

Message of Minister of Interior
Mr. Vo-Nguyen-Giap to the Vietnamese
People on Independence Day
September 2nd, 1945

Handwritten file classification stamp:

FILE	SUBJ.
DATE	SUB-CAT.

Handwritten notes: "HISI" above the stamp, "V. Minh" next to the "SUB-CAT." field, and a black circle below the stamp.

Dear fellow-countrymen,

After so many decades of ruthless fight against the land robbers, we at last met the favourable opportunity afforded by this second world war.

From the memorable year 1940, our people began to stand up, fighting to clear this country first of the French, then of the Japanese oppressors, in order to recover our sacred independence. Secretly, but steadily, the revolutionary organizations of the Vietminh league have spread all over the land. From the heart of the jungle, from the depth of the forest, the fighting units of our guerilla forces have developed into our present national Liberation Army.

A "Liberated Territory," comprising 6 provinces of North Vietnam, is being organized on new lines of administrative and social policy. Meanwhile a nation-wide uprising has transferred the governing rule of the State into the hands of our people, thus materializing the unity of the country from Namquan to Cape Camau. We have gone through so many hardships and sufferings, and have sacrificed so many of our heroes, to see the dawn of this day. In the present hour, the thousands and thousands of those who are present here at this meeting, as well as the twenty millions of fellow-countrymen scattered everywhere, all are feeling their hearts throbbing with hope and expectation, joy and enthusiasm, under the red banner with the central yellow star, for all are going to take their solemn oath to the fatherland, pledging themselves to make the heaviest sacrifices to maintain and consolidate our independence. Today, we solemnly declare to the world that we are determined to defend our right to live. We also declare that we have achieved the goal of our struggle, which was to establish as undeniable facts this two-fold reality:

Vietnam is an independent country.

Vietnam is a democratic republic.

We have attained this splendid result thanks to three factors:

The first factor is the deadly struggle fought by our heroic ancestors who for over eighty years under French ruthless oppression have sacrificed their lives and their personal interests either in jail or on the battlefield.

The second factor is the unity of our people, and the solidarity between the aforesaid heroes on the one hand, and the rest of the population on the other.

The third factor is the democratic movement which is shaking the whole world. The final victory of the anti-fascist democracies has had a determining influence on the future and fate of our nation. Japan, who has surrendered to the Allies, was our enemy.

Yet independent Vietnam and her Republican Government are still in the early days of childhood and we have to work hard to bring them rapidly into maturity, a sturdy, unshakable maturity.

From that starting point, the Vietminh league which has already an extensive audience will develop into a nation-wide movement of national liberation, including all classes and groups, and in which every individual is animated with the unflinching desire to materialize the unity of our people and to resist any violation of our sovereignty.

The present Provisional Government is embodying the will of the whole nation; it is not the representative of any political faction; since its institution it has never ceased from urging our people to be more and more united and to prepare ourselves for a harder fight. The spirit of our people is rising higher and higher, the strength of the nation growing greater and greater every day. Peasantry, labour and trading classes, intelligentsia, all have but one goal in view. Even the buddhist and christian priests, even Emperor Bao Dai are sharing the common enthusiasm and have volunteered to fight the common foe....

To develop and maintain this unity and this fighting spirit the Provisional Government will in a few days issue a decree, summoning a national congress on democratic republican lines, whose members will be elected by the people through universal suffrage. The national congress will give us an official constitution and an official government.

While waiting for the national congress, the duty of the Provisional Government is to take immediate measures regarding our home administration, foreign relations, military organization, economical and financial policy, cultural and relief organizations.

As regards home administration, the double object we have in view is unification and solidarity. The former distinction between North, Center and South no longer exists. The discrimination among the various Indo-chinese races will disappear. Those who had followed wrong paths but have resolved to turn over a new leaf will be reintegrated into the national community. The lives and properties of everyone, Vietnamese as well as strangers, will be respected. A point to be stressed is that the political rights of the citizen shall be so emphasized as to guarantee the freedom and the happiness of the individual.

To achieve this particular end, the Government on the one hand, has established intimate connections between the central departments and the provinces, with a view to carrying out a uniform policy everywhere, so as to avoid misunderstanding and errors, and on the other hand, has prepared a propaganda campaign as well as an adequate educational program to bring the spirit of our people to a higher level, thus enabling every citizen to enjoy and defend the rights of liberty and citizenship which we have so dearly acquired.

As regards military preparations, the liberation forces which had been created during the fighting days in the war zone, have developed into a national army with sufficient strength to support the republican Government and our independence. The creation of more cadres, to command and instruct our regular as well as our guerilla forces, is being organized as rapidly as is required.

France is preparing to invade our country once more, and her menacing words reach us every day, but with our unity, the self-denying disposition of our whole people, united behind our shock troops, we may confide in our final victory, and especially in our success in breaking the chains which the invaders intend to put around our feet once more.

As regards national economy, the looting policy of France and Japan has brought our country into a critical situation. Our productive powers have been throttled by monopolies and trusts, our industrial plants have been converted into manufactures for the use of the army, our commerce has been disorganized by speculation. It has been rumored that to face the present situation, the Government will nationalize all private enterprises. But the Government will not do so. The Government will so organize national economy as to promote private undertakings, and what is more, the Government will encourage and support any individual enterprise on a great scale.

As regards finance, we shall not conceal the truth to our people: the situation is critical and we are certain to find many difficulties in our way. But we have inquired into the problem and have considered ways and means to face the situation. In spite of these difficulties, we shall carry out a policy which will meet the expectations of the people, we shall abolish all market taxes and, the head tax, to relieve the condition of the poor.

But we must not forget that our program of reconstruction and the building up of a national army requires much money. So that to fill the gaps in our treasury we must resort to special means such as loans, income tax, raising of war funds, etc.

As regards national culture, the Government has manifested much toleration towards the writers and the journalists who had erred in the past. If press censorship is still functioning, it is only to avoid rumor-spreading or wrong propaganda which may affect our foreign relations or national security. But very shortly, when the political situation is clearly outlined, the liberty of opinion and of expression shall be promulgated.

National education is being organized on new lines. As a matter of fact, primary education shall be compulsory, secondary education gratuitous and poor students given scholarships. Instruction will be as practical as possible, and educational programs will lay stress on the formation of such virtues as are required in social cooperation and of such qualities as are needed in our age of technical and active life.

In a very short time, a decree will be issued, promulgating the compulsory study of Vietnamese reading and writing, and inaugurating a merciless fight against illiteracy. We cannot wait until better days to solve this all-important question. We must begin now.

The first steps in the organization of national education are being taken: committees of experts have been appointed to inquire into all the branches of human thoughts. Reactionary habits, outmoded or backward conceptions, shall be rooted out, pornographic literature as well as worthless fiction shall be prohibited.

As regards relief organizations, the recent flood has placed us in a critical food situation which may exert some influence on politics. The problem is now to feed millions of starving people, and in a few months, to transport rice from the South to provinces which suffered from a bad harvest. Though it is for the Government an imperative duty to preserve the population from famine and starvation, yet well-to-do classes should regard relief organizations and charity work as a sacred responsibility, not only for humanitarian reasons but because the future of our nation is at stake.

As regards foreign relations, our public opinion pays very much attention to the Allied Missions which successfully arrive at Hanoi, because everyone is anxious to know the result of the foreign negotiations of the Government.

... Our foreign policy depends on two essential factors: the world situation, and our own strength.

The world situation is in many ways favourable to our emancipation. From the Atlantic Charter to Teheran, Yalta and San Francisco conferences, everywhere the principle of self-determination has been defended and proclaimed. The democratic powers have declared that they will fight for world peace, and there is no reason why they should allow imperialist France to send her troops here to wage a conquering war upon us. The democratic powers have declared that they will fight for equality among nations and there is no reason why they should help imperialist France to return here to oppress and plunder our people.

It is inconceivable to us, as well as to the whole world, that after we have fought the Japanese on the Allies side, after we have shed our blood in the battle of the Pacific, we should be considered by our Allies as a people that deserves to be placed once more under the domination of those French imperialists who had assented to the Japanese occupation of Indochina, who offered Japan important bases to attack the Allies, who shamefully surrendered to the fascist Japanese and collaborated with them.

When the Japanese were at their lowest, and were compelled to remove the government of Indochina into their own hand, the French only thought of surrendering or taking their flight instead of energetically opposing or resisting the attack. Whereas the Vietnamese people rose up and successfully fought the Japanese in the highlands and midlands of Tonkin, thus giving birth to a generalized anti-Japanese feeling and to a very efficient non-collaboration movement.

There is one more thing we should like the Allies to know, and that is that for over three years, the Vietminh party had appealed to the French people in Indochina, urging them to join us in our fight against the Japanese. Not only did they ignore our appeal, but on the contrary they continued their oppressive policy to an even more terrorizing extent, for in many places they shot or slayed our antifascist patriots. Yet, we never retaliated. On the contrary, whenever we came across Frenchmen that had been taken prisoners by the Japanese, we never failed to have them released.

To-day the rule of the state is in our hands; towards the French we have adopted a friendly attitude, not out of fear or out of sheepish loyalty. The Frenchmen ought to be sensible enough to recognize our independence. On the contrary, if they are determined to invade our country by force of arms, we have resolved to fight them to the last man and we are sure that they will be routed.

Such is the friendly attitude we shall adopt towards any and every nation in the world. However, as far as China and the United States of America are concerned, we have had particularly intimate relations which it is for me a pleasant duty to dwell upon.

China is the nearest nation to us, from geographical as well as economical and cultural point of view.

The Chinese, living up to now in this country, have undergone untold miseries from the French, then from the Japanese oppression. They have shared our sufferings, our anxiety and our secret hopes. To-day they are rejoicing at the simultaneous liberation of our two peoples. They have acclaimed and supported the independence of Vietnam, and the Vietnamese Government will defend their rights. They shall share with us the fruit of our victory: liberty and happiness in an atmosphere of complete equality.

The United States of America are a Republic which has no territorial interests in this country. They have paid the greatest contributions to the Vietnamese fight against fascist Japan, our enemy, and so the Great American Republic is a good friend of ours.

Among the foreign problems we have to solve now, the most important concerns the attitude of de Gaulle's government towards our independence. They are launching a slandering propaganda to conceal to the Allies the real situation in Indochina: now they tell the world that we are loyal to them, and that we fought the Japanese on behalf of France, now they say that we have played at Japan's game, now they falsely charge us with savagely exterminating French women and children. But we have sufficient evidence to nullify those unfounded charges and to frustrate all those dark intentions. They have appointed a Governor-general and secretly incited the French administrative servants here to try and occupy all public buildings and services. They are making preparations to land their forces in Indochina. In a word, and according to the latest intelligence, France is preparing herself to reconquer our country. We pledge here to defend this homeland against the French until our death

B. Democratic Republic of Vietnam

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...The democratic nations sincerely hope for the liberation of the lesser powers and they are of the same opinion as Chiang Kai-shek that "the end of the world war must bring with it the end of Imperialism, because Imperialism is the cause of war."

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Under the guidance of the Vietnamese Provisional Government and of President Ho Chi Minh, our people shall sacrifice everything, material and spiritual, to transform our Fatherland once enslaved and exhausted, into a land of joy, of pure light and happiness.

Following the steps of our forefathers, the present generation will fight a last battle, to hand down to the generations to come, the precious and everlasting inheritance of Independence, Freedom and HAPPINESS.

Source: Government of D. R. Vietnam, Documents, n. p., n. d.