

Bao Dai Offers To Arbitrate

Nice, France

Former Vietnamese Emperor Bao Dai broke a 20-year public silence yesterday to offer to arbitrate peace negotiations in South Vietnam. He called for the immediate formation of a government of national union.

In an interview with Agence France-Presse, Bao Dai, 61, who has lived in exile in France for the past 20 years, said he would be willing to head such a government only if all parties involved agreed that they wanted him to do so.

He added that he would not return to power "for pleasure," but that his only ambition was to "save the country from disaster."

"South Vietnam is now swept by chaos engendered by panic and horrible killings," he said. "I am prepared to do the impossible to save my country."

Bao Dai was emperor of Annam (central Vietnam) from 1925 to 1945 and then Vietnamese chief of state from 1949 to 1955, when he was overthrown by Ngo Dinh Diem.

Agence France-Presse