

Text of a Reform Program Announced by
Prime Minister General Nguyen Khanh on
March 7, 1964

"Program of Activities of the
Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam"

I. While the communists, in connivance with the colonialists, were invading our country and murdering our people, the family regime of Ngo/Dinh Diem became more dictatorial and oppressive with each day. Consequently, the people kept more and more away from the government, were no longer interested in the fight for survival, and were gradually approaching annihilation.

The November 1st, 1963 revolution broke out, overthrew a cruel regime and restored to the people the right to live in liberty and honor. This created conditions favorable to the cooperation between the population and the armed forces and they closed ranks with the government to fight against the common enemy, and to build a true democracy.

But no sooner had the flame of the revolution been ignited than it was nearly extinguished after a period of three months on account of the lack of a resolute leadership. Irresponsible and almost incapable, the leaders of yesterday proved to be confused by the urgent needs of the war situation and the revolutionary momentum of our people. Personal sympathies have been given priority over the national interests. Moreover, the erroneous decisions of the government, whether intentional or non-intentional, destroying the surface defense structures and the popular combat organizations in the countryside, have indirectly helped the communists to terrorize the countryside and sow disorder in the cities. At the same time, the colonialists and the traitors took this opportunity to connive once more with the communists, and promote the neutralist solution betraying our country, destroying the fighting spirit of our people and armed forces.

The purge of January 30, 1964 shattered this vile maneuver in time, and gave great confidence to the people and the armed forces, as well as to world opinion.

A Revolutionary

A Revolutionary Government was formed with the participation of the political and religious groups, without regional discrimination.

To show its good will and prove that it does not want to cling to power, but only works for the good of the country and the people, the Government has solemnly promised to do its best in a record period of one year to establish the basic institutions, thus laying a solid foundation for the task of national salvation and development.

In the short period of the past three weeks, the decisions of the government have partly demonstrated its good will and its determination to carry out the revolution. Nonetheless, we think it necessary to define clearly for the benefit of the people the program which the government will try its utmost to realize in the days to come.

Such is the reason for making public the following program of activities of the government, a program the final objectives of which are to bring to our people what they have been longing for for the last twenty years. These are:

- Liberty and Democracy
- Justice and Happiness
- Independence and Unification.

II. NATIONAL SALVATION.

Aims and purposes. Concentrate all the forces of the nation to repel the communist invasion and shatter all maneuvers of the colonialists to neutralize South Viet-Nam, so as to deliver the population, especially in the countryside, from the calamities of war and bring them a peaceful and happy life in freedom and justice.

Thus we need to:

Reorganize our governmental structures. Abolish the centralization of power. Reform the central and local agencies to fulfill the requirements of the war and to serve the interests of the people. Simplify the administrative machine to become more efficient. In order to save the national resources and public funds, and to satisfy the needs of the local population, the government will study and abolish or reinstate a number of provinces and districts. In doing so we must carefully consider the difference between the military and politico-administrative requirements to avoid the errors of the old regime. Besides improving the governmental agencies, the civil servants and cadres will be selected on the following basis:

- Replace the aged and incapable civil servants with young elements to keep pace with the momentum of the revolution.

- Select the right people and assign them to the right places according to ability, experience, and character.

- Retrain governmental personnel to give them a revolutionary spirit.

- Trust them and give them clearly defined duties and responsibilities.

To really and permanently liberate the people, we need a sufficient number of low-level cadres who will look after our rural population.

This aims at reinforcing our substructure and avoid disproportion.

Countryside

Countryside (New Rural Life Hamlet). The previous Strategic Hamlet Program followed the principle of building a great number of hamlets very quickly, and consequently these hamlets only had an outside appearance but could not achieve the desired results. On the other hand it has created many injustices and corrupted our local substructure cadres.

At present, we shall be more realistic and shall make the best of the good points of the old Strategic Hamlet Program and adopt the following principles:

- Insist on quality rather than quantity.
- Establish hamlets in groups, spreading the oil spot from the rich and populated areas outward.
- Give equal stresses to the economy and the living standard of the population and the security factor.

In the general pacification program, the consolidation of the New Rural Life Hamlets is a key matter. The National Budget and Foreign Aid as well as the facilities of the central government will mostly be geared toward the countryside, in order to destroy the enemy substructure, and at the same time control the countryside. We shall give the utmost confidence to the entire anti-communist patriotic elements in the various localities to establish our own substructure because only local people can exterminate the communist traitors from their localities.

"Youth is the pillar of the nation". This saying is truer than ever, in this phase of the struggle for survival of our nation.

The Youth Forces, including university students and school pupils, have to be imbued with the spirit of serving the country and the people. Therefore the government will:

- Give facilities to and encourage the city youth to head toward the countryside, to share the life of the country people so as to promote unity against the communists.

- Reorganize

- Reorganize and give much assistance to the Combat Youth members who are sacrificing themselves to protect the lives and properties of the people.

- Initiate movements of social action to give the youths the opportunity to participate in the betterment of their own lives and that of their society.

- Develop the various sports and physical education compatible with the abilities and taste of the masses.

But the governmental program will only receive the support of and the participation of the people if there is a thorough explanation among the masses. Thus the problem of propaganda, information, and press will be given special attention.

A. Propaganda. Establishment of Propaganda Agency to:

Train in phases, propaganda cadres.

Carry out the program of oneness of cadre and population especially in the countryside.

B. Information.

1. Equip the Central Radio Saigon station to give it a stronger and wider range in order to establish a direct communication system to the masses.

2. Increase the rate of production of documentary films two-fold over the present rate to satisfy the needs of the countryside.

C. Press.

1. Establish a Press Council.

2. Promulgate the statute of the press.

3. Carry out the program of on-the-job training of newsmen abroad.

In the field

In the field of national defense, we will consolidate and increase the paramilitary forces and popular defense groups efficiently to assure the security of the rural areas.

The combativity and mobility the armed forces and the paramilitary units will be given special attention to meet the war needs.

In addition the government will:

- Promulgate a statute of the armed forces.
- Form a commission to work out a fair promotion system.
- Abolish the use of military personnel for non-military purposes.
- Review the regulations governing the military service and mobilization, and permit flexible draft deferment for those engaged in activities such as district chiefs, national police, pacification cadres, and rural census taking teams.
- Improve the living conditions of the soldier's family.
- Establish more organizations to serve the war orphans.
- Build villages for married enlisted men near the military rear bases.
- Promulgate special statutes to assist efficiently the soldier families.

In general, the government while trying to eliminate all the present social injustices, will do its best to assist the fighters - military, civilian and governmental - who are exposing themselves on the battlefields in the service of the just cause.

Open-arms policy.

Open-arms policy. Within the framework of the present historic struggle, the government open-arms policy will be based on sincere cooperation to accomplish the total revolution of the people.

Those who come back to us will contribute more constructive ideas necessary to the establishment of social justice and true democracy.

Thus, with the determination to promote the actual revolution, the government will eliminate the mistakes of the old regime to give a brotherly welcome to these people.

The government promises that those who come back to our rank will be honorably received and worthily employed according to moral character, ability and experience.

III. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

The Revolutionary Government's national development program aims at establishing and consolidating basic democratic structures which will lead more rapidly to a government by the people.

Confronted by a war for survival and having been sacrificed by a dictatorial family rule, the Vietnamese people at present need all kinds of support from the government to develop their social and economic potentialities. The Government believes that national development can only be achieved by first of all helping the people to attain a life free of material needs and free from worries. Such are the major features of the government's long-term program which will later be pursued by a popularly elected government after the goals of the shorter one-year term program are reached. This better program includes two major fields: economic development and social improvement.

The economic and financial development program includes agricultural, economic and public equipment matters.

A. Agricultural activities. The government's program aims at:

- Improving land legislation: tenants will be allowed to till the land for five years, buy the expropriated land and pay for it in twelve instead of six annual installments. The land tax will be temporarily suspended for peasants owning less than half an hectare.

- To realize the slogan "Land to the Tiller" and the policy of "Letting the people enjoy the fruit of their labor", the government will temporarily let the peasants till the public land which they have illegally occupied, or the land they are working in the agrarian development and resettlement centers and which has been surveyed.

- Giving the rural population the means to help develop the economy and increase production especially in agriculture and animal husbandry.

B. Economy and Finance.

B. Economy and Finance. Private enterprises will be encouraged as much as possible. The government will sell its interests in state-owned firms to private investors and establish a stock market.

At the same time the government will improve the monetary and tax systems to encourage production.

Budgeting will aim at saving the public funds to avoid inflation in accordance with the policy of "austerity for the sake of the people".

Through associations and syndicates the government will encourage private interests to participate intensively in the import and export activities. In the field of industrialization, a list of priorities in investments will be established which will aim at saving foreign exchange, expanding local industries and providing jobs to the working class.

C. Public equipment. The following activities are contemplated for 1964 to proceed with the project of bringing the Dong Nai river water to Saigon; to complete the 66,000 v electric line around the capital so that Saigon and its suburbs may benefit from the electric power coming from the Danhim Dam; to exploit the industrial resources of the Cam Ranh area; to work out and maintain the provincial and rural road networks to facilitate communication between the urban centers and the rural areas; and besides to carry out the irrigation projects especially in the Ninh Thuan and Quang Ngai areas.

Social expansion program. This includes education, health, social welfare, labor and justice.

A. The goals of the new educational program aim at imparting to university and school students a sense of responsibility necessary to the citizens of a country confronted by a war of survival against the Communist aggression and giving the young sufficient professional skills for them to succeed their elders in assuming the future historic responsibilities.

The following

The following measures will be taken:

- Screen teachers.
- Restore discipline in schools by creating student associations.
- Encourage teachers and students to share the life of the country people during their summer vacations.
- Revise the education program with emphasis on civics.
- Build more primary schools and technical high schools.
- Promulgate a statute for university professors and establish the National Cultural Council as a first step toward a National Academy which is the foundation of a truly national culture.

B. Public Health. The government is of the opinion that the health service activities are closely related to the welfare of the people and greatly influence the fight against the Communist aggression.

In the present emergency the public health activities have to make the best use of all available talents and be directed toward the countryside. To implement this concept, the following measures will be taken in 1964:

- Each village and each hamlet will have a dispensary.
- Establish more surgical wards in the provinces,
- Set up medical centers.
- Expand such programs as better out-patient-service, free medical care for the needy, mobile health units, rural health agents, more beds in hospitals.

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- Improve the pharmaceutical production; wipe out fake drugs; complete the equipping of the Pharmaceutical Production Centre.

- Improve and assist the genuine oriental medicine branch.

- Set up a National Health Council.

C. Social Action. Improve the living standards of the poor people in the cities and countryside.

The 1964 program of activities consists of:

- Social action in the workers districts of the cities: improve the sanitary conditions of the living quarters, establish low-cost cafeterias, nurseries, popular education classes, children playgrounds.

- Social action in the countryside: establish Councils for Social Improvements at the village and hamlet level, build modern low-cost houses in the villages and hamlets, give guidance to the people and make them participate in the rural rehabilitation movement.

- Establish additional orphanages, rehabilitation centers for beggars and delinquents, rooming facilities for the needy travelers (depending on local needs).

- Set up a National Advisory Council on Social Action.

D. Justice.

- To eliminate all the remnants of the old regime, the government has created the Revolutionary Court which begins to operate in March of this year.

- Improve the security and justice in rural areas, to eliminate social injustice.

- Reform

- Reform the Legislative Branch: promulgate the decree-law abolishing the family law, the decree regulating requisitions, the decree regulating the renting of houses and unifying land legislation.

E. Labor.

- The basic policy is to create an atmosphere favorable to a sincere and efficient collaboration between the management and the workers, improve the moral and material conditions of the laboring classes.

- The main principle is to democratize the management of enterprises and improve the quality of labor unions. To democratize the management of enterprises is to acknowledge the rights of the workers to share responsibilities with the management in the operation of enterprises. To improve the labor unions is to help them develop freely.

In order to realize this principle, the government will in 1964:

- Amend the existing labor laws relating to the statutes of the labor unions, the use of the right to strike, and procedure of labor disputes; study a statute for domestics; review the statute for non-contractual personnel; and abolish the system of labor contractors (as exists at the port of Saigon).

- Improve social security measures; reconsider family allowances and compulsory insurance against labor accidents; establish a national fund for social security; perfect regulations governing factory safety; and build workers' housing projects.

IV. STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

The overthrow of a despotic family rule on November 1, 1963, and the purge of January 30, 1964 shattering in time the neutralization scheme of the colonialists and the communists, have demonstrated the determination of the Vietnamese people to live in true liberty, democracy and independence. The more devilish the schemes of the enemy of our people are, the more resolute our people become. Free Viet-Nam is determined to carve for itself a respectable position on the international scene.

External policy. The government continues to maintain diplomatic relations with 94 nations in the world, although, because of limited means, it can only establish diplomatic and consular agencies in the most important nations.

The foreign policy of the government is to continue to support liberation movements in the world opposing all forms of oppression and especially communist aggressions.

As for the Afro-asian nations, which are in the same under-developed situation as we and which have just regained their independence, we want to have very close friendly relations with them as a first step toward the creation of a front of small nations opposed to the communists and the colonialists.

- Vis-à-vis our neighboring nations, we respect the will of their peoples and the policies of their governments. In particular, as far as our two neighbors, Laos and Cambodia, are concerned, the government will try to re-establish the severed relations caused by the former regime.

- But the government will be very firm with those countries which, on account of selfish interests, promote policies or have actions detrimental to our nation. For the sake of the survival of the Vietnamese people, and because we cannot betray the sacrifices of our combatants and our people during the past twenty years, the government is ready to oppose these policies and actions at any cost.

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- In the actual war for survival, our nation has received much sympathy from all over the world, especially the sympathy of the people of the United States, a friendly nation that has given us much disinterested assistance. Vietnamese-American friendship becomes closer with each day because the blood and tears of the Vietnamese and American soldiers have blended on the battlefields, to defend a common ideal of freedom and democracy.

- The Vietnamese residing abroad will be given special attention by the government which will help them overcome personal difficulties. The government calls on all the sons and daughters of Viet-Nam who are away from the Motherland to contribute their share of efforts at a time when the entire people is fighting for survival.

- Concerning the internal organization of the Foreign Service, the diplomatic personnel will be selected on the basis of professional ability and nationalism. A training course will be organized for brilliant candidates to the Foreign Service.

V. POLITICS AND RELIGIONS.

To raise the standard of the political activities of the nation in order to rapidly realize a truly democratic and popularly-elected regime, the government advocates the encouragement of open political activities. The government will make public a statute of the political groups and associations, statute which will be suitable with the present situation in the country.

In religion, the government confirms the freedom of belief as a basic inviolable right of all Vietnamese citizens. The position of the government is that all religions existing on the territory of Viet-Nam must have equal opportunities to develop within the national union. In the present circumstances, the fraternization of all religions is the basic factor conditioning victory over the common enemy. Therefore the government will resolutely oppose any and all schemes aiming at creating religious dissensions.

Thinking of all ethnic minority people as brothers in the same family who have contributed a large share in the defense of the country, the government will raise their moral and material standard of living, while at the same time maintaining their age-old traditions.

The government will create conditions favorable to the efficient participation of ethnic minority people in the work of national salvation and development.

VI. CONCLUSION.

The Vietnamese people has been for many years cherishing three just aspirations:

- Liberty and Democracy
- Justice and Happiness
- Independence and Unification.

These aspirations have not been fulfilled because of the betrayal of the communist traitors who have connived with the colonialists to create the present fratricidal struggle.

The historic experience on our beloved land as well as in a few neighboring nations has given our people a clear insight on this undeniable fact that, as long as the communists maintain their aggressive policy, the Vietnamese people have to continue their fight with determination.

- We are determined to stand side by side, each and everyone of us, to liberate our people from the Point of Camau to the Gate of Nam Quan.

- We are determined not to let the colonialists return to this land under any disguise.

- We are determined not to let our beloved Viet-Nam which we have inherited from many thousands years of heroic struggles, become one day a small province of the Communist Chinese Empire.

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The Government insistently calls for everyone to unite, the revolutionary patriots, the religious leaders as well as the leaders of the genuine nationalist political parties in and out of the country, so that we may together see the urgency of the present struggle.

This urgency

This urgency demands that we be resolute in our action, because any hesitation in this important period is a betrayal of our country.

We are determined to fight until the end for the just cause, for the survival of our nation, and because of our responsibility vis-a-vis the heroes that have lived before us. I am sure that the Soul of the Nation will guide us toward victory.