESIDENT JOHNSON TO HO CHI MINH

*His Excellency Ho Chi Minh,  
President, Democratic Republic of Vietnam.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I am writing to you in the hope that the conflict in Vietnam can be brought to an end. That conflict has already taken a heavy toll—in lives lost, in wounds inflicted, in property destroyed, and in simple human misery. If we fail to find a just and peaceful solution, history will judge us harshly.

Therefore, I believe that we both have a heavy obligation to seek earnestly the path to peace. It is in response to that obligation that I am writing directly to you.

We have tried over the past several years, in a variety of ways and through a number of channels, to convey to you and your colleagues our desire to achieve a peaceful settlement. For whatever reasons, these efforts have not achieved any results.

It may be that our thoughts and yours, our attitudes and yours, have been distorted or misinterpreted as they passed through these various channels. Certainly that is always a danger in indirect communication.

There is one good way to overcome this problem and to move forward in the search for a peaceful settlement. That is for us to arrange for direct talks between trusted representatives in a secure setting and away from the glare of publicity. Such talks should not be used as a propaganda exercise but should be a serious effort to find a workable and mutually acceptable solution.

In the past two weeks, I have noted public statements by representatives of your Government suggesting that you would be prepared to enter into direct bilateral talks with representatives of the U.S. Government, provided that we ceased "unconditionally" and permanently our bombing operations against your country and all military actions against it. In the last day, serious and responsible parties have assured us indirectly that this is in fact your proposal.

Let me frankly state that I see two great difficulties with this proposal. In view of your public position, such action on our part would inevitably produce worldwide speculation that discussions were under way and would impair the privacy and secrecy of those discussions.

<sup>1</sup>"Vietnam: Search for Peace," Department of State, 1967.