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RECOMMENDATION
of
A METHOD TO SEEK PEACE
by
Deputy Tran Ngoc Chau

Since April 1, 1968, the US President has announced the unilateral de-escalation of the bombing and the willingness to negotiate with NVN, and since the day the peace talks (hoa dam) were established in Paris, the National Assembly, the elected government, and many other important personages have expressed their anti-Communist and anti-coalition position and called for the continuation of the war to the end.

We have several times reminded the US and the Allies of the principles dealing with the sovereignty of the RVN.

The speeches made during the last several months have shown that the US and NVN still continue to negotiate and bargain in order to arrive at some decision related to SVN, but still without the participation of our representatives.

Truly it is a shame for the RVN, for the US and all the Free World, when everyone is fully aware of the relationship and the nature of this relationship among the nations fighting in Viet Nam.

NVN is still usually considered the lackey of Russia and China.

The US is still proud that only because of a righteous cause do (Americans) come to help the RVN oppose the Communist invasion.

But neither Soviet Russia nor Communist China strive to represent NVN.

While SVN strives, but on the contrary does not have the right, to represent herself.

One asks himself how, in these conditions, one can blame the people of the world and even our own people who for some time have been uncertain (or doubted) concerning the righteous cause, the form of government and the will of the RVN.

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- a. "A Method to Seek Peace", a talking paper;
- b. "A Motion"
- c. "A Method to Seek Peace", questions and answers;
- d. "Approving an Initiative", an editorial by Ho Van Dong in QUYET TIEN.

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of thousands of soldiers in the armed forces, (c) millions of people have suffered losses and sacrifices because of the war, (d) the group, political party, and religious victims of the Communists, (e) all the hidden authority of the foreigners.)

The more we seek the answers to the above questions, the more we see clearly that:

1. We cannot reject peace talks. If we reject peace talks it means we oppose the common wish of religious leaders and chiefs of state throughout the world and even of our own people and the people of the US.

2. We also cannot unilaterally surrender to or come to an agreement with the Communists. If we were to act in that manner, we would surely be immediately crushed by the genuine nationalist forces.

3. However, we also cannot continue to be beguiled by the promises and blandishments of the US, and let the US and NVN seek a decision for our own people. If we act in this manner it supports Communist propaganda which has long told the world and our people that:

We are only the puppets of the US imperialists.

Such evidence will have the effect of strengthening the fighting spirit of the Communists and at the same time impairing our own spirit and giving more support to our enemy from the people of the world.

Realizing the above, I think the time has come for us to act with determination:

"TO SECURE THE INITIATIVE IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE."

For this purpose, I earnestly suggest that you sign the attached petition.

While speaking with many Deputies and Senators concerning the goal and contents of the above petition, a number of other questions were brought up.

I earnestly think I ought to attach these questions and answers here in order to resolve some common worries.

QUESTION: Our government has many times expressed the desire and called upon NVN to sit at the conference table and talk directly with SVN. NVN refused; therefore, can our National Assembly be more successful than the government?

ANSWER: NVN refused due to the lack of a clear-cut US attitude. If the US straightforwardly announced that (a) the US cannot represent the RVN in discussions with NVN, and (b) the US would accept the conditions for agreement of SVN with NVN, then it is certain that NVN must talk with the RVN. The Goodwill Delegation will demand that the US turn over the major right (to talk) to the elected government of Viet Nam.

All the promises made by the US and the Honolulu Conference were only aimed at extending the indecision of the RVN so the US could continue to hold on to the above-mentioned right.

QUESTION: If the NVN National Assembly refuses to answer and will not meet our National Assembly's Goodwill Delegation, then what influence will it (NVN's refusal) have?

ANSWER: This refusal is almost a certainty because of the war-like attitude and usual stubbornness of NVN. If she refuses, NVN will confirm before public opinion in this country and in the world the above attitude. This attitude will very much influence defeatist circles ("doves") as well as war advocates ("hawks") who have been unable to make up their minds, when they are faced with a clear-cut attitude on the part of NVN.

QUESTION: If NVN refuses, will the RVN be criticized and despised by public opinion?

ANSWER: No. For a long time general public opinion has mistaken the position and anti-Communist and anti-neutralist attitude of our government and National Assembly for a war-like attitude; therefore, people do not think we earnestly seek peace.

Our efforts -- appointing a Goodwill Delegation -- will provide evidence to the people in the country and to world public opinion that we always earnestly seek peace. But not a peace which leads to Communism.

QUESTION: But if NVN explains that the reason she refuses to meet and talk with us is because we do not have sovereignty to decide, then how will we reply?

ANSWER: We will demand the US return the principal right to negotiate and hold peace talks to our government.

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This is another duty of the Delegation.

QUESTION: What if the US refuses?

ANSWER: The US cannot refuse because of the following reasons:

1. Our government, National Assembly and people have never yet really put this question to the US.
2. The US still often reiterates the fact that they fight in Viet Nam in response to a request from the government and people of the RVN. (The bombing of NVN is only a military action falling within the framework of the above-mentioned response.)

3. The allied nations and the world could never accept such a refusal.

QUESTION: If we meet and discuss with the NVN National Assembly, does this mean that the National Assembly of the RVN recognizes the government of NVN?

ANSWER: Recognition or not is no longer the problem. The main problem is that we are forced to decide:

Either let the US seek peace or we must seek peace for ourselves.

Saigon, August 1, 1968
Tran Ngoc Chau
Deputy from Kien Hoa

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MOTION

The undersigned deputies,

REALIZING THAT:

The Pope, the Supreme Patriarch, and many other religious leaders in the world have many times expressed their hope to soon see peace restored in Viet Nam.

Many Chiefs of State and political leaders inside and outside the country have also expressed similar good-will.

In spite of this, the war still continues to destroy our territory, destroy our life, scatter our people, and break up our society to the greatest extent in Vietnamese history.

Hundreds of thousands of people have died, other hundreds of thousands have been crippled, widowed and orphaned and millions of people are living in shameful privation.

Our country from the Nam Quan gate to the Ca Mau Cape every day advances closer to Hell.

In the face of this black prospect, the U.S. and the Communists are bargaining to determine the fate of our people.

It is very possible that our SVN will be forced, overthrown or abandoned so that it will accept the agreements between the U.S. and the Communists.

Even though for many years our government and people have been forced to fight a war of self-defense, we have still always advocated and sought peace in order to create a common opportunity for development for the people of both the North and the South and progress to a Unified and Free Vietnamese Nation.

DECIDE:

To request the Lower House Chairman to agree with the Bloc Chairman to nominate a

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which will have the following duty:

1. Contact the NVN National Assembly to seek out the possibilities for holding direct negotiations between South and North Viet Nam aiming at the reestablishment of peace in Viet Nam.

2. Contact the national assemblies of the Allied nations participating in the Viet Nam War in order to reserve for the RVN the principal and important right to talk with NVN.

In carrying out the above contacts the delegation must respect the following basic principles:

- a) Only the RVN and NVN are competent to decide on War or Peace.

- b) The U.S. and her Allies on one side and the VC and interested nations on the other will take the appropriate actions to participate on the side of the delegations of the RVN or NVN.

- c) The Constitution of the RVN is the foundation on which all discussions between the two Viet Nams will be based.

Done in Saigon on August 1, 1968

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PROPOSAL FOR A METHOD TO SEEK PEACE

By Deputy Tran Ngoc Chau

NOTE: After the above-mentioned proposal was disseminated, it received full agreement by public opinion at home as well as abroad. But more questions still arose. For this reason, I have listed here a number of questions with their answers to facilitate comprehension.

QUESTION: Why did we pose the question of searching for peace, instead of increasing the struggle.

ANSWER: It is natural that the fighting must continue and be intensified to force the communists to renounce their illusions of a victory, and to be aware of the reality of their decline. But while we are increasing our struggling potentialities, we still have to search for peace because peace is considered a righteous cause, the aspiration of the whole world dreamed of by all religious leaders, chiefs of state and the common people. To show our good will for peace also means to show the reasons why we have been fighting for a legitimate cause. These reasons are as follows:

- We are peace loving people.

- The communists have disturbed peace and waged war. Consequently, our struggle has the sole aim to fight against the Communists who triggered the war. However, all things considered, we always love peace. For this reason, while the tempo of the war is at its peak and our enemy is suffering a series of setbacks and is seriously disintegrated, we still create for them the opportunity to turn to peace. To show good will for peace also has another aim which consists in contending with the Americans for the initiative and the principal role in the search for peace which our friends the Americans are now looking for in Paris.

QUESTION: Why did you wait until now to pose the question of seeking for peace and not pose it in the past?

ANSWER: The government has several times appealed to NVN to sit at the conference table to talk peace, but they refused. For this reason, we have been compelled to increase the fighting in order to force NVN to adopt a wiser attitude. Now that NVN has come to the conference table with the Americans, it is certain that their intention is not to restore peace but (a) to degrade the sovereignty of our country before world opinion, (b) to compel the Americans to fight a limited war so that NVN will have time to prepare for a wider war, and (c) to sow division among the people in

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Viet Nam, the United States and the world. Consequently, when we take the initiative to search for peace, it means that we force the Americans to hand over to us the role they are playing now in Paris. Only when Viet Nam secures this principal role will we be able to (a) clearly show the meaning of our sovereignty, (b) clearly share the righteous cause of the United States and the Allies when they come to fight in Viet Nam, (c) force NVN to directly discuss with us, and (d) restore the confidence of the people. We bring up the question of searching for peace now because we have confidence that after they failed in their last general offensive, the NVN leaders must clearly see that an honorable peace is the only way left open for them before we are compelled to increase our military efforts. To summarize, the reasons why we bring up the question of searching for peace is that it becomes necessary for us to (a) show that the sovereignty and righteous cause of the RVN have been debased by the Paris talks, and (b) show our good will for peace before we are compelled to escalate the war.

QUESTION: Why do you talk about a search for peace while the war is going on? Don't you think that by doing so you might weaken the combat spirit of our soldiers and people?

ANSWER: No. On the contrary, our soldiers and people will become more eager to fight and more courageous because they see they have a government and a National Assembly which do not hesitate to demand that sovereignty be restored to their country and uphold the national cause, and because they can see that the Allies sincerely support their country and respect our sovereignty.

QUESTION: Recently the United States promised several times to turn over the initiative in peace talks to Viet Nam. The Americans said that now in Paris they only discuss the conditions for a cessation of bombing with NVN. If so, why is it still necessary to pose this question with the United States?

ANSWER: The bombing of NVN is only a military act supporting military operations in SVN. For this reason, the discussion of a bombing halt cannot be separated from the whole war issue in Viet Nam. Besides, from a practical point of view, the Paris peace talks have gone beyond the domain of military questions. The sovereignty of Viet Nam has been clearly specified in the Constitution and made more concrete by our present institutions. The United States must immediately recognize the sovereignty of the RVN in the search for peace.

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QUESTION: Can a dispute with the United States over authority be considered an unfriendly or anti-American act?

ANSWER: No. On the contrary, such a legitimate dispute will clearly show the people at home and all over the world (a) that we are equal to the Americans and not their subordinates as the Communists claim, (b) that Viet Nam, the United States and the Allies fight for an ideal and a noble cause, and (c) thanks to this, the United States will receive more good will from the people of Viet Nam and of the world.

QUESTION: If the United States turns over the negotiating initiative to Viet Nam, are we able to unilaterally decide on peace or war?

ANSWER: We will not betray our soldiers and people nor the United States and the Allies who have sacrificed so much in this country.

QUESTION: It is certain that NVN will not talk with us. Do you consider this a shame for the RVN?

ANSWER: NVN has refused to talk with us until now because the United States has always stated that she is ready to talk with NVN. If now we succeed in securing the initiative and the United States solemnly proclaims that she cannot discuss Viet Nam's affairs with NVN, the latter will be compelled to choose either (a) to continue to fight or (b) to talk peace with us. If Viet Nam becomes sovereign in the decision to make peace or war and if NVN still refuses to talk with us despite our good will for peace, our cause will shine brighter and our escalation of the war will be justified. In all wars throughout the world, only those countries which seek peace last deserve to be ashamed.

QUESTION: Why do you want to make contact with the NVN National Assembly instead of its government?

ANSWER: We are the representatives of our National Assembly; it is advisable to make liaison with their National Assembly. Besides, our government has appealed to the NVN government several times. Contact with the NVN National Assembly also aims at (a) helping the people of North and South Viet Nam as well as the world's people differentiate the false and dictatorial nature of the NVN National Assembly from the genuine and democratic nature of the National Assembly of the RVN, and (b) giving NVN another opportunity to talk with us after its government has refused to do so.

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QUESTION: Lots of people think that the idea of contact with the NVN National Assembly will fail to materialize. Therefore, why put forth this idea?

ANSWER: Nobody raises a question which has been solved. In our case, the question has arisen, and it must be the goal which we must strive to reach. This goal is as follows: "To clarify our righteous cause and that of the United States." Consequently, we raise this question to reach the above-mentioned goal.

QUESTION: Why did you put the VC on the same level with those countries associated with NVN in your motion?

ANSWER: I put the VC on the same level with the countries associated with NVN (a) to demonstrate that the VC are subordinate to NVN, (b) to help our people clearly see this subordinate nature of the group which they only know by the above name, and (c) to show that the VC, NVN and the countries associated with them have never been recognized by us. Therefore, there is no question of treating them in accordance with their degree of affiliation, and it is ^{un-}necessary to pose the question of equality.

QUESTION: Could liaison with the NVN National Assembly be misunderstood as recognition of their National Assembly or of the NVN regime?

ANSWER: The United States maintains liaison and has conferred with the Red Chinese in Warsaw for several years but has never recognized Red China. Consequently, to have liaison does not mean recognition.

QUESTION: Why didn't our National Assembly send a message to the NVN National Assembly to see whether they would agree to meet with us before setting up a Goodwill Delegation?

ANSWER: If we only sent a message, then surely the NVN National Assembly would refuse. They will agree to meet with us only when we really regain the initiative to seek peace. For that reason, the Goodwill Delegation must demand that the United States turn the above-mentioned initiative over to us. Only thus can contact with the NVN National Assembly have some effect and meaning. But, at the same time, the Delegation should communicate with the NVN National Assembly to demonstrate its goodwill towards peace; only thus will the United States not be able to allege that it is only her desire for peace that causes her to refuse to turn the right over to Viet Nam.

QUESTION: If its establishment is approved, then what will the Goodwill Delegation discuss?

ANSWER: The Delegation will only perform the missions which have been specified in the motion. The Delegation is compelled to act only in compliance with the decisions of the National Assembly (Lower House) and in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. Remember, the Delegation only has the mission (with regard to NVN) to make contact for the purpose of seeking the possibilities for direct negotiations between SVN and NVN; the Delegation does not have the mission and jurisdiction to negotiate.

QUESTION: If the Delegation should fail in the search for peace, then what would be the consequence?

ANSWER: If we have enough goodwill, but NVN still obstinately refuses to talk peace, then we would have a better cause to continue to escalate our war efforts until NVN must accept our logical conditions.

QUESTION: Many people have predicted the above-mentioned failure because of the stubborn attitude that NVN has shown in the past. Why don't we continue to escalate our war efforts right now, instead of waiting to seek peace?

ANSWER: We are not waiting. We must still continue to increase our war efforts while seeking peace. But we must show evidence to public opinion in the United States and in many other places, which for a long time has mistakenly believed that we are warlike, that in reality we love peace.

QUESTION: Can you as the author of the recommended "Motion to Seek Peace" rank yourself among either the doves or the hawks?

ANSWER: I would rank myself among those who are eager to bring peace to the people (military and civilian) who have incurred losses due to the war, and if I cannot realize this wish, at least I must bring to the people an ideal in order for them to struggle more bravely. For that reason, I will be as mild as a "dove" or as cruel as a "hawk" in order to achieve that wish. I think that it is not necessary to choose to act in any specific manner.

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QUESTION: If there are negotiations, will it be necessary to make concessions?

ANSWER: Yes. But they must fall within the limits prescribed by (a) an understanding of and keeping abreast of the situation in NVN, (b) the Constitution of the RVN, and (c) the acceptance by the Vietnamese National Assembly.

QUESTION: Can you give a general conclusion to your entire recommendation to set up a Delegation to seek peace?

ANSWER: My general conclusion is that we are determined to seek peace. We really hope for peace to be restored all over the RVN! If we fail in the search for peace, our Army and People will have a better cause to struggle more strongly and more bravely.

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QUYET TIEN editorial: By Ho Van Dong

Approving an Initiative

Up to now, the problem of Viet Nam has been posed incorrectly in many ways. In an interview with us, Doctor Pham Hieu Chuong said that the Americans had created for themselves a "guest-to-host" relationship. From its position as a guest, as a friend assisting Viet Nam to defend its frontiers, the United States became a boss, a commander-in-chief who decides on peace or war in this country.

Previously, when the decision of March 31 was made to limit the bombing of NVN in the hope of bringing North Viet Nam to the conference table, President Johnson consulted the Saigon government and the Saigon government declared that it had "given its permission"(?). The United States did so on behalf of the Allied nations participating in the war, but the Vietnamese still had the impression (and, who knows, it might be true) that the government and people of SVN have lost all initiative in their own land.

Because of that fact, NVN can spread propaganda and sow confusion among the populace and declare that our National Assembly is no better than the Saigon government which is only a puppet government, no more no less. And also because of that, NVN set a high price to the Americans and refused all talks with the government of Saigon, hinting that they only wanted (to talk) and only will talk with our "boss".

What have we done so far, if not a huge nothing, to avoid that passive position? It is for this reason that we think that Deputy Tran Ngoc Chau's initiative is something which deserves attention, which is worth examining and studying carefully to determine the extent to which it can contribute to the recovery by the government and people of SVN of the initiative in seeking peace. A peace which we must gain ourselves, but not be granted by the United States and NVN.

Perhaps many people worry and think that Deputy Tran Ngoc Chau's initiative is just the cut of a sword in water and cannot lead to any substantial results because NVN will refuse to meet us. This may be so, but faced with the choice of a passive nature, of self-resignation and self-content, and enthusiasm to seek the initiative for the nation, we think that we don't have the right to hesitate.

Let those who will not accept a promulgated peace stand up!