

PROCLAMATION  
OF  
GEN. DUONG VAN MINH

To the compatriots inside and outside of the country.

Dear Compatriots,

Eight years ago, in answering your wishes, I and my comrades in arms had stood up to overthrow a dictatorial regime which was completely separated from the people, solved a deadlock situation which was heavily threatening the existence of our country.

Knocking down the dictatorial regime is the first step.

The next step is to establish in the South a truly independent, democratic Nation, and a just, prosperous, and generous society, in which every Vietnamese, despite his political belief, his religion, has a standing place to contribute into the defense and the development of the country: that is the main purpose of the revolution of 1-November 1963.

With that aim, the South not only would become prosperous and strong in the later years, but the country also would not have to suffer six years of destructive war and all the elements would have an occasion to come to a compromise to stop the internecine war from which there is no escape for both sides.

The People Revolution in 1963, if accomplished, must lead to the national Peace.

But historical situation at that moment had not enough conditions to give us success: the revolution was betrayed, the way to peace was cut by the plot of an aggressive power and the ambition of some individuals.

Eight years have passed. Our country is still sunk in the war.

So many bombs have been poured down onto both parts, North and South, so much mourning and hatred have been created in the hearts of the people of both sides, but not a single wish of the people like Independence, Unity, Freedom....has been satisfied.

Eight years have passed, the South ~~\*\*\*\*~~ not only does not get stronger but becomes weaker in every aspect and is coming to a bankruptcy.

The country becomes more dependent on foreigners. The Democracy, established by the struggle of the people four years ago, has been used and made as instruments for a dictatorial regime. The economy is declining to the degree of ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~ being nearly exhausted, and is living on foreign aids. Social injustice becomes a greater issue, morality, culture, education are on a decline, and the youth becomes more and more degenerated. The worst of all is the killing between Vietnamese which is continuing with a greater dimension, and from that no victory nor peace are coming out.

Before that situation, who does not feel bad and angry if he still has some conscience left, if one still has some feeling for the country, he must take the risk of his life to find a way out for the country.

It is the conscience of responsibility <sup>that</sup> has urged me to run for the presidency this time, with the ~~only~~ <sup>sole</sup> wish that I could <sup>together</sup> with the people complete what had been interrupted eight years ago, link the road to the People Peace back together: the Peace decided by the Vietnamese people themselves, basing on the compromise between Vietnamese, and directing to the most sacred interests of the Vietnamese people.

The people are longing for that peace, because it is the life of the South, the way to recovery and unity of the people.

The people Peace can be achieved when we have a good and effective government rising up from the people and supported by them. A government which has enough prestige and self-confidence to get out from the orbit of foreign countries and takes back the active role in the peace arrangement.

The most convenient occasion to establish such a government is the coming election, with the conditions that it must be completely free and clean.

A clean and honest election not only brings back to South Vietnam a government which has the sympathy of the people, but also brings back the confidence in the regime and that is the necessary psychological condition to go to a compromise between Vietnamese in this land.

Therefore, for a long time I have been asking for a free and clean election, and right after my declaration of the decision to run on 26 July 1971, I had asked you to forgive me if I was forced to retreat on realizing that the election would not have enough of the above conditions.

I hoped my warnings as well as that of others will make those responsible persons repent, will make them realize the extremely destructive results which a dishonest election would bring back to the country and to themselves.

I, myself has tried all the ways to ask them to stop the giant dishonest machinery which has been operating secretly for a few months, to stop those activities to prevent the opposite candidates from their campaigning activities and to suppress them, to stop terrorizing our friends and cadres.

But until now, those responsible persons are still stubborn and do not listen to our declarations.

All the facts which the Congress Committee and the People movement Against dishonest elections have denounced, those documents and concrete evidences which our office has announced, and those suppressing activities of the government which the people have witnessed in the past are only the small part of the plots being in operation and will be used in all parts in the country in the two coming elections, the lower house and the presidential elections.

In this situation, after going through all the facts, listening to all opinions, weighing all the advantages and disadvantages, I feel the duty to withdraw from the election, because of the interest of the country and of the people.

<sup>force</sup> I decided to withdraw because I can not support a despicable ~~role~~ which only makes the people disappointed in the democratic regime, which stops the compromise between Vietnamese, for as I said in my speech "THE PEOPLE PEACE" on 17 June 71, that this compromise must begin at the confidence in the respect for the democratic rules.

To me, success or failure is not the main matter. It matters

*farce*  
that I can do some thing useful to serve the country, to contribute in bringing peace back for the country. Withdrawing from the dishonest ~~joke~~ is to help those in power a chance to awake, is to create a position for the people to reestablish the democracy in order to achieve peace.

Here, I would like to thank all the people inside and outside the country who have agreed with my standpoint, who have helped me by all the ways, particularly those people who are poor military personnels, public and private employees, students have automatically contributed small amounts of money but very precious to help me in the election campaign. Those amounts of money will be kept in a special account and will be returned to the people or used in other usefull things, according to the opinions of the people.

I sencerely thank the Senators and Congress man who have been brave enough to save their signatures to introduce me for running.

I sincerely thank relatives and friends who have contributed money and labor, who have cooperated with me but never raise any condition. I beleive that that sincere and impartial cooperation will continue for many years to come.

Dear compatriots,

Withdrawal does not mean to stop struggling. Withdrawing is to choose a more effective way to serve the country.

The way on which we fight for Independence and Freedom , for the People Peace is a long and dangerous way, which is full of obstruction.

On that rightous road, I will be always next to you.

Saigon, 20 August, 1971

General Duong Van Minh