

Dien Tin
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GENERAL MINH COMMENTS ON RECONCILIATION FORCE

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[Interview of Gen Duong Van Minh on the National Reconciliation Force and the Freedom of the Press--date not given]

[Text] Question: General, what do you think about the current activities of the Catholic and Buddhist communities?

Answer: Our people's life has become extremely miserable and famine has become more and more serious, especially in central Vietnam.

As the war continues our people have to endure all its disastrous consequences and cannot voice their will to build peace. But their lamentations have reached the ears of religious leaders. As a result, the popular anticorruption movement to build peace promoted by Catholic fathers and the national reconciliation force morally backed by the Vietnam unified Buddhist church have appeared. More than once history has revealed that the religious communities play a decisive role when the country is in danger and that the destiny of religion is associated with that of the nation.

Question: What is your opinion on the Buddhists' recent decision to found [words indistinct] to the national reconciliation force?

Answer: I must say at once that I fully endorse this decision. Under the present circumstances of the country, national reconciliation and concord is of paramount importance to restoring peace to the country.

The establishment of the national reconciliation force and its objectives are very rational and opportune. I am convinced that, in working for national peace, the force will surely enjoy the entire people's cooperation and support.

Question: What do you think of the press circles' current struggle for the freedom of the press?

Answer: I have read the statement by Rev Thanh Lang, president of the Vietnam PEN Club, on this struggle. In my opinion, his views are complete and rational. I wish to repeat once more that national reconciliation and concord can be achieved only when our people can enjoy freedoms, especially the freedom of expression. For this reason, the current struggle for the freedom of the press is an imperative requirement of the country and is consonant with the implementation of Article 11 of the Paris agreement.

Question: What are your impressions on the recent demonstration by the Catholic believers at Hue?

Answer: Everything has its limits. After containing themselves as far as possible, if the people realize that their freedoms and human dignity continue to be trampled underfoot by a group or faction which has disregarded the national interests, they will react in one way or another for the sake of the country and nation. History repeats itself!