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NGUYEN THANH LE HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER 120TH PARIS SESSION

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[Memorandum of Comrade Nguyen Thanh Le's press conference after the 120th session]

[Text] Comrade Nguyen Thanh Le said: Today, at the 120th session, in addition to his prepared speech, Minister Xuan Thuy made five additional remarks, including two long ones. (Comrade Le made these two remarks: first remark--please read it in the report already sent home; second remark--I have on many occasions pointed out that although the United States engages in more propaganda than anyone else, it accuses other people of propagandizing. It is probably its habit to make charges against people. I am not inflexible on the format of the meeting but I pay more attention to content and good will for negotiations.

However, I observe at the meeting that the United States has evaded giving a serious response to the seven-point proposal and has sidestepped setting a troop withdrawal deadline. We have long raised the question of such a deadline in extremely specific terms. Why has the United States not been able to respond? In a word, the United States refuses to set a deadline for the rapid withdrawal of all its troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp from South Vietnam.

(Thus, in actuality, the United States prevents captured U.S. combat troops and civilians captured in the war from returning to their families at an early date.

(I suggest that the U.S. delegate ponder the ideas that we have advanced, and I agree with Minister Madame Binh that the session will be as usual next Thursday. At the next session I will be ready to hear the U.S. delegate respond to the seven points, especially on the deadline for the total withdrawal of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp from South Vietnam.)

Now, as spokesman of our delegation, I would like to comment about the U.S. delegate's statements today:

On 1 July, Minister Madame Nguyen Thi Binh set forth the very important seven-point peace initiative which broad public opinion in South Vietnam, France, the United States, and throughout the world has warmly approved, considering it a significant contribution to moving the Paris conference forward and as a correct basis, one full of good will, for a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem.

Since then, 1 week has elapsed. In other words, the U.S. delegate has had enough time to study the new PRC peace proposal carefully and to advance a positive reply to it.

However, at today's session, he did not respond. He still avoided giving a positive and concrete reply to the seven-point proposal. The United States is still trying to evade the setting of a deadline for the total withdrawal of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp from South Vietnam in 1971. It still refuses to end its support for the present warlike ruling clique in Saigon headed by Nguyen Van Thieu.

The U.S. delegate alleged that the Vietnamese people do not want to end the war. It is because the United States is pursuing its war of aggression that it still refuses to give a positive response to the seven points. On 6 July, 1971, Mr Nixon stated that the United States would pursue the policy of Vietnamization; in other words, it would prosecute the war and continue to carry out its scheme of implementing neo-colonialism in South Vietnam.

Since the beginning of this year, the patriotic fight of the Vietnamese people, as well as that of the other Indochinese peoples, has witnessed many new things: these are the resounding victories on Highway 19 in Snuol and many other places; the struggle which is surging in the countryside and, more seethingly than ever, in the urban centres of South Viet Nam; the "spring offensive" in the United States linking up the struggles on either side of the Pacific against the U.S. criminal war of aggression, for peace and friendship between the people of Viet Nam and the other Indochinese countries and the American people.

Premier Pham Van Dong went on:

"At present a new thing is drawing the attention of public opinion in Saigon, Washington and almost all other parts of the world, arousing boundless sympathy and hope: that is the seven points of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam which were issued from Kleber Street in Paris and which have been warmly welcomed by broad public opinion in the world which considers them to be a correct, realistic and timely solution. Hence, many questions have been put to the U.S. administration, the most burning of which is the following: Why the U.S. administration, those who have made a noisy clamour about the question of captured pilots, do not take this opportunity to end the war of aggression, withdraw all U.S. troops home and thereby bring the captured pilots back to their families?

"Another urgent question is why the U.S. administration, those who used to talk big about the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people, do not take this opportunity to stop backing the present bellicose ruling group in Saigon headed by Nguyen Van Thieu and let the South Vietnamese people exercise their genuine right of self-determination? These questions boil down to this: What do the rulers in the White House and Pentagon really want? Peace or war? A political solution or the continuation of their military adventure? To talk in good faith, to reach a settlement of all problems or to prolong the war of aggression by odious manoeuvres and schemes about which the "secret study" of the Pentagon concerning the Viet Nam war being published in the U.S. has revealed only part of the truth?"

Premier Pham Van Dong stressed that the Vietnamese people are determined to put into practice the sacred testament of President Ho Chi Minh, persist in and step up the resistance to U.S. aggression for national salvation, continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Lao and Cambodian peoples to defeat the common enemy and drive the U.S. aggressors out of the Indochinese Peninsula.

Premier Pham Van Dong expressed the profound gratitude of the Vietnamese party, government and people to the Mongolian people, party and government for their heartfelt support and assistance to the Vietnamese people's patriotic struggle and socialist construction.

The reception took place in a very cordial and friendly atmosphere.

To evade the question of setting a date for the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp from South Vietnam, the U.S. delegate proposed that a restricted meeting be held.

Minister Xuan Thuy was critical as I reported earlier.

We request that the Nixon administration give an early and positive response to the seven-point proposal if it really wants to end the war, really aspires to peace, and really means to negotiate seriously.

J. Hess (New York TIMES): Have there been any private meetings and is a meeting contemplated with Mr Kissinger who is arriving in Paris Saturday?

Answer: You are really asking two questions. I will answer both:

The first question: We have no information on that subject. (laughter)

As for the second question, as I answered your question the last time, if Mr Kissinger proposes to meet with either Minister Xuan Thuy or Mr Le Duc Tho, we will be ready.

As we have repeatedly said, the format of the meeting matters little. What is essential is to know whether the Nixon administration wants to end the war of aggression in Vietnam or not, to give a positive response to Minister Madame Nguyen Thi Binh's seven-point peace initiative or not.

Lenart (PAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW). After his interview with Mr Le Duc Tho, Mr Anthony Lewis of the New York TIMES reported that Mr Tho gave him the impression that you would be prepared to hold discussions with an administration in Saigon minus Mr Thieu. Is this position any different from your earlier position?

Answer: Recently, in his meeting with Mr Anthony Lewis, Mr Le Duc Tho presented a viewpoint which had been expressed in Point 2 of the seven points of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, namely, the present bellicose ruling clique in Saigon headed by Nguyen Van Thieu has been rigged by the United States. The United States must cease backing this bellicose ruling group and stop all its maneuvers including election tricks aimed at maintaining puppet Nguyen Van Thieu.

Mr Lewis asked Mr Tho by what means and when this group would be changed. Mr Le Duc Tho answered: The United States has set up this warlike leading group in Saigon headed by Nguyen Van Thieu. Thus, it must cease supporting it, it must stop maintaining Nguyen Van Thieu and the sooner the better. As to the choice of means, it is up to the United States to choose the means best suited to it.

Tas (a Dutch journalist): 1--You have said that the proposal of the other side to hold restricted sessions is a maneuver. Can you tell me how a restricted session in the present context could be detrimental?

2--You have announced that political discussions will take place after the United States withdraws its troops. Does this mean that they will take place before or after withdrawal?

Answer: I do not believe that we should attach too much importance to the question of the format of the meeting. We have repeatedly explained our position, and, at today's session, Minister Xuan Thuy stated that what matters above all is for the Americans to end their aggression and give a positive response to the PRGRSV seven-point peace initiative. Whether the meetings are restricted ones, enlarged ones, or public ones matters little.

I believe that we should focus our attention on the following fact: Madame Binh advanced the seven points a week ago. Why does the Nixon administration continue to refuse to respond positively to these seven points? In September of last year, Madame Nguyen Thi Binh presented her eight points. To date, in early July, Mr Nixon still has not responded to them. Yet, 9 months should be enough; why does Mr Nixon still refuse to respond seriously to the PRGRSV eight points?

Why does Mr Nixon not dare to publicly reply to the matter of a deadline for the total withdrawal of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp from South Vietnam in 1971 so that U.S. military personnel, both on duty and prisoners, can go home? Why can he not publicly respond at the present plenary sessions of the conference? What does he fear? Perhaps he fears public opinion. He is afraid to reveal his war schemes and thus must evade answering. It is to avoid having to make a positive and frank response to Minister Binh's seven points that the United States has proposed holding restricted sessions.

The Nixon administration is sidestepping the question of setting a deadline for the withdrawal in 1971 of U.S. troops which will permit U.S. military personnel, on duty and prisoners, to return to their families rapidly and which will lead to a cease-fire between the South Vietnamese People's Liberation Armed Forces and the U.S. forces after an agreement has been reached on a date for the total withdrawal from South Vietnam in 1971 of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp.

As for your second question: The United States has used military and political maneuvers to carry out neocolonialism in South Vietnam. Thus, to restore peace in Vietnam, it is indispensable that the United States put an end to its aggression, withdraw from South Vietnam all its troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp, and renounce its scheme of materializing neocolonialism in South Vietnam.

The United States must give a positive response to the PRGRSV seven points, the following two of which are basic: the United States must set a deadline for the withdrawal in 1971 from South Vietnam of all its troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp. The United States must cease backing the bellicose group headed by Nguyen Van Thieu at present in office in Saigon; stop all maneuvers, including deception in connection with the elections that aim to keep Thieu in power; and leave it to the political, social, and religious forces in South Vietnam to form a new administration favoring peace, independence, neutrality, and democracy. This administration will enter into talks with the PRGRSV in order to form a broad three-component government of national concord.

I would like to go on: An agreement on all the questions mentioned in the seven points, specifically Points 1 and 2, is necessary to achieve an overall and radical settlement of the Vietnam war. Only such an agreement can guarantee the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people, the right of the South Vietnamese people to self-determination, and a lasting peace in Vietnam and in Southeast Asia.

Recently, in his reply to Mr Anthony Lewis, Mr Le Duc Tho said: in the process of negotiation, if it is possible for an agreement to come about on questions mentioned in Point 1, realization of this agreement will immediately follow.

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This means that if the United States sets a deadline for the withdrawal from South Vietnam in 1971 of all its troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp, the parties will immediately come to an agreement on the modalities for guaranteeing the security of this withdrawal and the release of all military personnel of all parties and of all civilians captured in the war. These two operations will begin on the same date and end on the same date. A cease-fire will be observed at once by the South Vietnam PLAF and by the forces of the United States and of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp as soon as an agreement has been reached on the withdrawal of all U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp from South Vietnam.

Thus, as a token of our good will, we believe that if the United States agrees on questions mentioned in Point 1, the implementation of this point will allow all U.S. military personnel, on duty or captured, to go home in the course of this year and thus, will not lengthen the list of GI's killed or wounded.

Meanwhile, the parties will continue to discuss the other points to reach an agreement on all questions mentioned in the seven points in order to come to an agreement on the overall Vietnamese problem.

Anatole Shub (Washington POST): You said that Mr Xuan Thuy made five additional remarks and you reported on two of his statements. What was the substance of the other three remarks?

Answer: In his other three additional remarks, Minister Xuan Thuy approved Minister Nguyen Thi Binh's viewpoints and concurred with her proposal to meet next Thursday as usual for the 121st session.