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GVN Press Briefing - July 1, 1971  
Nguyen Trieu Dan  
Questions and Answers

Q. (Goldsmith - AP) - Is it correct to say that in its present form Mrs. Binh's plan is unacceptable?

A. The communists maintain their two preconditions as before which are preconditions to negotiation. They continue to demand the surrender of the opponent at the meeting table which they were unable to obtain on the battlefield. Far from it, the evolution of the situation in Indochina shows very clearly every day that the communists have failed in their conquest of SVN and that their policy leads them straight to failure. For us, we have always said we are ready to negotiate without preconditions all problems and in any kind of meeting. We are ready to look for a negotiated solution with great openness of mind, but if you say a negotiated solution, obviously this implies a solution acceptable to both sides which must feature reciprocal actions and measures.

Q. (Goldsmith - AP) - So the reply to my question is yes? I asked if in its present form this plan is unacceptable.

A. You have Ambassador Lam's remarks, it is all very clear.

Q. (Giniger - New York Times) - Were Ambassador Lam's supplementary remarks a reply to Mrs. Binh's plan this morning?

A. His remarks addressed themselves to that subject. You have the text. They constitute preliminary remarks and he reserved

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the seven points.

Q. (Valery - New York Daily News) - If we accept your thesis on the two preconditions, and I assume you refer to the request for a date for unconditional withdrawal of U. S. troops and at the same time to the remarks concerning President Thieu.

A. Which is the legal and elected regime of the GVN.

Q. (Valery - New York Daily News) - Granting you that these remarks are valid, don't you believe that there is a rather considerable change in the details of the offer just presented, particularly concerning simultaneous occurrence of troop withdrawal and prisoner release which was not the case before?

A. You mean POWs release. There is always a precondition. The deadline must be announced first. As for the release proposed by the communists, it is not unconditional and immediate release of all military of the two camps as in our proposal. The communists are using the prisoners they hold as a bargaining counter to secure military concessions from our side and they have done it in a most open and cynical manner: using the fate of the military prisoners as a bargaining device.

Q. (Shub - Washington Post) - Everyone knows that in a few months presidential elections will be held in SVN and they could play an important part in the further evolution of this matter. Is your government prepared to consider the possibility of negotiating

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either here or elsewhere the supervision of these elections by joint commission?

A. We have proposed here that to solve the Vietnamese political problem free elections be held in which all political forces in SVN, including the so-called NLF, may participate on an equal footing, and we have proposed to place such elections under international control. We have proposed to initiate conversations with the other side right away about the procedures and the schedule for such elections. This remains on the meeting table. As to the forthcoming elections in SVN, they represent the normal functioning of our democracy according to the schedule set by our constitution. So we are dealing with two different things.

Q. (Valery - New York Daily News) - Mr. Dan, once more, outside the fact that according to you the two preconditions remain, don't you see anything new in Mme Binh's text?

A. The entire answer is contained in Amb. Lam's preliminary comment. The basic demands of the communists remain unchanged.

Q. (Goldsmith - AP) - How many NVN and VC prisoners are being held by your government?

A. I have the figures here. As of the end of March 1971, the total had reached 37,616 POWs, including 8601 North Vietnamese.

Q. (Goldsmith - AP) - The remaining 29,000 are therefore SVN communists.