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GVN Press Briefing
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Q. Redment (Westinghouse)

Mr. Dan, did ~~not~~ ^{not} your government/authorize the U. S. government to negotiate privately and to ~~reach~~ conclude an agreement with the other side, or have you always reserved the right to approve and sign the agreement separately?

A.

Two days ago President Nguyen Van Thieu ~~presented~~ made a lengthy statement before the ^{South} Vietnamese people ~~in~~ concerning the search for peace. He spoke precisely of the point which you ~~had~~ just brought up. He recalled that the U.S. and GVN are acting in coordination. He said that the Americans inform us of the proposals put forward by NVN in the private talks. We then express our views on these proposals, the Communist proposals, and the Americans then ~~inform us of our views~~ informed the Communists of our views. The President said that although we are very flexible on the form of these private talks, we maintained that the final decision concerning the future of the country must be made by our government.

Q: de Gunzburg, AFP

Can you say at this time whether there is complete agreement between the government of the U.S. and your government?

A: You see, the U.S. is our ally, ^{an ally that} ~~we~~ came to our country to help us ~~to~~ fight aggression, our ally in the defence of Viet-Nam and ~~in~~ in

the search for ~~peace~~ a just and lasting peace for the entire region. Therefore, our government and our ~~ally's~~ ally's government act on a coordinated basis.

Q. Lewis (New York Times)

Is the agreement which was revealed today ^{the same} ~~the~~ one which the U.S. government told your government about, according to the process which you just described?

A: This touches upon a privileged area, the relations between the two governments, and I cannot comment on it.

Q: Sullivan (Baltimore Sun)

Mr. Dan, now that we have at least one version of the agreement between the U.S. and NVN, could you say that Mr. Phong's speech today contains all the points which remain unsettled, that is, if the points which Mr. Phong brought up today were incorporated into the agreement which has already been reached, would everything then ~~be~~ be acceptable ^{to} ~~for~~ the Saigon government ?

A: I agree with you completely on the terms. This is a "version" issued by North Vietnam, it's only one version. As for the answer to your question, I can tell you this: in our prepared statement today we commented on the proposals put forward by the Communist side and we proposed discussing a certain number of problems including the problem of guarantees for the cease-fire, an essential problem, and also another essential problem, that of guaranteeing ~~the~~ the self-determination of the South Vietnamese population. This is what we did today.

Q: Sullivan, Baltimore Sun

Without going so far as to comment on the "version," could you tell us how these guarantees would differ from the international conditions and other conditions mentioned in the "version"?

A: I will give you an example: with regard to the cease-fire you probably recall that our side has been proposing ^a cease-fire for years.

And, naturally, for us, as for everyone, there must be a cease-fire so that peace can be restored. And our position has always been to ~~assure~~ *make sure* that this cease-fire is ~~a~~ serious ~~and~~ and genuine ~~and~~ so that the peace which will come out of it can be stable and lasting.

Today, therefore, I should like to refer you to what we said in our prepared speech. Today we stated that if the Communists want discussions with us on details related to the cease-fire and other steps designed to guarantee its ~~implementation~~ implementation, then discussions can begin immediately.

Q: Sullivan, Baltimore Sun

Yes, but in fact we have in front of us proposals for guarantees.

A: What guarantees do you mean?

Q: (Sullivan, ^BBaltimore Sun)

The Joint Commission and ^{the} International ~~Commission~~ Control ^{and} Supervision Commission.

A:

The cease-fire which we proposed is to be extended to all Indochina. In light of the nature of the war in Indochina, one cannot talk of a cease-fire in South Vietnam unless the problem is settled in Laos and in Cambodia, failing this the Communist ~~threat~~

^{will} troops, still be present at/~~the~~^{our} borders, and there can be no stable peace. A cease-fire must also be internationally supervised.

Q: TIME Creary, Southern News Service of Canada

With the cease-fire in place effective in South Vietnam, what proportion of the territory and of the population would be under the jurisdiction of the two different administrations, Saigon and the PRG?

A: I realize that the Communists claim to control, I can't recall what percentage of the population...

Q.

They said two and a half million...

A.

In addition! In addition to the 4/5 that they have controlled for the past four years!

Q.

4/5 of the territory or of the population?

A.

Of the population. I can answer your question in this way: We proposed elections in South Viet-Nam, open to ~~all~~ everyone, throughout the territory. And we pledge in advance to ~~respect~~ respect the outcome of these elections, whatever it may be. That will give you an idea of the true reality in South Viet-Nam, without there being any need for us to engage in a contest with the Communists here over how many people and how much territory we control. The

reality is there for everyone in South Viet-Nam to see, and the foreign journalists in South Viet-Nam can see this reality every day.

Q. Creary (Southern News Service of Canada)

Between the cease-fire and the elections, there is the matter of running the country, of administering the country. If I understand correctly, there will be two administrations, and I wonder what proportion of the country will be under the control of the administrations during this interim period.

A.

What ~~period~~ are you referring to?

Q. Creary (Southern News Service of Canada)

The period between the cease-fire and...

A.

What period is this? ~~What is the basis of your remarks?~~ What do you base your remarks on?

Q. ~~Creary (Southern News Service of Canada)~~ Sullivan (Baltimore ^ABass Sun)

"The version"....

A.

Let's understand each other. I agree with Mr. Sullivan, this is a "version"....

Q. de Gunzburg (AFP)

Is it false?

A.

I have no comment on this point. Wait and see.

Q. de Gunzburg (AFP)

Without reference to the "version," would the government of the Republic of Viet-Nam accept the formation of a National Reconciliation Council with three components to organize the elections?

A.

I think we should back up a bit in order to answer your question, Mr. de Gunzburg. We should go back over our position on the search for peace, a position which President Nguyen Van Thieu reaffirmed scarcely two days ago. "Our people and our army," the President said, "have fought for more than ~~16~~ 16 years to defend the country." And for more than 16 years they have wanted to see peace restored, a peace which ^{would} put an end to the suffering of the South Vietnamese and enable them to reconstruct the country, to devote their energies and their efforts to making ~~the land of~~ the South, ~~devastated~~ a rich ~~land~~ ^{devastated by the hostilities,} and prosperous land once again. Therefore, ^{no} ~~no~~ one wants peace more than ~~we~~, the South Vietnamese, ~~do~~; for South Viet-Nam is the victim of the war. The hostilities have taken place on our soil for many years. And ^{also} ~~no~~ one ~~more~~ ^{than our} government has ^{made} ~~more~~ greater effort than our government in the search for peace; for the very simple reason that as the elected representative of the South Vietnamese population, this government expresses and tries to achieve the population's aspirations for peace. ‡ The problem, naturally, is what kind of peace will be achieved. ^{Will it be} A peace which will enable the South Vietnamese to

live in freedom and democracy? And to ~~exist~~ have sovereignty ^{and} over their future, the political regime of the country? This is why we have ~~proposed~~ made an entire series of military and political proposals designed to achieve this peace. We proposed a cease-fire throughout Indochina, to put an end to the killing ~~is~~ and to create an atmosphere favorable for the solution of the conflict. We ~~proposed~~ suggested to the other side that there be/discussions among ~~Vietnamese~~ Vietnamese on problems which are separating the Vietnamese, that is, bilateral discussions between our government and the Hanoi authorities to resolve the problems between the North and the South, and discussions between our government and the so-called ~~the~~ NLF to resolve the South Vietnamese political problem. This is what we have been doing all these years.

Q. Lewis (New York Times)

According to the ~~proposals~~ ^{right} put forward by your government and the U.S. government, here in the semi-public sessions,all the same, you propose a cease-fire with elections to follow, therefore, there will be a period between the cease-fire and the elections, and there is the matter of administration during this period. And if it is a cease-fire in place, which I believe was your proposal, there is the matter of what proportion of the territory...if a cease-fire in place, as you proposed, is to be followed by elections.

A.

and our May 8th proposals,
In the framework of our 8-point peace plan/we proposed a general cease-fire throughout Indochina under international supervision.

Q. Lewis (New York Times)

~~Without the offer~~ And if the forces do not remain "in place,"
if they are to be regrouped....

A.

These are matters to be discussed. This is why we chose to discuss the details of a cease-fire today, and the guarantees for a cease-fire.

Q. Creary (Southern News Service of Canada)

Discuss with whom? The NLF?

A.

At the meeting table, with the other side.

Q. (American woman journalist)

The other day your President declared in a speech that in order to have peace all the Communists must be killed. Does this speech provide an indication of the kind of peace that your government is seeking?

A.

Let me ask ~~me~~ you something. Do you know that there are 14 North ~~Viet-Nam~~ Vietnamese divisions in South Viet-Nam?

Q. ~~Lewis (New York Times)~~ (American woman journalist)

That does not answer my question.

A.

Do you know that we are at war? ~~that~~ That we are victims of aggression?

Q. Prevaut (AFP)

Do you have any news of Mr. Lam? Will he be there on the 2nd?

A.

No. He will inform us in due time.

Thank you very much.