

STATEMENT

by Ambassador PHAM-DANG-LAM, Chief of the
Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam at
the 23th plenary session of the Paris meetings

June 26, 1969.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Observers following these meetings have hoped that, after a period devoted to propaganda, the Communists will finally engage in serious negotiations in order to arrive rapidly at the restoration of peace. These people of good faith have thought that, in face of the prolonged sufferings of the Vietnamese population, in face of the aspirations for peace of the whole world, and once evidence has been given to indicate that the Communist side will never be able to achieve military victory, the Communists will realize that the continuation of the war does not profit any party, and will accept to enter into negotiations in view to substitute the armed conflict by a fair and honest political struggle.

Unfortunately, these people of good will saw their hopes vanish. As time passes, the Communist side makes clearer

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their concealed intentions which are to refuse serious negotiations, to pursue at all costs their illusions of total victory by the concerted efforts of military pressure and of propaganda, to persist in their tortuous dialectics in the sole aim of prolonging these meetings, while waiting for the opponent to lose patience, grow discouraged and finally accept all the conditions which will be imposed on them. How cruel are these schemes when one thinks of the added devastation inflicted by the war to the South Vietnamese population with every passing day.

You must understand that the armed forces and the people of the Republic of VietNam will never permit your side to achieve your aim which is to seize the monopoly of political power in South Viet-Nam. This is a matter of honor and a matter of life and death for them.

Your attitude of bad faith consists in your refusal to have useful negotiations and in your claim to have all the advantages and rights for your side. All this merely illustrates your lack of good faith when you talk about the fundamental rights of the South Vietnamese people.

A large majority of world public opinion has seen through and condemned your scheme.

The newspaper "Tribune of Geneva" in its issue dated June 12, 1969 states that, with "the proclamation of the

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provisional government", the communists have revealed that the expression of their intention to enter into a coalition government is only a maneuver, and have confirmed their design to bring down the present government and "to take over the management of internal and external affairs ..." The intention of the communists to force the withdrawal of the United States and the political surrender of the Government in South VietNam is now very clear. No one can be surprised by this except those people who have already forgotten that the communists have pursued patiently for many years their war objectives and have never bothered to conceal them.

The newspaper "Journal of Geneva" in its issue dated June 12, 1969, under the heading "The Front Says No to Peace" writes as follows : "The Communist leaders do not wish to search for an early peaceful solution ... which would curtail their hold on the future of South Viet-Nam. This 'national coalition' only constitutes for them a transitional phase varying in duration according to elements of opportunity. Their ultimate purpose is the seizure of power. This much they do not even deny".

The newspaper "The Scotsman" in its issue dated June 16, 1969 accurately states : "There is no sign that the communists in Viet-Nam are prepared to compromise. Their aim, as ever, is to take over the whole country regardless of the wishes of the inhabitants of the South. No concessions have

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been made since President Johnson stopped the bombing of the North. Sporadic rocket attacks on civilian targets in the South continue. The Communists would insist on representation on any coalition Government that might be set up--although President Nixon has ruled out coalition unless it has popular approval--but they are adamant that no member of President Thiệu's Government should be included in this coalition. Self-determination, as far as the Vietnamese Communists are concerned, includes the proviso that they must be in a position to regulate the result of the exercise.

Your concealed intention, which I have had opportunities to expose, particularly in my statement in the previous session, becomes clearer every day through your declarations and actions.

As related by the issue of the "International Herald Tribune" dated June 20, 1969, the special advisor for your side, Lê-Duc-Tho did not hesitate to declare to the press that your side will continue to maintain its position until, by weariness, our side is forced to accept all your conditions.

In other words, your side has made it plain that you will not negotiate, you will not discuss, you will not seek to reconcile the positions of both sides in order to reach an agreement. To the contrary, you will persist in restating your erroneous arguments and your unreasonable demands, and you

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will continue to fight and talk at the same time in order to pressure your opponents into accepting your conditions in their entirety.

That blatant affirmation is enough to make it clear to all that it is your side which is systematically blocking all progress at these meetings.

It also indicates that no manifestation of goodwill and no constructive proposal on our part can induce your side to engage in serious discussions, except if all your conditions are accepted; thus, is there anything left to negotiate ?

Impartial public opinion all over the world is therefore able to see which side is responsible for impeding the progress of these meetings.

According to the above mentioned article of the International Herald Tribune your special advisor has put the impudence so far as to declare that your side will sit at the meeting table until the seats are worn out in order to wait for your opponents to accept all of your brazen demands. One wonders whether you give any thought to the fact that during that time, while your side strives to drag out these meetings, more blood from both sides is being spilled, more houses and fields are being destroyed, the spiritual and material life of millions of our compatriots continues to be shattered and worst of all, the hatred between the members of the same

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community is still mounting because of the war. Our compatriots and the conscience of the world will make a judgment on your attitude of holding in contempt the life and misery of the people.

Furthermore, according to AFP of June 20th, one of your spokesmen stated in a meeting at the Palais de la Mutualite that your side would "not make any effort to induce progress in the Paris Meetings".

I.- In fact, your side did not come here with the intention of seeking a solution to putting an end to the war but rather to seek a way to seize power in South Viet-Nam.

In Resolution Number 3 of the Central Office for South VietNam, to which I have referred in previous meetings, the Communists affirmed their "determination to pursue the war till the end and have no illusions about peace through negotiations". The newspaper "Vanguard", the Party publication for zone 5, stated it even clearer as follows : "determined not to have the slightest illusion of peace and not to expect anything of negotiations or the goodwill of any President of the United States".

Recently, the so-called guidelines disseminated by Central Office for the summer campaign of 1969, especially in Directives 7I and 8I, exhorted the Communist troops with the "determination to go forward and gain decisive victory".

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While the Republic of Viet-Nam and its allies have taken actions to de-escalate the conflict and gradually reduce the presence of the allied forces in South Viet-Nam, your side has increased its acts of terrorism and still continues to shell cities indiscriminately, carrying out your futile attacks in disregard of the heavy sacrifices of the Communist troops and in the hope of gaining a military victory.

Most typical was your attack on the provincial capital of T^uY-Ninh on June 19 and 20, which was carried out by regular North Vietnamese units of the Ninth Division. This attack, as well as the other attacks, did not bring your side the desired results, but to the contrary only increased the heavy losses to the Communist troops in causing the unjust death of a large number of them in foolhardy and fruitless suicide attacks. Therefore, one wonders who it is who has held the lives of the troops in contempt and who has used their troops as "cheap cannon folder", who has used their troops as vanguard forces in order to expand the influence of an ideology which flies in the face of the national spirit and has violence as its rule of struggle ?

In the meantime, the army of the Republic of VietNam, which includes citizens from all strata, elements and tendencies of South Vietnamese society, has no other mission than the sacred one of preserving the nation and protecting the population. Those combattants are not fighting for any ideal

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other than the national ideal, are not making sacrifices for any interest other than the interest of the nation, and do not serve anyone other than the people of South VietNam. They do permit anyone to distort the sacred meaning of their struggle.

Why have those peace-loving youths had to leave their normal existence to carry arms into battle ? It is solely because the North Vietnamese Communist authorities have carried out armed aggression against South Viet-Nam to test their policy of 'People's Revolutionary warfare' within their expansion program of international communism in South-East Asia. It is precisely those who have carried arms to sow death and destruction among our compatriots in order to serve a foreign ideology and policy who can justly be called "mercenaries" and who consider their troops as "cannon folder".

II.- Your side does not even conceal that you do not search for a negotiated solution to put an end to the conflict but to use these meetings as a propaganda forum to create pressure to force your opponents to accept your conditions in their entirety.

While our side search for points of similarity in order to begin serious and useful discussions, while our side seek to reconcile the different viewpoints in the hope of reaching a solution acceptable to both sides, your side affirms

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that there cannot be any points of similarity and that there cannot be any logical and reasonable solution other than your side's overall 10-point solution. This solution is aimed at excluding the constitutional and legal Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam and eliminating all the present legal structures in South Viet-Nam. This solution is aimed at setting up a kind of administration chosen by your side regardless of the aspirations of the people of South Viet-Nam. This solution is aimed at destroying the self-defense capability of South Viet-Nam by demanding the total withdrawal of the allied troops who are aiding the Republic of Viet-Nam in its fight against Communist aggression. This solution is also intended to oppose the strengthening of the national armed forces, strengthening which would permit the gradual replacement of the allied forces.

Meanwhile, your side has never pledged it will withdraw back to the North Vietnamese troops and subversive forces in South Viet-Nam. It has never pledged that it will cease all infiltration of troops and arms into South Viet-Nam. And it has also never pledged that it will not intervene in the internal affairs of South Viet-Nam. In addition, you do not accept any effective international supervision.

Thus, what is there to negotiate ? As far as you are concerned, is it not that negotiations mean only sitting and

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waiting for your opponents to accept your demands in their entirety ?

III.- In order to justify this attitude, in the previous session a spokesman on your side held that in view of reality and practical conditions, the problem of South Viet-Nam must be settled on the basis of your side's overall 10-point solution and that there could be no other way.

We agree that if one to settle the Viet-Nam problem, one must take as a basis reality and practical conditions in South Viet-Nam. But what is the reality in South Viet-Nam ? Your propaganda apparatus has sought to create an entirely erroneous picture of South Viet-Nam.

The truth which can be seen by everyone is that your side cannot seize and hold any city, any province capital, any district town, or any populated area. The truth is that although you boast of controlling four-fifths of the territory, your side cannot find any place to establish the seat of your so-called "Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet-Nam".

The truth is that of 2,303 villages and 10,775 hamlets there have been 1,853 villages and 8,241 hamlets which have elected their administrative council. This comprises nearly 90 per cent of the population of South Viet-Nam.

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Those elections are being carried out in the remaining villages and hamlets. In sum, despite your acts of terrorism and sabotage, the national Government now controls the great part of the territory and the overwhelming majority of the population of South Viet-Nam.

You affirm that all the strata of the people of South Viet-Nam from the mountains and countryside to the cities warmly welcome the establishment of the so-called "Provisional Revolutionary Government", which you claim represents the will and the aspirations of millions of people who have opposed American aggression for ten years.

But the truth was pitifully described in a picture appearing in the June 23 issue of Newsweek which shows the exodus of the rural population in the area of Tây-Ninh after receiving the news of the establishment of the so-called "Provisional Revolutionary Government". The truth is that despite all your appeals to the population of South Viet-Nam to rise up, there has been no response whatsoever from the people. To the contrary, the number of troops who have deserted your ranks to return to the just national cause has not ceased to grow larger everyday.

The truth is from your general attack of Tết Mậu-Thanh through your general attack of Tết Ky-Dâu, from one fall-winter campaign to the other, your side has not gained anything but has caused serious losses to yourself and has

not gained any results other than to sow more death to innocent civilians.

The truth is that the Army of the Republic of VietNam is daily growing stronger and has given ample proof of its capability and its determination to defend the lives and property of the people of South Viet-Nam in their opposition to your attacks and terrorism.

In sum, it is your side which has disregarded the reality in South Viet-Nam by demanding that your overall 10-point solution be accepted in its entirety. This is a demand that only the victor can force his opponent to accept.

With regard to practical conditions, is it not that, according to your conception, the allied forces must withdraw totally and unconditionally, while the North Vietnamese troops cadre and subversive forces in South Viet-Nam, in Laos and in Cambodia continue to remain there ?

Is it not that your practical conditions are to oppose the strengthening of the self-defense capability of the people of South Viet-Nam, strengthening which you call "de-Americanizing" of the war in South Viet-Nam ?

Are not your practical conditions the setting up of coalition governments while you say that the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination can be fulfilled without free elections ?

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We have emphasized many times that there is no practical way to solve the problem of external forces in South Viet-Nam other than for the troops, cadre and subversive forces of North Viet-Nam now in South Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia to withdraw to North Viet-Nam simultaneously with the withdrawal from South Viet-Nam of the Allied Forces according to a definite time-table acceptable to both sides.

There can also be no practical way to allow the people of South Viet-Nam to exercise their right of self-determination other than to allow all individuals and groups to participate in free and sufficiently guaranteed elections without any pressure or threats.

On the practical basis that I have just presented, the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam is willing to hold serious discussions in order to reach a logical and reasonable solution which respects the legitimate interests of the concerned parties, with full guarantees for all citizens and groups to participate in the political life of South Viet-Nam, and, speaking generally, to have an opportunity to contribute to the building of a South Viet-Nam which responds to the aspirations of the great majority of the South Viet-Namese people, and advance gradually toward the reunification of the country.

But it is also out of respect for the interests and

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the right of self-determination of the South Vietnamese people that, although earnestly wishing to see peace return quickly to the country, we feel it necessary to restate the principles which are vital issues for the South Vietnamese population :

- no one can deprive the South Vietnamese people of their legitimate right of self-defense;
- no one can determine the political future of South Viet-Nam in the name and on behalf of the people of South Viet-Nam, without regard to their aspirations and the achievements which they have made in the edification of democracy for so many years.

If your side has come here with any other goal than to seek a solution on the basis of respect for the interests and the right of self-determination of the South Vietnamese people, then it is your side which is responsible for the lack of progress in these meetings and therefore responsible for the continuation of the war which is causing more destruction to the country and mourning to the people. You will have to bear this responsibility before the people of both North and South, before world public opinion and before history.

I have concluded.-