

August 21st 1969

STATEMENT

by Ambassador PHAM-DANG-LAM, Chief of the
Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam at
the 31st Plenary session of the Paris Meetings
August 21st, 1969.-

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The statements you made in the previous sessions indicated that you are not yet prepared to negotiate seriously. You continue to slander the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam and to heap upon this government all kinds of crimes when, in fact, the only "crime" of this government is not to capitulate to the communists and to prevent them from taking over South Viet-Nam by force. In other words, it is because the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam is the legal expression of the will of the large majority of the South Vietnamese people to resist

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communist aggression that you have tried to discredit and to eliminate this government by all means. But your designs are doomed to failure for your repeated attacks on the battlefields obviously cannot bring you victory, similarly the truth cannot be altered by your slanders and calumnies at this meeting table.

You accuse others of treason against the people and the Fatherland. But who have betrayed the Vietnamese people if not those who have taken advantage of the national resistance movement to establish the communist regime?

Twenty four years ago the entire Vietnamese people have rose up as one man to struggle for national independence and unity. Should the struggle of the entire people have wholly been directed at these two legitimate objectives, it would have been successful long ago and the Vietnamese people would have lived in peace and prosperity as the other Afro-Asian peoples.

Unfortunately for the destiny of our country, you have taken advantage of this legitimate struggle to undertake the communization of the whole of Viet-Nam, an undertaking which you have labelled as "the struggle against feudalism and imperialism for the realization of the national, democratic and popular revolution". This erroneous

policy and these harmful designs have transformed the struggle of the Vietnamese people into a long adventure without issue. The Vietnamese people have paid in lives and properties for a quarter of a century and are not yet able to enjoy the benefits of unity, of independence and of the democratic regime simply because the North Vietnamese communist authorities have linked the patriotic struggle with the "edification of socialism".

Who have done disservice to the country if not those who have initiated the war, those who are prolonging it to date, and those who are threatening to continue this war until the objectives of international communism are reached ?

You have also evoked the economic and social disturbances in South Viet-Nam. But what are the reasons which have prevented the full realization of the economic development and the social reforms advocated by the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam ? This state of affairs is due to your policy of systematic sabotage and to your total war.

Right at this meeting table, if you only thought of the fundamental rights of the Vietnamese people, these negotiations would not be in the present situation. On the contrary your side continues to pursue before everything else the objectives of the party and of the international communist bloc.

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This explains your stubbornness in maintaining your illogical demands in the vain hope of bringing triumph to the communist cause in the world, of expanding communism domination in Asia, as well as overthrowing the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam, the only rampart preventing the seizure of power in South Viet-Nam by the communists.

The Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam which originates from the people and is working for the welfare of the people, is always seaching by all means to shorten the war and to spare the people's blood so that all the efforts and resources of the country can be directed at the restoration and the edification of the country.

You also claim that the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam constitutes a serious obstacle to the restoration of peace in Viet-Nam. But who are the ones causing the most serious obstacles to the restoration of peace if not those who, although talking peace, are drowning themselves in illusions of victories and are escalating the war ? Who are preventing the restoration of peace if not those who stubbornly refuse to engage in serious negotiations ?

The Government of the Republic of VietNam has come to this table with the utmost goodwill and the most generous proposals, such as the proposal of March 25, 1969 to engage

talks with the so-called "NLF", or the one of July 11, 1969 to hold free elections with the participation of this organization under international supervision.

In fact, all the unfounded criticism against the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam which I have just rejected only has one purpose and that is to help you avoid any honest and serious talks on the two essential problems with the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam, the sole legitimate representative of the South Vietnamese people : namely the problem of withdrawal of the external forces and the problem of holding free elections to determine the political future of South Viet-Nam.

Concerning the first problem, in previous sessions, you have accused the Allied side of proceeding with a "pretended withdrawal, a "drop by drop" withdrawal, or of prolonging the withdrawal operations. But these noisy criticism only aim to mislead public opinion and to hide the truth on the conduct of the HANOI leaders concerning this problem.

Actually, there is no withdrawal of the North Vietnamese communist forces whatsoever, whether "pretended" or "drop by drop". In fact, you even refuse to discuss about it.

No one ignores that the invasion of South Viet-Nam by the North Vietnamese communist troops constitutes a serious

violation of international law and of the 1954 Geneva Accords on Viet-Nam. It is equally evident that as long as these troops remain present in South Viet-Nam, no peace is possible and the South Vietnamese population will not be able to exercise truly their right to self-determination.

Thus, international law and accords, as well as the interests of the South Vietnamese population and of peace, demand that the North Vietnamese communist troops and subversive forces be withdrawn back to the North. That is what public opinion at home and abroad is demanding. And that is also what we have ceaselessly said since the opening of these meetings.

Facing such legitimate demand by public opinion, you try to avoid the issue by a slanting statement through the vague formula in item 3 of your proposal : "the question of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Viet-Nam will be settled by the Vietnamese parties". With such an ambiguous formula you are not committing yourself to anything specific. The problem of restoring peace is too important an endeavour to permit you to prolong such games of hide and seek. The solution to this problem must be put on concrete and unquestionable basis. Consequently, it is necessary for you to give the precise and exact meaning of your item 3. Does it mean that you have accepted at last to withdraw back to the North the

North Vietnamese communist troops currently present in South Viet-Nam ? And what are the "Vietnamese parties" which will discuss this question ?

Your refusal to give clear answers to these questions proves that you do not want to consider the withdrawal of your troops from South Viet-Nam. You will have to bear the responsibility for any prolongation of the war.

In contrast to your unfounded criticism, we have put forth a proposal with a clear time-table : it is not the matter of withdrawing 25.000 or 50.000, but the withdrawal of the majority of the allied forces within a 12-month period in the event you also agree to withdraw simultaneously the communist forces, back to the North. Although you have rejected it, the principle of mutual withdrawal remains a basic one which is logical and necessary for the withdrawal of the external forces. The North Vietnamese communist forces of aggression must begin to withdraw back to the North simultaneously with the withdrawal of the allied forces to enable the South Vietnamese people themselves to decide their own political future.

In this respect, the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam has made very clear proposals : the holding of free and democratic elections under the supervision of an international body and in which all political parties and groups,

including the so-called "NLF", can participate. An electoral commission, composed of representatives of all the political parties and groups including the so-called "NLF", will have the task to assure equal opportunities in the campaigning all the candidates. The Government of the Republic of VietNam has further pledged to accept the results of these free elections, whatever the results may be.

What has been your answer to these precise proposals?

As usual, you merely and simply rejected them without even bothering to examine them.

In order to justify your negative attitude before world opinion which has welcomed the generous initiative of the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam, you claim that the organization of the elections must be trusted to a so-called "provisional coalition government", a government "issued from bargaining between groups and persons in favour of peace, independence and neutrality". In other words, this would exclude all forces and people not sharing your political views.

To put the problem of changing the Government and the regime in the South prior to the holding of the elections is to put the cart before the horse. This means in fact to ask for political power and not for truly free and democratic elections.

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Consequently, when you talk about really free and democratic elections organized by a "provisional coalition government", your aim is rather power and not the elections. Similarly, when you say that "the question of the armed forces in South Viet-Nam will be settled by the Vietnamese parties", your aim is to maintain the presence of the North Vietnamese communist forces in the South and not their withdrawal back to the North: On this question of withdrawal, you have recourse to ambiguous formulas in order to avoid the issue. Concerning the elections, you have put forth an illogical process in order to elude them.

Such an attitude is enough to show which side is afraid of truly free and democratic elections. Who are the people opposed to democracy if not those who are maneuvering to determine in advance the outcome of the elections by demanding as precondition the replacement of the legal government by a government to their devotion. Who are against democracy if not those who have chosen violence as their means and party dictatorship as their end ?

If your side has nothing to fear from a verdict by the South Vietnamese people, if you have nothing to fear from an impartial supervision by an international body, then we see no reason why you do not accept the principle of free elections put under international supervision and open to the partici-

pation of all the political parties and groups in the country, as proposed by the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam on July 11, 1969.

Once this principle is accepted, all the modalities for its implementation will be the object of discussions between the parties. As far as we are concerned, the Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam is prepared to begin such discussions. It depends then on you for these meetings to progress or to mark time.

I have completed my statement.-

