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THE SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA

QUESTION OF PEACE, STABILITY AND CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Letter dated 29 July 1982 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i., of
the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith the report by the Viet Nam News Agency dated 22 July 1982 on the result of the visit made by our Foreign Minister, Mr. Nguyen Co Thach, to the Republic of Singapore from 18 to 20 July 1982, and request Your Excellency kindly to have this note and its enclosure circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 20 and 35 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) NGUYEN NGOC DUNG
Ambassador,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent
Mission of the Socialist Republic of
Viet Nam to the United Nations

* A/37/150

ANNEX

FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN CO THACH ON THE RESULT OF HIS
VISIT TO SINGAPORE.

HANOI VNA JULY 22 -- Nguyen Co Thach, Foreign Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, has given the following interview to Viet Nam News Agency on the result of his visit to the Republic of Singapore from July 18 to July 20, 1982.

Question 1 :

Would you please tell us about the result of your visit to Singapore ?

Answer :

I had talks with Deputy Prime Minister Rajaratnam and Foreign Minister Dhanabalan. The two sides agreed that it is of common interest to build South-east Asia into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation. The two sides, however differ as to the cause of tension in the region, and in the way to solve it. Each side retains its viewpoint. Nevertheless, the two sides held that their exchange of views was frank and useful, they have better understood each other's position and agreed to continue the dialogue, and Foreign Minister Dhanabalan has accepted my invitation to visit Viet Nam.

Question 2 :

The Singapore press has spoken about a "Vietnamese threat to ASEAN countries", what is the truth about it ?

Answer :

They said that the possibility of China and Viet Nam normalizing their relations is aimed at threatening ASEAN, they also said that Viet Nam threatens to take retaliatory action against the ASEAN states.

This is a complete distortion. In our talks Singapore demanded that the "Kampuchea problem" be settled first, that is to say all Vietnamese forces must be withdrawn from Kampuchea according to the U.N. Resolution, it also said that after the Kampuchea problem is solved, ASEAN would cooperate with Indochina to contain China. I made it clear that Viet Nam will repatriate all its troops from Kampuchea as soon as China stops its threat. I also told them that we want friendship and cooperation with them, that we respect the solidarity of the ASEAN countries and hope that they also respect the solidarity of the Indochinese countries.

Their concern is to get Vietnamese forces out of Kampuchea. The concern of the Indochinese countries is to end China's threat. We pay attention to their concern, so they must also take our concern into consideration. I have told them that the situation might evolve according to the following five possibilities :

- 1/ China in collusion with the United States and the ASEAN countries continues opposing the Indochinese countries, and ASEAN carries on its present policy of confrontation with the Indochinese countries ;
- 2/ The Indochinese and ASEAN countries and China improve their relations ;
- 3/ China in collusion with the United States and ASEAN launches a large-scale war against the three Indochinese countries;
- 4/ The ASEAN and Indochinese countries improve their relations while China continues opposing the Indochinese countries and;
- 5/ China and the Indochinese countries improve their relations while ASEAN continues its hostile policy towards Indochina.

I made it clear that we strive for the second possibility and try to make the most of the positive aspect and limit the negative aspect of the fourth and fifth possibilities, but at the same time are determined to cope with the worst. The Singaporean press has distorted my words saying that the mention of the fifth possibility is a threat against them. As a matter of fact, this is nothing new. We have repeatedly and openly spoken of the three first possibilities, namely while resisting China's multi-faceted sabotage war, we have always struggled for the restoration of peace and stability in Southeast Asia and at the same time are prepared to cope with a possible large-scale aggressive war by China. The fourth and fifth possibilities derive from the proposals of the successive conferences of the three Indochinese Foreign Ministers. Since early last year, we have proposed that the Indochinese and ASEAN countries hold a regional conference to solve questions relating to peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

We have also proposed that China and the Indochinese countries sign treaties of non-aggression and non-intervention in each other's internal affairs. ASEAN's response will lead to possibility 4, and China's response will lead to possibility 5. Over the past few years we have done all we could to negotiate a ceasefire and normalise the relations between the two sides, this is our policy, and not intimidation. Consideration of the various possibilities and eventualities give us more choices in coping with all eventualities. Only too "sensitive" people could interpret this as a threat on our part.

I have also told the Singaporean side that the ASEAN countries' and China's hostile actions against the Indochinese countries, their support to the Pol Pot clique, and their rigging up of a so-called

"Coalition government" of the Khmer reactionaries against the Kampuchean people will provide a dangerous precedent for countries to interfere in others' internal affairs.

During the past three years, Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea have repeatedly warned Thailand and the other ASEAN countries that having taken part in the U.S. war of aggression against the three Indochinese countries, they should now discontinue their hostile actions against the Indochinese countries and their intervention in the internal affairs of Kampuchea and the Indochinese countries in general. We have the right to take self-defence measures against their actions. However, during the past three years, we have not yet made use of this right, and in the future, we do not want to use this right either, but, if they continue their hostile actions and continue to interfere in the internal affairs of the Indochinese countries, then we will be compelled to reconsider our attitude towards them.

Question 3 :

Would you comment on the claim of Singapore and some other ASEAN countries that Viet Nam has broken Premier Pham Van Dong's promise in 1978 not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and that because Viet Nam has lost its credit, it should restore it among the ASEAN ?

Answer :

During his visit to Southeast Asian countries in 1978, Premier Pham Van Dong declared Viet Nam's policy of respecting the independence and sovereignty of other countries and not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. That is our consistent policy. Only the ASEAN countries have forgotten that no country has committed itself not to fight back if invaded. The Vietnamese armed forces exercised their right to self-defence when they hit back at the Pol Pot forces just as the Soviet Union, the United States and France had exercised this right when they fought against the German fascists and brought their forces up to Berlin.

As for the question of credit, it is the ASEAN countries and not Viet Nam which have to restore it because for several decades in the past, ASEAN countries took part in the U.S. war of aggression against the Indochinese countries and now they are colluding with China to oppose the Indochinese countries. So far Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea have done nothing that can be construed as an hostile act against ASEAN.

Our policy is to stand ready to cooperate with the ASEAN countries in order to make the Southeast Asia a region of peace, stability and cooperation. If this desire cannot be promptly realized, it is necessary to move step by step. If differences cannot be levelled overnight, we should leave them aside for the moment and should not let them hinder our efforts toward stronger bilateral ties in other fields.
