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AFP EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DRV FOREIGN MINISTER

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(BY JEAN VICENT)

(TEXT) HANOI, JAN. 22 (AFP) NORTH VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DUY TRINH TODAY RULED OUT ANY IDEA OF A NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE SOUTH.

IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH AFP ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIETNAM, MR TRINH SAID THAT "DURING THE PRESENT PHASE, THE ESSENTIAL TASKS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE CONSIST OF SAFEGUARDING PEACE" AND OF RECONSTRUCTING WAR-TORN VIETNAM.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE QUESTIONS AND OF THE ANSWERS GIVEN BY MR TRINH DURING THE INTERVIEW.

QUESTION ONE: ONE YEAR AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT, WOULD YOU CONSIDER IT CORRECT TO SAY THAT THE WAR IN VIETNAM HAS ENDED?

QUESTION TWO: WHAT IS THE MAIN FACTOR TO WHICH YOU ASCRIBE THE FACT THAT MILITARY OPERATIONS ARE STILL TAKING PLACE IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THAT ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS THESE OPERATIONS CAUSED MORE THAN 50,000 DEATHS ON BOTH SIDES DURING 1973, AND THAT AMERICAN RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER NORTH VIETNAM OCCUR RATHER FREQUENTLY?

QUESTION THREE: YOU ARE ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIETNAM, AS WELL AS OF THE AMERICAN-VIETNAMESE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF JUNE 13, 1973. WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE WAY IN WHICH THESE TEXTS ARE BEING APPLIED?

REPLY:

THE FACT MENTIONED IN YOUR SECOND QUESTION SUPPLIES THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST. THE FACT IS THAT THE UNITED STATES--FAR FROM BREAKING OFF ITS MILITARY ENGAGEMENT AND ITS INTERFERENCE IN THE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF SOUTH VIETNAM, AS REQUIRED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT--HAS MAINTAINED AND EVEN STRENGTHENED ITS CORPS OF MILITARY ADVISERS, NOW CAMOUFLAGED AS CIVILIAN PERSONNEL.

IT HAS ALSO FURNISHED A FLOOD OF MATERIEL TO SAIGON'S ARMY, WHICH--THANKS TO ITS SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT--IS CONTINUING TO LAUNCH ENCROACHMENT OPERATIONS AGAINST THE AREAS LIBERATED BY THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM, AS WELL AS POLICE AND "PACIFICATION" OPERATIONS.

IN THE AREAS UNDER ITS CONTROL, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS REMAIN CHAINED IN THE PRISONS AND DETENTION CAMPS OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION.

THE DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS OF THE SOUTH VIETNAM CONTINUE TO BE TRAMPLED BY THAT ADMINISTRATION. THE BIPARTITE CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE OF LA-CELLE-SAINT-CLOUD IS MAKING NO PROGRESS TOWARD THE SETTLEMENT OF THE DOMESTIC ISSUES OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

THE MAIN FACTOR GIVING RISE TO THIS SERIOUS SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM IS WASHINGTON'S OBSTINATE POLICY. BY USING THE NGUYEN VAN THIEU ADMINISTRATION AS AN INTERMEDIARY, WASHINGTON IS AIMING AT IMPOSING U.S. NEO-COLONIALISM ON SOUTH VIETNAM AS A WHOLE AND AT MAKING IT A SEPARATE "NATION"--THUS PERPETUATING THE DIVISION OF VIETNAM.

HOWEVER, THE RESULTS OF A YEAR'S APPLICATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT HAVE PROVEN THE IRREVERSIBLE EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN FORCED TO WITHDRAW ITS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, PUTTING AN END TO OVER A CENTURY OF FOREIGN MILITARY OCCUPATION OF THE TERRITORY OF OUR FATHERLAND. AND IN THE SECOND PLACE, THE SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION HAVE ENCOUNTERED THE ENERGETIC OPPOSITION OF THE LIBERATION ARMED FORCES AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE POPULATION.

IN SPITE OF ALL THEIR EFFORTS, THEY HAVE NOT MANAGED TO TURN THE DE FACTO SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM IN THEIR FAVOUR. IN THAT AREA THERE ARE TWO GOVERNMENTS, TWO ARMIES, TWO DIFFERENT CONTROL ZONES, AND THREE POLITICAL FORCES. WHILE THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION'S POSITIONS ARE BEING WEAKENED AT EVERY LEVEL, THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE OF THE PRG (PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT) ARE CONTINUOUSLY GROWING.

THE PARIS AGREEMENT IS STILL A VERY VALUABLE POLITICAL AND LEGAL WEAPON IN THE HANDS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AS IT STRUGGLES FOR THE FULL AND COMPLETE ATTAINMENT OF ITS NATIONAL RIGHTS.

QUESTION FOUR: PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU, HEAD OF THE SAIGON LEADERSHIP, DECLARED RECENTLY THAT THERE WOULD BE NEITHER ELECTIONS NOR A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM, AND THAT "THE WAR WOULD CONTINUE." HE ALSO ISSUED AN ORDER OF THE DAY INSTRUCTING HIS TROOPS TO GO INTO ACTION IN THE AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE COMMUNISTS. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, DO YOU STILL HOPE THAT THE PARIS AGREEMENT WILL BE APPLIED SOME DAY?

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XXX APPLIED SOME DAY?

(TEXT) QUESTION FIVE: AMERICAN DEFENCE SECRETARY JAMES SCHLESINGER RECENTLY THREATENED NORTH VIETNAM AND THE PRG-CONTROLLED ZONES WITH TACTICAL AIR RAIDS IN CASE OF A GENERAL OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE SOUTH SUCH AS THOSE OF 1968 AND 1972. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SUCH AN OFFENSIVE IS BEING PLANNED?

REPLY:

NGUYEN VAN THIEU'S HYSTERICAL CALLS FOR A WAR TO SABOTAGE THE PARIS AGREEMENT AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN THREATS MADE IN SUPPORT OF THESE CALLS CERTAINLY CONSTITUTE A CYNICAL DEFIANCE OF VIETNAMESE AND WORLD OPINION.

THE SLANDEROUS ALLEGATIONS THEY MAKE TO JUSTIFY THEIR WARMONGERING HYSTERIA ARE SIMPLY INTENDED TO MISLEAD PUBLIC OPINION, AND TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR NEW ADVENTURES AND FOR MORE SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIETNAM. THE RECENT VIOLENT BOMBARDMENTS OF THE LIBERATED ZONES OF THE PRG, THE LARGE-SCALE ENCROACHMENT OPERATIONS ON THE HIGH PLATEAUS AND ON THE MEKONG PLAIN, AND THE FREQUENT VIOLATIONS OF THE AIR SPACE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM GIVE YOU SOME IDEA OF WHAT IS NOW AFOOT.

ALL THESE ACTS OF WAR HAVE MET WITH, AND WILL MEET WITH, SEVERE PUNISHMENT. THE UNITED STATES AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION ARE ENTIRELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS.

QUESTION SIX: SOMEONE ONCE SAID, "SOCIALISM IS A MATTER OF PRIORITIES." IN THIS CASE, WHAT IS THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM'S PRIORITY? MANY PEOPLE ARE ASKING THEMSELVES, IN SIMPLE TERMS: "IS IT PEACE OR IS IT WAR?" WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON THIS POINT?

REPLY:

DURING THE PRESENT PHASE, FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT, THE ESSENTIAL TASKS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE CONSIST OF SAFEGUARDING PEACE, MAKING IT STABLE AND LASTING, BINDING UP THE WOUNDS OF WAR AND BUILDING SOCIALISM IN THE NORTH, COMPLETING THE NATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC TASKS IN THE SOUTH, AND MOVING TOWARD PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY. THESE TASKS BEAR A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER.

OBVIOUSLY GREAT VIGILANCE IS NECESSARY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM TO FACE THE SERIOUS SITUATION DESCRIBED IN MY PREVIOUS REPLY, TO CHECK ANY ATTEMPT TO SABOTAGE THE PARIS AGREEMENT, AND THUS TO SAFEGUARD THE FRUITS OF THE PEACEFUL LABOUR OF OUR PEOPLE.

QUESTION SEVEN: BESIDES THE EVENTS TAKING PLACE IN VIETNAM, THE WAR IS CONTINUING IN CAMBODIA, AND MOREOVER THE SITUATION IN LAOS REMAINS RELATIVELY UNCERTAIN. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO REACH A STRICTLY VIETNAMESE SETTLEMENT? RATHER, IS IT NOT NECESSARY TO REACH A GENERAL SETTLEMENT ON ALL INDOCHINA, OR PERHAPS EVEN ON THE WHOLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA?

REPLY:

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE PROBLEMS HAS ALREADY BEEN EFFECTIVELY LAID DOWN IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT AND ITS PROTOCOL HAVE DONE THE SAME FOR THE LAOTIAN PROBLEM. THE CAMBODIAN PROBLEM MUST BE SETTLED BY THE CAMBODIANS THEMSELVES WITHOUT FOREIGN INTERFERENCE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MARCH 23, 1970, DECLARATION OF PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK AND THE POLITICAL PROGRAMME OF THE NUFC (CAMBODIAN NATIONAL UNITED FRONT).

THE FAILURE OF THE UNITED STATES TO CARRY OUT THE PARIS AND VIENTIANE AGREEMENTS AND THE U.S. LACK OF GOOD FAITH IN FAILING TO PUT AN END TO THIS SITUATION BY RENOUNCING ITS NEO-COLONIALIST AIMS IN VIETNAM, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA ARE AN OBSTACLE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF TRUE PEACE IN THE THREE COUNTRIES OF INDOCHINA ON THE BASIS OF RESPECT FOR THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLES OF THOSE NATIONS.

QUESTION EIGHT: ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS THE HANOI NEWSPAPERS HAVE REPORTED ON THE "SINO-SOVIET CONTRADICTION"--EXPLAINING THAT THIS CONTRADICTION WAS EXPLOITED TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE EXTENT BY "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND THE SAIGONESE." WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE USE OF THIS CONTRADICTION AS FAR AS THE APPLICATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIETNAM IS CONCERNED?

REPLY:

AS FAR AS THE APPLICATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT IS CONCERNED, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM HAVE ALWAYS ADVOCATED STRICT RESPECT FOR AND SCRUPULOUS EXECUTION OF THIS AGREEMENT--AND THEY DEMAND OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION THAT THEY DO LIKEWISE.

THE SOVIET UNION, PEOPLE'S CHINA, AND ALL OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES HAVE ALWAYS GIVE THEIR FIRM AND TOTAL SUPPORT TO THIS JUST POSITION OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE.

QUESTION NINE: IT SEEMS THAT THE NEW RELATIONS AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAVE NOT YET REACHED THE DEGREE OF DYNAMISM THAT SOME PEOPLE MIGHT HAVE HOPED FOR--AT LEAST PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF THE FRENCH DECISION NOT TO GRANT DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION TO THE PRG.

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