

WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS
By Prime Minister General Nguyen Khanh
April 4, 1964

Dear compatriots: The present government, born out of the rising revolutionary tide which toppled the cruel dictatorial regime, must fulfill its mission of perpetuating and strengthening the 1 November spirit of all the army and all the people so as to carry out a complete and total revolution and to achieve national liberation. As head of the government, I feel it is my duty and privilege to talk intimately with you compatriots over the radio and to report to you what my government has done, is doing, and will do to meet the rightful aspirations of all the people for justice, order, prosperity, and happiness. It was precisely to reach these noble objectives that our people in cities as well as in rural areas, from old to young, have sacrificed their lives for 20 years to defeat colonialism, feudalism, and dictatorship under all forms.

At present, we must still cope with an unprecedented and incomparable danger which can decide our country's future. This is the dangerous communist invasion. Like the Jews of antiquity who at the same time built towns and fought the enemy, we must now fight off the communist invaders even while reconstructing a society completely ruined by nine years of a dictatorial, rotten family-ruled regime. Engaged in this immense double task, we must carry out an all-out revolution and make positive sacrifices until the revolution is achieved.

Considering your great sacrifices for the fatherland, my government feels it is its duty to keep in close contact with you and share your concerns and sufferings to help achieve, at any cost, the work of national salvation and reconstruction you have entrusted to it. Under so many past governments, you compatriots heard many fine words and promises which in the end had no effect on the nation's plight and the sufferings of the people. Therefore the people did not know whom to believe. The government understands that well, and now assures you compatriots that it will never fall into the rut of former regimes: to make promises and not keep them or fail to fulfill all of them.

The revolutionary

The revolutionary government does not intend to regard the word "revolution" as a catchword with which to sweep away the masses or as a label to deceive them. The word "revolution" must be placed at the heart of the collective determination of a generation that pledges to die with glory in freedom rather than live in shame in communist slavery.

The vow all members of the Military Revolutionary Council and I have taken, to devote ourselves to the service of the nation and people, reminds us day and night that, so long as our people do not live in prosperity, security, order, freedom, peace, and happiness, we must still make sacrifices. This vow will witness the sincere determination to fight of the entire revolutionary armed forces.

Dear compatriots, my heart is rent each time I think of the rural population, which bears the brunt of the war and suffers most of the consequences of communist invasion. A large-scale plan is now being implemented, which will be dealt with in detail during my future talks to the people. This plan is aimed at helping alleviate the very heavy burden of the rural compatriots and at consolidating a genuinely democratic policy, to be executed first at the level of the social substructure. In other words, my government has decided to bring the revolution to the countryside to help the rural people realize that they are indeed an important element of the nation at this historic hour. Day and night, our rural compatriots are frightened by the communists. Day and night, they are oppressed by despots and tyrants. Day after day, they must lead miserable lives in the rural areas, from generation to generation. They are lacking schools for their children. They have no medicines when they are sick. They cannot afford to secure means for their agricultural work. Throughout the year, they must live in poverty, misery, starvation, and under an oppressive yoke. To lighten their heavy burden is our concern and our present task. You compatriots can judge the government's sincerity through its coming achievements.

Dear compatriots,

Dear compatriots, I would go on speaking, but without being able to express all I feel for you. I content myself today with a few final, simple but sincere words to inaugurate the first of the series of talks I and the other members of the government intend to deliver weekly to report to you on what the government is going to do to achieve such goals as peace, prosperity, happiness, and justice for the people in general and the rural population in particular, for whom basically I and all the government members are working. We will meet again next weekend and so for now I wish you all a good night.

WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS
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April 11, 1964

Dear compatriots, as I have been in power for two months, my special concern consists of seeking the most effective way to help our people in the cities and, especially, in the rural areas express their thoughts and feelings freely and to settle rapidly and definitively all spiritual and material problems still encountered by a number of compatriots due to the present state of war in our country.

During the past twenty years, while mingling with fighters on all battlefields, I have had the good fortune to travel to every remote nook of the country in the North, Central, and South, as well as in the highlands. I have been so happy to see all of our beautiful country which was built by our forebears with great pain. However, my heart is rent each time I see that our people everywhere are suffering thousands of hardships because our country has not emerged from backwardness and is still ravaged by the war which has created disturbances and sadness.

The communist bandits have disregarded the love for one's people and the obligations toward one's compatriots. They have plotted to sabotage and disturb the rural areas and have committed a great deal of crimes. They have used the label "liberation of the South" to encourage and expand the guerrilla war. For this reason, we must fight fire with fire, war with war, to attain peace. It is for peace that our republican fighters have sacrificed their lives on the battlefield. However, our people cannot avoid the damages caused by military operations. We earnestly pray that peace and happiness will be restored to our nation and independence and unification to the country. I am deeply saddened before the sufferings engendered by the war upon our people in the rural areas. On several long and silent nights, I have had restless sleep when thinking of the injustices and misfortunes imposed on our compatriots in a certain locality following a clash between our army and the communist rebels. Their homes are destroyed and their ricefields and gardens damaged; after a battle the communist rebels withdraw, but they will indignantly take revenge on the villagers for having betrayed their presence.

As for

As for the republican troops, I wonder whether certain units, after their brilliant victory, have thought about the ruins of the village which was used as the battlefield. I also think of a few cases concerning some insignificant and helpless compatriots in certain regions who have been harmed by tyrants and despots in a grudge affair. I am more anxious and worried by the fact that following a mopping-up operation conducted by the republican armed forces the Viet Cong communists have committed a barbarous crime by daring to drop a packet of poison into the only well in a village in an attempt to kill a number of our fighters or to lay the blame on the national army.

Such a cruel move has, on several occasions, entailed danger for our compatriots because a few troops mistakenly think that those people living near the well have the intention of killing their fellow soldiers. But our compatriots are more grieved to see that the well is unused after the departure of the troops from their village.

Dear compatriots, while awaiting the return of peace my concern is to see that something can be done to help alleviate your pains and sorrow, something that can make you understand that my heart holds a deep affection for you day and night, something that can enable you to keep me informed directly and swiftly of what is happening to you, something that can bring me the honor of dissipating all your grief and to secure for you suitable spiritual and material relief. This concern I have felt during several sleepless nights of meditation which have led me to a solution: setting up an organ to receive and settle all worries and aspirations of the people in the whole country. I have just signed the decree-law on the formation of this organ today. This is the General Office for People's Suggestions and Complaints, a link between me and every citizen in the whole country. A general given full powers will direct this office and help me quickly settle all your worries and protect your interests effectively. He will also help me share directly the war burden on our fellow citizens in the countryside.

All that

All that is my sincere sentiment and also the sentiment of the Military Revolutionary Council. I believe that God will never stand against the men of good will and that, from now on, you will be relieved of your grief and the final glorious victory in the revolutionary struggle for the sake of the people and the country is not so far off. We will meet again next weekend and so, for now, and before ending my talk, in the name of the revolutionary army and government, I wish you all a good night and, that when you get up tomorrow morning to welcome the sunrise, your heart will be full of hope and confidence in the future of the country.

IV. Excerpts from a Press Conference on April 13, 1964
in Which Prime Minister Nguyen Khanh and Members
of His Cabinet Participated

In a press conference on April 12 Prime Minister Khanh denied that he aimed at establishing himself as a dictator. As evidence that this was untrue, he cited the recent enlargement of the Military Revolutionary Council to include broader representation of armed forces units, and his recent announcement that a constituent assembly would be elected in four to six months. He noted that the army was inherently democratic in giving equal treatment to all.

Deputy Prime Minister for Pacification Nguyen Ton Hoan, in answer to a newsman's question, said that the resignation of Ha Thuc Ky, former Minister of the Interior, did not indicate there was a split in the government that could lead to a crisis. As a leading Dai Viet Party leader, Hoan said that he regarded General Khanh as a man dedicated to democracy, and said that his party and the Prime Minister "were never closer".

On trials of former government officials and others accused of criminal activities under the old regime, Khanh said all would be accorded due process of law. The Revolutionary Tribunal set up to try such persons was expected to complete its work within three months.