

PHAI-DOAN VIỆT-NAM CỘNG-HÒA

TẠI HỘI-NGHỊ GIỮA HAI BÊN  
MIỀN NAM VIỆT-NAM

Délégation de la République du Viêt-Nam

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**S T A T E M E N T**

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR. NGUYỄN-LƯU-VIÊN

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

CHIEF OF THE DELEGATION

OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM

AT THE 37TH SESSION

OF THE OFFICIAL MEETINGS BETWEEN THE

TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES

Friday, January 18, 1974

Dear Compatriots,

In exactly four days the Giáp Dần (Tiger) year will begin. As in the past every time the Tết (Lunar New Year) is approaching, the South Vietnamese people is strongly yearning to see peace at last restored in their country.

Nearly one year ago, at the spring of the Quý Sửu (Buffalo) year that hope has pervaded our entire people when was signed on 27 January 1973 in Paris the "Accord on the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace in Viet-Nam".

Unfortunately the year elapsed without an end to war and the restoration of peace. The yearning for peace of all the Vietnamese has been broken by the bitter reality of innumerable mournings and sufferings that continue to fall upon our country.

Right at the start of the La Celle Saint Cloud Conference the Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam has not ceased to reflect the burning desire for peace of all the South-Vietnamese, in its statements as well as through its attitude at the conference table.

Our Delegation has repeatedly appealed to your side to be conscious of the great responsibilities that befall on us here and join its efforts to ours so as to peacefully settle the differences that divide us and help restore rapidly a just and lasting peace in the strict respect of the South-Vietnamese people's right of self-determination.

The task which is ours at this conference table and the purpose of our negotiations were clearly defined in the Chapter IV of the Paris Accord of 27 January 1973, that includes articles 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Chapter IV is entitled "the exercise of South Vietnamese people's right of self-determination" and begins with article 9 that says quote

"Art. 9 :

The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam undertake to respect the following principles for the exercise of the South-Vietnamese people's right of self-determination :

- a) The South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination is sacred, inalienable and shall be respected by all countries.
- b) The South Vietnamese people shall decide themselves of South Vietnam's political future through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision.
- c) Foreign nations shall not impose any political tendency or personality on the South Vietnamese people" unquote

Art.10 and 11 state the obligations of the two parties such as the pledge to "respect the cease-fire, to maintain peace in South Vietnam, to settle all matters of contention through negotiation and avoid all armed conflict" and to achieve "national reconciliation and concord, to put an end to hatred... to ensure democratic liberties..."

Art.12 and 13 of Chapter IV of the Paris Accord stipulate clearly that our two parties shall settle by negotiation a certain number of problems so as to arrive at the organization of truly free and democratic general elections provided in the above mentioned art.9(b). Those problems are related to the establishing of the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord (NCNRC) and to the settlement of the "problem of the Vietnamese armed forces in South-Vietnam", which includes "steps to reduce armed effectives... and to demobilize the troops being reduced".

Our Conference was convened precisely for the purpose of solving by negotiation the above mentioned problems. In accordance to the spirit and the letter of Chapter IV of the Paris Accord the Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam has put forth at this conference table extremely concrete, realistic and fair proposals, so as to rapidly achieve the assigned objective which is "the exercise of the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination".

The Delegation of the Republic of Vietnam has constantly tried to overcome the obstacles and iron out the differences that divide us so as to arrive at the organization of the general elections as stipulated in the Paris Accord at art. 9-b and 12-b.

With a view to respect the deadline of 90 days stipulated in art 12-a of the Paris Accord, the Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam has presented at the 8th meeting of 25 April 1973 a "Draft Agreement of principle" designed to solve all the issues that are being posed to the Conference, within the framework of a global settlement and proposed that the date of 26 August 1973 be fixed for the general elections. Your side has mechanically rejected that concrete, realistic and constructive proposal.

After the Joint Communiqué of 13 June 1973 our delegation has proposed to your side to organize general elections for Christmas 1973, your side has also mechanically rejected that proposal.

At the 18th meeting on 25 July 1973 our delegation has put forth a new "draft agreement of principle" that include steps to be taken so as to solve the substance of the essential issues that the Paris Accord has assigned to our conference as well as on the way to hold negotiations. In that "draft agreement of principle" the Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam has worked out a precise calendar to solve all the issues within the framework of a global

settlement and again appealed to your side to accept 1973 Christmas day, for the general elections. Your response however was totally negative. Thus Christmas with its traditions and its significance of peace passed in general disappointment, because of your attitude.

Your statements and attitude at this conference table during the last 10 months have been totally against the spirit as well as the letter of chapter IV of the Paris Accord on "the exercise of the right of self-determination of the South Vietnamese people".

Since its beginning until now, the Conference has not been able to make any progress whatsoever, in spite of all the efforts of the Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam aimed at getting it out of the deadlock and lead it into the path of true negotiations.

In the face of your totally negative attitude, we have for our part continued to set forth concrete, realistic and constructive proposals and initiatives designed to restore a just and lasting peace in South Vietnam on the basis of the strict respect of the right of South Vietnamese people at self-determination.

Once more, in sign of goodwill and continuing its efforts for peace, the Delegation of the Republic of Vietnam is presenting the new proposal that follows :

The Delegation of the Republic of Viet-Nam proposes that general elections provided for in art.9-b and 12-b of the Paris Accord, be held on 20 July 1974.

If your side agrees to the 20 July 1974 date for "truly free and democratic general elections under international supervision" as stipulated at art.9-b of the Paris Accord, elections in which "the South Vietnamese people will decide themselves of South Vietnam's

political future" our Delegation is ready to solve with your side in a prompt and satisfactory way, all the issues that are posed to this conference table, namely :

- the establishing of the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord (NCNRC)
- the guarantee of democratic liberties and
- the issue of Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam.

We propose that our two sides do their best to solve in time all these issues so that general elections could be held on July 20, 1974 in favourable and totally free and democratic conditions, without coercion or external interference from anywhere.

From now to 20 July 1974, there are still 6 months. If our two sides show the same goodwill and the same spirit of conciliation and set to work together, that deadline of 6 months will be more than sufficient to solve all the differences between us, political as well as military ones, so as to complete the setting up of procedures and modalities of general elections and to establish the bodies necessary to these elections.

The date of 20 July, twenty years ago, marked a painful date in the history of the Vietnamese people, for it was at that date that the Geneva Accord of 1954 divided the country into two parts at the Bén-Hai river. It is a date that all Vietnamese, during the last twenty years, should regard as a "Day of shame". That date does not cease to remind us all along these last 20 years of the partition of the country into a free South Viet-Nam and a Communist North Vietnam.

These last 20 years were also years of sufferings and destructions for our country, caused by a long and catastrophic war of which South Viet-Nam is the victim, in the face of the expansionist and aggressive ambitions of North Vietnam's communist regime.

By the proposal that we made just now, 20 July of this year could open up a new page in our history, full of promises for the future of our country.

Twenty long years of war and innumerable mourning will fade away, if your side agrees to put an end to hatred and sincerely engage into the path of reconciliation and concord, if your side agrees to abandon the path of violence so as to accept a peaceful and honest political struggle and if you agree to our proposal to organize general elections next 20 July as we just proposed.

The Paris Accord has solemnly recognized the sacred and inviolable character of the right of the South Vietnamese's people to self-determination. With the general elections the right of the South Vietnamese's people to self-determination will be fully implemented, and the conflict between South Vietnamese will find its solution in the respect of democratic rules and in the spirit of reconciliation and concord.

If your side agrees to the date of 20 July 1974 to hold general elections, then from now on, that date will have a new meaning for every Vietnamese. The "day of shame" will become "the day of reconciliation and concord".

The general elections next 20 July will open a new era for South Vietnam in which all South Vietnamese without distinction of political opinion, religious belief and social class, will be able to join their efforts to heal the wounds of the war, to rebuild the country and to build a new happiness. A democratic, united and prosperous South Vietnam is an essential factor that will check the ambitions of the Communist North Vietnam's leaders to conquer South Vietnam and place South Vietnam under the yoke of totalitarian communism.

The general elections of next 20th July will eventually open the path to the reunification of Viet-Nam "by stages, through peaceful means, on the basis of discussions and agreements between North and South Viet-Nam, without coercion or annexation by either party" as stipulated in art.15 of the Paris Accord.

Dear Compatriots,

At the threshold of the Giáp Dần (Tiger) year, turning towards the future, we have just put forth our general elections proposal with all our goodwill and our sincere desire to rapidly reach a satisfactory and definitive settlement of the conflict. We hope that your side will carefully examine our proposal and give us a positive response so that with the new year we could begin true negotiations.

We call on your side not to mechanically and hastily reject that constructive proposal. You are not compelled to answer us at once today. Your side could take the necessary time to carefully examine our proposal and give us your answer next week, at the Friday 25th January 1974 meeting.

Before ending my statement I wish to put forth some small initiatives that are likely to help our two parties work in better conditions at this Conference :

- To establish a climate of conciliation necessary to our discussions we think that all recriminations and charges should cease at this conference table. In the presentation of proposals or counter-proposals as well as in the way of putting forth problems, our two parties should use a courteous language and show the greatest restraint as befits a peace conference.

- To show an open and conciliatory spirit and to create more opportunities for exchanges of views we think that at the end

of each plenary session our two parties could lunch together, engage into friendly talks, not necessarily concerning the issues of the Conference. Thus our two chiefs of delegation will have the opportunity to talk together in a more relaxed atmosphere. As for the other members of our delegations, they will be also able to meet one another and have fruitful talks for the two sides.

If your side agrees, we could begin right at the end of this session. If, on the contrary you deem it is not yet timely to do so today, then let us start next week, at the end of the Friday 25th January 1974 session that falls right on the 3rd day of the Têt, a propitious day for such encounters according to our people's traditions.

I have finished and thank you for your attention./.

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