

DRV
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DRV PRESS CONFERENCE - Minister Xuan Thuy - October 26, 1972

My dear friends, today I set forth the reasons why the government of the DRV was obliged to issue the statement of October 26, 1972. I also set forth the essential content of the statement made by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Our government's statement and my statement today are already in your hands. I am now ^{READY} ~~willing~~ to answer your questions.

Q: Nahon, Radio Monte Carlo

What is the only obstacle to peace at the present time?

A: It should be pointed out that the U.S. reached agreement with the DRV on an Agreement on ^{ending} ~~the end~~ of the war in Vietnam and ^{RESTORING} ~~the resumption~~ of peace in Vietnam. The U.S. also reached agreement with the ^{DRV} party ~~of the DRV~~ on the timetable for the signing of this agreement. ~~The U.S. is putting~~ ^{is} putting forward one pretext after another in order not to keep its commitments. This is the only obstacle at the present time.

Q: Bousquet, ORTF-TV

Mr. Minister, would you agree to the U.S. postponing this date of October 31 once again to some ulterior date and what ^{would} ~~will~~ be the deadline for the signing of an agreement insofar as the North Vietnamese side is concerned?

A: You have read our statement, the DRV's statement. In this statement we made it known that these timetables were proposed by the American party. The U.S. sought to modify ^{these} ~~these~~ time-tables three times, therefore we believe that the date of October 31 is the date which the U.S. must stick to in fulfilling its commitments.

Q: Bousquet (ORTF TV)

Is this a deadline?

apparently reached not to reveal yet the terms of the declaration.
 the ~~the~~ declaration would be issued and
 Could you tell us whether it was understood that/the time-table would be observed
~~only~~ only to the extent that the U.S. obtained agreement from Saigon?

A: There was no understanding ^{on} ~~concerning~~ this subject. Just a while ago during
 the session I gave the reasons ~~why~~ why the government of the DRV was obliged
 to issue the statement in question. Mr. Porter made the following remark:
 "I am surprised that you have chosen to reveal the content of the private talks."
 I answered as follows: "I've already stated the reasons why our government issued
 this statement, but you will have to agree that if you want to talk about
 disclosing the content of the secret talks, the American party has up to now
 on several occasions disclosed the content of the private talks." To corroborate
 this I quoted the following statement made by President Nixon on January 25, 1972,
 when he presented the American party's 8 points after having presented them
 in the secret talks. Here is President Nixon's sentence: "The best way to
 solve peace is to make public the proposals which we have put forward in the
 private meetings."

Q: Rolison, ABC

I have two questions:
 Mr. Minister, you said that in your original proposition ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ October, there were
 of disagreement on which you accepted the American proposition. Could you ~~say~~
~~specify~~ specify what these two points were? ~~And~~ And could you say on the 22nd of
 October in what form President Nixon gave personal approval to both the text
 of the agreement and the time-table? (question as asked in English).

A: I should like to provide clarifications on the two remaining questions
 following the October 17 private meeting.

(answer as repeated in English) I wish to specify on the two remaining points
 after the private meeting on October 17.

The first question deals with the replacement of ~~weapons~~ the two South Vietnamese parties' weapons after the cease-fire.

~~(question)~~ ^{answer} as repeated in English) The first question is on the replacement of armament ~~weapons~~ by the two South Vietnamese parties after the cease-fire.

This ~~is~~ is the sentence: "The two South Vietnamese parties will be authorized to replace periodically weapons, ammunition and war material which has been worn out or damaged after the cease-fire on the following ~~basis~~ basis: one ~~to~~ one, ^{for} two South Vietnamese parties' with the same characteristics and properties, under the supervision of ~~the~~ Joint Military Commission and of the International Control and Supervision Commission.

~~(question)~~ ^{answer} as repeated in English): The following is the paragraph: "The two South Vietnamese parties will be permitted to make periodical replacement of armament, ammunition and war material which have been worn out or damaged after the cease-fire on the basis of piece for piece of the same characteristics and properties under the supervision of the Joint Military Commission of the two South Vietnamese parties and of the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

The second question deals ^{with} the return of persons captured by both parties.

(question as repeated in English): The second question is on the return of the captured people of the two parties.

The American party wanted to recover American military personnel but on the other hand it did not want to release persons from the PRG and the NLF captured and held by the U.S. or by the Saigon administration.

~~(question)~~ ^{answer} as repeated in English) The U.S. wants the American captured personnel to be returned but they don't want to return the people of the PRG captured by the Americans and the Saigon administration.

Thus the American party considers that it is not responsible for the detention of these persons. It claims that this responsibility falls upon the Saigon Administration.

~~Q. (several journalists at once)~~
 (Answer as repeated in English) The United States is trying to avoid its responsibility for the capture and detention of these people and on the other hand tries to shift the responsibility to the Saigon Administration.

But to demonstrate our goodwill and ~~because~~ because we are anxious to reach a peaceful ~~settlement~~ settlement of the Vietnamese problem, we reached agreement with the American party on this question: ~~the return of~~ ^{The parties'} the return of captured military personnel and ^{foreign} civilians ~~will take place parallel to~~ will take place parallel to the withdrawal of American troops.

(Answer as repeated in English) With our goodwill and with a view to reaching an early, peaceful settlement of the Viet-Nam problem we agreed with the U. S. side on the following: the return of the captured military men and captured people of the parties will be completed, will be carried out ^{U. S.} parallelly and completed on the same day as the/troop withdrawal.

Q. (several journalists at once)

If there is a difference between the two translations...which should we go by?

A.

In the English version, the word 'foreign' was omitted. If you like we will repeat: the return of ~~the~~ ^{parties'} the captured military personnel and ~~foreign~~ ^{foreign} civilians ~~will take place parallel to~~ will take place parallel to the troop withdrawal and will be completed on the date of the completion of this ~~troop~~ withdrawal.

Q.

Withdrawal of what troops?

A. The American troops.

(Answer as repeated in English) The return of ~~the~~ the captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties shall be carried out simultaneously and completed on the same day as the ^{U. S.} troop withdrawal.

Q. Sullivan (Baltimore Sun)

Is this formulation more recent or more accurate than the one which we have on page 4 of the statement, where it says that ~~the~~ "the release of all persons, ^{VARIOUS} captured and held, of ~~the~~ parties, parallel to the withdrawal of the American troops."

A.

Concerning the case of Vietnamese civilians in South Viet-Nam captured by one party or the other, that is, the Saigon Administration, or the PRG, the two South Vietnamese parties will consult to settle this question within a period of three months, to wipe out hatred and achieve national concord.

Q. Kalisher (CBS)

After a period of three months or within a period of three months?

A.

Within three months.

~~the~~ (Answer as repeated in English) Concerning the captured ~~of~~ Vietnamese civilians of the parties, that means the PRG and the Saigon administration, the two South Vietnamese parties will negotiate to ~~the~~ promptly solve this matter within three months so as to eliminate hatred and enmity and to achieve national concord.

Q. Redmont (Westinghouse)

The other part of the question was ^{on} the form of President Nixon's message.

A.

Excuse me, but we are not in a position to provide details on this question. I hope you will understand.

(answer as repeated in English) This is all I can tell you now. I hope you

understand.

Q. Lewis (New York Times)

Mr. Xuan Thuy, in the statement you talk of proposals put forward by your government on October 8. Did the American government, ~~for~~ for its part, put forward any proposals?

A.

On October 8, we put forward a new initiative to put an end to the ~~war~~ ^{war} in Viet-Nam and to restore peace. This ~~is~~ initiative takes the following form: we put forward a draft agreement on the end of the war and the restoration of peace in Viet-Nam. And we proposed that the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, with the approval of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet-Nam, and the United States, with the approval of the Republic of Viet-Nam, proceed to the signing of this agreement to put an end to the war, and the ~~United States~~ American party agreed to this initiative. ~~On~~ that day the American party ~~stated~~ stated that it appreciated our initiative.

Q. Edith Lenart (Far Eastern Economic Review)

Mr. Minister, you explained to us that the two South Vietnamese parties were to agree on the question of political prisoners in South Viet-Nam. Now in Point 4, at the end of the paragraph, you mention the fact that "the two South Vietnamese parties will reach agreement on internal questions in South Viet-Nam." Could you give some indication of what the other South Vietnamese questions ~~are~~ ^{are} which will be agreed upon ^{are} -aside from the question of civilian prisoners?

A.

The internal questions in South Viet-Nam are the following: for example, the question of democratic freedoms for the people, the question of the organization of elections in South Viet-Nam, the question of the establishment of a National Council for Reconciliation and National Concord -- ~~central~~ centrally and

on the various lower levels.

Q. Sullivan (Baltimore Sun)

Mr. Minister, certain American circles have reported a parallel understanding according to which the North Vietnamese troops, ~~if there were any~~ if there were any in the South, would withdraw at the time of the cease-fire to the North. Could you tell us whether such a clause or agreement exists?

A.

Our government's statement also discussed this question. I should like to make our point of view clear. The only aggressor in South Viet-Nam is the United States. American aircraft, moreover, has bombed North Viet-Nam and has recently ~~been~~ mined the harbors and waterways of North Viet-Nam. Therefore, the Vietnamese people, in the South as in the North, have a perfect right to oppose the aggression committed on Vietnamese soil. To claim that North Viet-Nam is committing aggression against South Viet-Nam in order to demand afterwards mutual withdrawal amounts to putting forward a line of reasoning designed to justify ~~the~~ aggression, to justify the prolonging of the war. For our part, we have already, and on many occasions, rejected this false line of reasoning.

Q. Bousquet (ORTF-TV)

Mr. Minister, would you accept ^{*The modification of one or*} ~~that one or~~ several of the ^{*nine*} points in ~~the~~ the agreement reached between Washington and Hanoi, ~~be modified~~ between now and the official signing of this agreement?

A.

For the moment, I can tell you simply that the text of the agreement was ~~accepted~~ accepted by the United States and the DRV.

Q. Bousquet (ORTF-TV)

Compromise is still ~~is~~ possible on one of the nine points?

A.

I have nothing to add on this subject.

Q. de Gunzburg (AFP)

I have two questions, one on ~~the~~ content, one on ~~the~~ form: ~~Concerning~~
~~the publication of the agreements, the Minister~~ Concerning the publication of the agreements, the Minister
 said that during the session he had explained to Mr. Porter the reasons why
 the DRV was obliged to publish them. I wonder if the Minister could tell us
 what his arguments on this subject were.

A.

After my answer to Mr. Porter, which ~~was~~ ^{given} given a while ago, Mr. Porter
 contented himself with remaining silent.

Q. de Gunzburg (AFP)

My second question is on paragraph 6 of the Agreements, ^{where} ~~the~~ ^{four-member} the/Joint
 Military Commission ~~is discussed~~ ^{this is quite clear--} but I wonder
 if the Minister could provide some clarification concerning the International
 Control and Supervision Commission and the International Conference on Viet-Nam;
 France's
 for rumors have been circulating concerning ~~the~~ participation in the ICC. And
 in addition, concerning the International Conference on Viet-Nam also, the
 participation of the four permanent members of the Security Council has been
 discussed. I would like to know if these rumors are true/false and what the
 opinion of the DRV on this subject is.

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A.

In light of the fact that these Agreements have not yet been signed,
 I ~~am~~ am not in a position to disclose what countries have been proposed for
 participation in this Conference.

Q. Nahon (Radio Monte Carlo)

Mrs. Binh said she would see us next ~~Thursday~~ Thursday. Next Thursday, the date of October 31 will have passed, Should we understand by this that the negotiations will continue or that on the other hand you might take the initiative of breaking off the negotiations if this date is not respected by the Americans?

A.

Wait and you will ~~find~~ find out when the day comes.

Q. Valery (New York Daily News)

I would like to understand clearly the reasons for this press conference today. What exactly is the situation today with regard to the talks with the Americans. The impression which one has from your statement is as follows: the Americans apparently ^{requested} ~~requested~~ on October 23rd ~~requested~~ the renegotiation of certain points in the 9 points which you had agreed upon with them. Is this accurate?

In this event what is it they want to renegotiate? and if it is not correct, ^{this agreement} what are your reasons for doubting that the Americans will sign/on October 31?

Do you have specific reasons for doubting that the Americans will sign ~~on~~ this agreement on ~~the~~ October 31st as they apparently ~~were~~ committed themselves to do?

A: The U.S. ^{has} ~~have~~ already agreed with us on this question and now they are creating new obstacles, taking as a pretext (difficulties encountered in Saigon) We believe that this attitude on the part of the U.S. proves that this latter is seeking to prolong the negotiations and to prolong the war. This is why we demand that the American party implement the agreements ^{have} ~~was~~ already been reached ~~at~~.

Q: Behr, Newsweek

Could you tell us through what channel this request for renegotiation reached you? Was it a personal message from Mr. Kissinger or did it reach you through the American delegation in Paris?

A: Just a while ago, one of our journalist friends asked a similar question and I said that you should understand that we are not in position to answer these questions for the time being.

Q: ~~Woman~~ (women journalist from a Saigon paper)

What do you think of the statement made by Mr. ~~Tran~~ Tran Van Lam, foreign minister of the Republic of Vietnam? Mr. Lam stated that the cease-fire will not be declared, decided upon before November 7?

A: The Saigon administration is free to think whatever ~~it~~ it pleases.

Q: Freudenheim, Chicago daily news

Mr. Minister, you said that the two parties, the DRV and the American party, reached agreement on October 22. Are you saying that the American party agreed unconditionally without any reference to the Saigon administration?

A: The U.S. ~~has~~ created the Saigon administration, and the U.S. stated that it ~~can~~ ^{could} represent the Saigon administration in the bilateral conversations.

Q: Rosenberg, (AP)

Excuse me, but we have not been able to hear all the questions. Perhaps this question has already been asked. I would like to ask whether you would continue the negotiation either here at Avenue Kleber or in private if the agreement is not signed on October 31st?

A: Just a while ago I already told a journalist friend: "wait and you'll see on October 31st".

Q: ~~Could you please repeat~~ Sal Tass, Het Paroll

In your statement you talk about a tripartite government and you continue to say that the two South Vietnamese parties will consult. One of these parties is either the Thieu government ^{or} ~~at~~ the government of concord. In general what will be the role of the Thieu administration after the agreement?

A: Could you please repeat ^{that?} I did not understand.

Q: Sal Tass, Het Paroll

First of all, you talk about a tripartite government. Then you say that the two South Vietnamese parties will consult. Now who is the second party, the first is your party, then is it the government of concord or the Thieu government?

And in general, what will be the role of the Thieu government after the signing of the agreement?

A: According to the agreement concluded, before the free general elections for the establishment of legislative and executive bodies there will exist, parallel to each other, two armies, two administrations and three political forces.

This is why when we spoke of a three-month ~~the~~ period following a cease-fire, that is, during this period the two South Vietnamese parties will enter into consultations, ^{of SVN} I am talking about the PRG/and the Republic of Vietnam.

Q: Lewis (NYT)

In the agreement which you concluded with the American government did you decide upon the third component, the other political forces which ought to represent it, and if not, ^{by} ~~or~~ what procedure will they be chosen?

A: The agreement in question makes it clear that while the two administrations exist, one parallel to the other, that is, the PRG of RVN and the government of the Republic of Vietnam, there will exist alongside a National Council

for Reconciliation and National Concord with three equal components.

Q: Lewis (NYT)

That did not answer my question?

How will the third component be chosen and if this has not already been decided between your government and the U.S., by what procedure will the choice be made?

A: I do not wish to go into details on this question but I believe that by reading the PRG's statements, the seven points, the two clarified points, the September 11 statement, you could obtain some indication of the procedures concerning the third ~~component~~ component. In particular the PRG's September 11 statement provided specific indications concerning the third component.

Q: Randal, WP

Mr. Minister, when the Americans spoke about the difficulties which made the signature of this agreement impossible on the date which had been agreed upon, did the Americans provide any details on the nature of the difficulties or did they simply talk about difficulties without going into details? In other words did the Americans give you a new list of pointsⁱⁿ/~~sa~~/contention or not?

A: Just a while ago I answered a journalist friend by saying that I did not believe in the ~~was actual~~ existence of these difficulties encountered by the American party.

I still consider these so-called difficulties as a pretext for prolonging the negotiations and prolonging the war.

Q: Randal, WP

All right, I accept your theses, but did the Americans give any details on these so-called difficulties?

A: The American party contented itself with saying that it had not obtained ~~the agreement of~~ Saigon's approval.

Q: Sedbon, Reuters

Mr. Minister, up to this morning the tripartite government was being discussed. This morning this expression disappeared, replaced by the term "administrative structure" or ~~also~~ "national council". Is this the same thing?

A: It should be pointed out that logic requires the formation of a tripartite government of national concord in keeping with the PRG's proposal and without parallel existence of two administrations. But precisely because the DRV and the PRG, having demonstrated their goodwill, accepted the formula of a National Council of Reconciliation and National Concord, which I just mentioned.

Q: Behr, Newsweek

~~When~~ When was the second formula accepted, did this occur for example in the past 48 hours?

Q: During the course of the ~~negotiations between the two sides~~ private negotiating and discussion process.

Q: Tim Craery, Southernnews service, Canada

Has there been agreement on the line of ~~demarcation~~ demarcation between the two jurisdictions in South Vietnam?

A: The agreement mentions a cease-fire in place.

Q: Tim Craery, Southern News Service, Canada

Did the two parties to the talks agreed on who occupied what territory?

A: These are very concrete matters and they cannot be decided upon before the act goes into effect.

Q: Edith Lenart (Far Eastern Economic Review)

Mr. Minister, you said that the Americans want to prolong the negotiating process. Do you think that it is because it will be easier for Mr. Nixon after the elections to put pressure on President Thieu than to do so now to obtain the agreement of the Republic of South Vietnam ^{on} the signing of the agreement which you have concluded?

A: With regard to the election in the U.S. it should be said that it is the Americans who will be going to the polls. I am not eligible to, therefore I have no opinion on this matter. As for ^{what} Mr. Nixon ~~he~~ really thinks, it is hard for me to know this. All I know is that at the present time the American party is seeking to prolong the negotiations and to prolong the war.

Q: Bousquet (ORTF-TV)

Mr. Minister, I should like to return to the question which Mrs. Lewis asked you concerning the choice of the men of the third component, the neutralist component. Without going into details I would like to know whether this choice will be made by Saigon or the PRG or by the four delegations to the Paris conference?

A: ~~Regarding the formation of a tripartite provisional government of national concord, the PRG will name~~

The PRG's September 11 statement made it clear that concerning the formation of a tripartite provisional government of national concord, the PRG will name the members of the first component, ^{the} Republic of Vietnam will name the members of the 2nd component, and the PRG and the Republic of Vietnam -- that is Saigon -- will enter into consultation to name the members of the third component. Now I believe that this principle will be applied also for the establishment of the National Council of Reconciliation and National Concord.

Q: Flora Lewis (NYT)

Did the Americans accept this?

A: We believe that the FRC's proposal is designed to ~~banish~~ banish hatred and achieve national concord in South Vietnam. But Mr. Thieu on the other hand, in his last speech, on the 24th, ~~showed~~ showed himself to be hostile to the third component.

Q: Sal Tass, Het Parool

What is the difference between this administration and a provisional government?

A: The difference ^{is} ~~resides~~ in the following: if a provisional government of national concord existed, there would ~~be~~ ^{not be} parallel existence of two administrations in SVN. On the other hand, if a National Council of Reconciliation and National Concord exists there will be the parallel existence of the two administrations.

Thank you for your attention.
