

# Mr. Thieu calls for a Bandung-like conference of Asian nations to find peace. He'd include North Vietnam.

By Nguyen Van Thieu

SAIGON, South Vietnam—For the past few years everyone has talked about peace. In recent months more and more talk has been heard about peace, about one solution or another, about the coming cease-fire and so forth.

I would like to reiterate that our South itself hopes that peace will soon come more than anyone else and that we ourselves have worked harder and gone farther than anyone else.

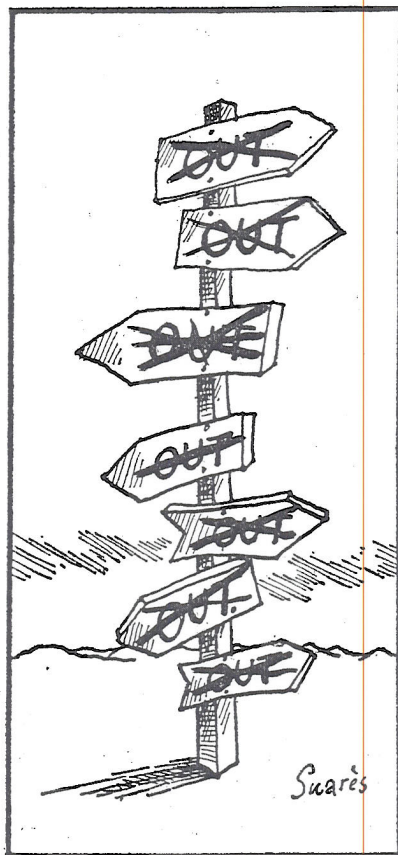
On the other hand, the Communists yell for peace louder than anyone else but they are more stubborn and treacherous than anyone else.

We are not afraid of a cease-fire, nor do we evade it. We ourselves hope that a cease-fire will soon come so that peace will be restored quickly. We have also demanded many times talks on an immediate cease-fire. Meanwhile, it is the Communists who are more afraid of a cease-fire than anyone else.

They arrived in Paris three years and more ago not to negotiate peace seriously with a peaceful will but to save the North from bombings pending a complete U.S. troop withdrawal and to prepare adequate means, awaiting the most favorable moment, in the hope that they can defeat the Republic of Vietnam by force.

In the past three years and more, the Communists have refused to negotiate peace seriously because they had at their disposal fifteen infantry divisions, from five to seven artillery and antiaircraft divisions together with 1,000 tanks waiting to come South to stage the last battle in 1972.

In recent months the Communists have run up and down from Hanoi to Paris, the U.S.S.R. and Red China and have made contacts with the United States time and again, acting as if they truly wanted peace in one or two days with one solution or another.



But in reality, they merely aimed at exploiting the U.S. voters' public opinion, separating the people from the U.S. Government, separating the United States from ourselves, and at the same time once again deceiving world public opinion. In fact, no words, gestures or acts on their part have indicated that they had any goodwill in the past four years and more. On the contrary, troops, weapons and ammunition have been continuously sent from the North to the South, Laos and Cambodia to prolong the war of aggression.

Today the Republic of Vietnam once again confirms:

In a solution for the war in Vietnam, North Vietnam is the aggressor from the outside; naturally it will not be allowed to enjoy anything or any right in the South; on the contrary, it has the duty to end all acts of aggression in the South and withdraw all of its tools of aggression to the North.

Moreover, the North must compensate the southern people for all the damages and mourning caused to them by their infiltration during the past eighteen years.

In a solution to the war in all of Indochina, North Vietnam also bears a similar responsibility toward the Khmer Republic and Laos.

In everything concerning the Republic of Vietnam, the Khmer Republic and Laos, North Vietnam must respect these three Indochinese countries' territory, sovereignty, independence, freedom and peace. First of all, it must not interfere in or stir up domestic political affairs in any of them.

In the South a political solution is a domestic affair of the South. It is a right and responsibility of the southern people to settle it among themselves. No one is allowed to interfere.

The South Vietnamese people now have a unique, constitutional, legal Government. Every domestic political solution and problem of the South must be approved by the present constitutional, legal Republic of Vietnam Government and by the South Vietnamese people.

Therefore, only the present Republic

of Vietnam Government is competent to discuss and approve any domestic political solution for the South and no one has the right to do it in its place. The Republic of Vietnam Government and the northern administration would discuss only what concerns the two parts.

This national right to self-determination must be seriously implemented through democratic procedures that really respect the people's absolute freedom of choice and determination and this spirit of national reconciliation must be implemented honestly.

Besides the direct participation of all components of the South Vietnamese people, broad international control or observation is very necessary to certify and insure freedom, democracy and fairness to any of these procedures.

No prefabricated mechanism, in any form whatsoever, can be imposed to force the Republic of Vietnam Government and people to accept such a mechanism.

The points which I have presented and which are related to the restoration of peace and the settlement of the internal political problem in South Vietnam are also the basic principles for a peace solution which we have sought and are seeking and which we expect to come soon to us.

The peace, which we have sought and are seeking, is a peace based on the reason and honor of everyone and for everyone. This peace also bears a special Vietnamese characteristic which is national love and concord and the elimination of hatred, and the great national unity among the Vietnamese people themselves who are of the same breed.



These basic principles can be summed up as follows:

Militarily, all foreign countries must withdraw their armies back to their territories and must not invade any other neighboring countries directly or indirectly or carry out infiltration and acts of sabotage, organize acts, inciting activities and terrorist acts, or interfere in their internal affairs.

Politically, on Republic of Vietnam territory we advocate a policy of reconciliation so that people from the other side of the front line can participate in a peaceful manner and without the use of military strength or violence in the common activities of the nation on the basis of the right of self-determination according to genuinely free and democratic procedures.

Regarding the problems between the South and the North, we propose that the two administrations hold serious discussions on the relations between the South and the North on the basis of peaceful coexistence while waiting for favorable conditions to achieve national unification.

Our proposals have become more and more open-minded, broadened, and sensible and reasonable. We have made maximum concessions based on the right of self-determination and the spirit of national reconciliation.

Meanwhile, the Communists have become more and more deceitful and stubborn through their increasing unreasonable and insolent proposals. They want to eliminate that which belongs to and is established by the South Vietnamese people in order to impose a Communist regime disguised under the form of a coalition government.

If the Communists really have goodwill for peace as they have frequently ballyhooed, let them end all their deceitful political maneuvers and hold serious talks with the Republic of Vietnam Government to discuss the procedures to end the war on the basis of the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination as they have constantly advocated and demanded that it be realized at all costs.

As for our Republic of Vietnam, it has many times stated that it advocates no aggression against anyone, no participation in any military alliance and not allowing any nation to use its own territory to invade or threaten any other nation.

The North Vietnamese Communists have brazenly violated the neutrality of Laos and Cambodia and trampled on the Geneva agreements which they signed to invade the Republic of Vietnam. In their aggression in Indochina they have enjoyed the important aid of Communist countries, especially the U.S.S.R. and Communist China. Meanwhile, they have shouted for the "neutralization" of South Vietnam. So, objective people note that while speaking of the "neutralization" of South Vietnam, the Communists and pro-Communists actually want to use that apparently attractive label to promote a one-way solution and to exert pressure to demand that our allied armed forces be not present in this country and refrain from exercising the public right to self-defense.

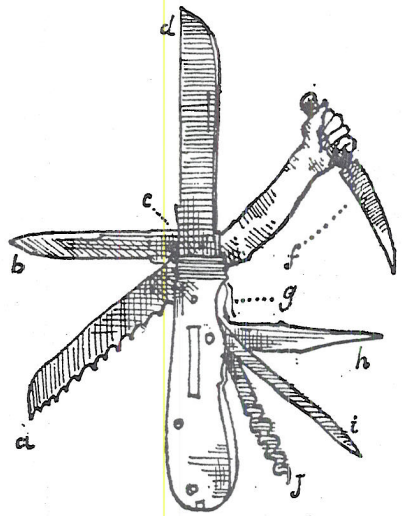
For this reason, I resolutely oppose Communist-style neutrality because this is a malicious Communist plot aimed at paralyzing and isolating us in our self-defense struggle and then at annexing our country and then all of Southeast Asia.

In 1955, 29 Afro-Asian countries including the Republic of Vietnam and North Vietnam attended the Bandung Conference and approved a joint declaration of the conference that upheld the aforementioned principles.

In the present situation, I think that it is time to convene a conference involving all the ten Southeast Asian countries including North Vietnam.

North Vietnam should participate in this conference if it has a sincere desire for peace. This is necessary for it to display its much-heralded goodwill for peace. The proposed conference is designed to find appropriate procedures for establishing a lasting peace for this area and laying a foundation for and establishing economic and cultural relations among the nations in the area. The proposed conference is also designed to lay a basis for the relationship between the countries in the area and the big foreign powers on the basis of these principles.

If the proposal for such an all-Southeast Asia conference is responded



Drawings by Jean-Claude Soares

to, we will be glad to invite Southeast Asian countries to come and meet in the Republic of Vietnam capital or we will be ready to participate in that conference in any other place chosen by the majority of the Southeast Asian countries.

No one understands the Communists more clearly than we do, and no one has more or as many sorrowful experiences with the Communists than we do.

No one will bear the responsibility and admit the fault before our national history and children and grandchildren for us, if this country is lost.

*President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam addressed the National Assembly in Saigon earlier this month. This article is excerpted from that speech. Translation by the U.S. Government.*