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LY VAN SAU DISCUSSES AGREEMENT AT PARIS PRESS CONFERENCE

[Transcript of PRG press briefing by Ly Van Sau, October 26, 1972]

Good afternoon, friends. You have just attended a press conference given by Minister Xuan Thuy. I have no statement to make, but will answer your questions if you have any.

Question: Creary (SOUTHERN NEWS SERVICE of Canada). What proportion of South Vietnam is governed by the Provisional Revolutionary Government?

Answer: There have been great changes in South Vietnam during the past six months. The zones which were already liberated have been extended, while new liberated zones were established. The People's Liberation Armed Forces and the revolutionary administration are present throughout South Vietnam, including in the regions surrounding the large cities like Saigon. In a situation where the fighting is still going on, we are not yet in a position to give you a concrete figure on the proportion occupied by liberated zones.

Question: Creary (SOUTHERN NEWS SERVICE of Canada). Do you have any idea of what percentage of the population is under the Provisional Revolutionary Government?

Answer: I could use the same image to reply to your question concerning the proportion of the population living in one zone or the other. But I can tell you that two million of our compatriots have been liberated during the past six months--excuse me, two and a half million. Mr Nguyen Van Thieu has just issued a decree that any person in possession of a PRG flag will be subject to the death penalty. I do not know what penalty Nguyen Van Thieu is reserving for the people in the United States who are in possession of National Liberation Front flags--and there are many of them. And what would he do to those who have the National Liberation Front flag imprinted deep in their hearts?

Question: Lewis (New York TIMES). How far will the lower-level "reconciliation councils" be extended? As far down as the village and hamlet level?

Answer: I can tell you simply that the "councils of reconciliation and national concord" will be set up on different levels. The concrete modalities will be determined by the South Vietnamese parties.

Question: Sullivan (Baltimore SUN). Minister Xuan Thuy must told us that the question of the release of civilian prisoners would be deferred to a future date. What makes you think now that it will be possible for the PRG to reach an agreement with the Thieu government on this issue? What makes you think that all the PRG prisoners will not stay in Saigon jails indefinitely?

Answer: As you surely know, our position on this question is very simple. As far as we are concerned, after the end of the war, all captured military personnel and civilians should be released as quickly as possible. But the American party did not accept this clear and humane point of view. But to demonstrate our goodwill, our will to reach agreement, we made appropriate concessions on this point. We know only too well that at the present time attempts are being made on the lives of those patriots held in prisons of the Saigon administration. Like the entire South Vietnamese population, the entire Vietnamese people, and all peace-loving people in the world, we will struggle until all these persons are released.

Question: Sal Tas (HET PAROOL). Mr. Xuan Thuy spoke of consultations between the two South Vietnamese parties. [remainder of question indistinct]

Answer: As far as we are concerned, we have goodwill, are motivated by a spirit of national concord, and we want to reach agreement with the other party in the interests of peace and in keeping with the legitimate interests of the South Vietnamese population. Once an agreement has been concluded, we will devote all our efforts to this end, but the result will also depend on the attitude of the administration of the Republic of Vietnam.

If you have no further questions, I will see you next Thursday.

Question: De Gunzburg (AFP) You told us that you had agreed to the holding of private talks between the Americans and the North Vietnamese, but I should like to know if there is complete agreement on the part of your government, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, on the terms of the agreement which was finally reached.

Answer: As you know, we proposed holding private meetings with the Americans on several occasions so that we might discuss questions concerning the end of the war and the restoration of peace. But up to now the American party has always refused this reasonable and logical proposal. But in our desire for peace, we agreed with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the holding of private talks with the American party. We are in full agreement with the steps taken by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at the Paris conference in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese problem. As you know the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has engaged in private talks on the basis of the PRG's position which was clarified in its statement of September 11th, 1972. In the course of these private talks, there have always been consultations between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. This is why we can say that between us and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam there is complete unanimity on the results obtained. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, we demand that the American party honor the agreements reached and sign this agreement within the period of time accepted by the American party.

Question: De Gunzburg (AFP). I should like to ask about the signing procedure, that is, the agreement is to be signed by Mr. Rogers and Mr. Nguyen Duy Trinh. [words indistinct]

Answer: We consider that in the present situation this is a logical way to proceed to put an end to the war rapidly and to restore peace. For we have no other desire than to end the suffering of our compatriots as quickly as possible. As you certainly know, tons of bombs are falling on our country every minute. This is why we want this war to end--the quicker the better--on the basis of the proposals that we have put forward. I will see you next Thursday.

SAIGON RADIO: CEASE-FIRE 'ONLY MATTER OF TIME'

Saigon in Vietnamese to Armed Forces 1415 GMT 28 Oct 72 S

[Untitled commentary]

(Excerpt) In recent days, in the capital as well as in all provinces throughout RVN territory, compatriots of all strata and all walks of life have joined in buying flags to hoist in front of their houses in commemoration of the 9th anniversary of the November revolution day. Most of the compatriots have willingly bought two or three flags each.

Now every one of us understands that a cease-fire is only a matter of time and that it will come in a very short time--possibly in a few weeks--or it will happen unexpectedly as RVN President Nguyen Van Thieu warned in his speech on the evening of 24 October. Buying flags, therefore, is a development in current events which the compatriots have accepted with all their good-heartedness, calmness and high vigilance.

S. VIETNAMESE PEOPLE ALONE CAN DECIDE THEIR FATE

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1100 GMT 29 Oct 72 S

[Untitled commentary]

[Text] More than ever we are in a phase full of hardships which can affect our country's survival. Our fate is in our own hands and not in the hands of anyone else. Our fate must be decided by ourselves. The right to self-determination is a sacred, just right of the 17.5 million southern Vietnamese. No one else, no power can represent us to decide our fatherland's future. This is reasonable and rational and no one can deny this.

Faced with the seething political events at home and in the world related to our armed forces' and people's just struggle, especially the report on a cease-fire and overall final solution to the Vietnam problem which are to come about, public opinion at home in the rear as well as on the frontline has manifested a fierce, opportune reaction with a view to defend the self-determination right. This reaction has been reflected through the massive meetings and demonstrations held throughout the country, statements by various organs and mass organizations regardless of their religious beliefs and political tendencies, through the views of the people's representatives from central to local levels, and through the press, voicing the only steadfast stand of all our armed forces and people, a just stand which our national leader has asserted on several occasions before the nation and the world, the stand of the 17.5 million people of South Vietnam. Only with this inalterable and firm stand can we hope to achieve peace, a peace in genuine freedom and democracy which responds to our entire people's just desire.

More than ever, we are singleminded in our stand. In making greater efforts we will surely smash all perfidious schemes of the communists, imperialists, colonialists, reactionary Vietnamese traitors, and false peace advocates to complete our great national salvation undertaking.