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FILE SUBJ.  
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GVN PRESS BRIEFING

JULY 8, 1971

Q: Bernard Valery, New York Daily News

Are you under the impression that the other side views Point One as a pre-condition to all negotiation, that is to say there can be no negotiation on the rest of the seven-point program before President Nixon accepts Point One and sets the date for the withdrawal? Is that your impression?

A: You know what Madame Binh said during the discussion and what Xuan Thuy said. From their statements at today's session it seems very clear that what they are asking before any discussion can take place is the setting of a date. After that, discussions can take place on other problems.

Q: Ullmann, AFP

Do you have the feeling that this insistence by the other side that a date be set now has anything to do with the forthcoming presidential elections in Saigon and that they want to have a date set before these elections take place?

A: Look, I don't know what goes on inside the heads of the Communists. In view of the seven-point plan they presented last week, our attitude has been to determine if it contains points likely to serve as a basis for discussion and it is with this outlook that we ask questions today hoping that we could at last engage in a genuine negotiation and it is also in the same spirit that we ask to meet in restricted sessions, that is to say to leave aside propaganda and at last approach a serious negotiation. If it is accurate that that is what the Communists want, as you stated in your own question, then it means that they want to continue making propaganda in Paris as they have up to now in order to influence public opinion

in Viet-Nam and in the United States in order to get the other side to make concessions. That is not negotiating. What we want to know. What we are trying to determine, is what the Communists really want. We asked many questions, we hope to receive answers in forthcoming sessions but anyway we intend to continue with the work which consists in exploring all possible avenues for negotiation.

Q: Shub, Washington Post

Has the Communist side given an answer to Ambassador Lam's suggestion that private meetings be scheduled?

A: No.

Q: Ullmann, AFP

Do you see a political shift in the fact that the other side insists only now on the name of President Thieu and not any longer on the name of Vice President Ky also? This is an important change on the part of the other side.

A: It is well known that it is only through the angle of our leaders as individuals that the Communists are attacking but what they really want is to bring down the entire institution of the democratic regime in South Viet-Nam. It is well known that for the Communists who are disciples of historical materialism it is never individuals as such who count and if they put forward some names, I believe that it is only as a maneuver for propaganda purposes to deceive public opinion. Names as such have never mattered to the Communists. What is at stake is to bring down the elected regime of the Vietnamese people and their attitude has not changed.