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Pres. Thieu on SEA Neutralization

SAIGON, February 24 (VP) -- President Nguyen Van Thieu Wednesday morning has an hour-long interview with Mr. Cyrus Leo Sulzberger, a prominent columnist of the New York Times. Among the topics discussed were the war situation, peace prospects in Vietnam, the process of the Paris Peace Talks and the over-all situation in South East Asia (SEA).

According to the Presidential Press Secretary, President Thieu discussed at length in this interview a solution called the "Neutralization of South East Asia" proposed by a number of countries in an effort to consolidate peace and stabilize the security in this region.

President Thieu made it clear that he did not oppose the goodwill of SEA nations in voicing a common position of their own. However, the President pointed out, all SEA nations must sit together to discuss and reach an agreement on the issue, instead of letting four or five nations have the right to make decisions on behalf of all.

President Thieu said he welcomed a conference participated by all SEA nations without distinction of regimes, including North Vietnam.

The RVN, he added, will be pleased to attend such a conference and he will be ready to host it if other nations agree to convene in Saigon.

President Thieu explained that the term "neutralization" of South East Asia has become too vague, insufficient and inaccurate. Therefore the Communists may construe its meaning and use it to their advantage in carrying out their aggression of SEA.

According to the RVN President, it is not necessary to paralyze small nations having no means of aggression but it is necessary to paralyze those great powers which nurture the scheme of invading small nations, because these powers possess all the necessary means to materialize their schemes.

His viewpoint is in line with the RVN policy which always advocated non-aggression, non-participation in any military alliance and at the same time will not let anyone make use of her territory to invade others. For this very reason, the RVN has always wanted to return to the fundamental provisions of the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements to restore peace in Indochina.

In conclusion, the RVN President expressed doubt that the Communists will give up their war of aggression which aims at domination of this region before mastering the world.