

MAJOR POLICY SPEECHES

BY PRESIDENT

NGÔ DINH DIÊM





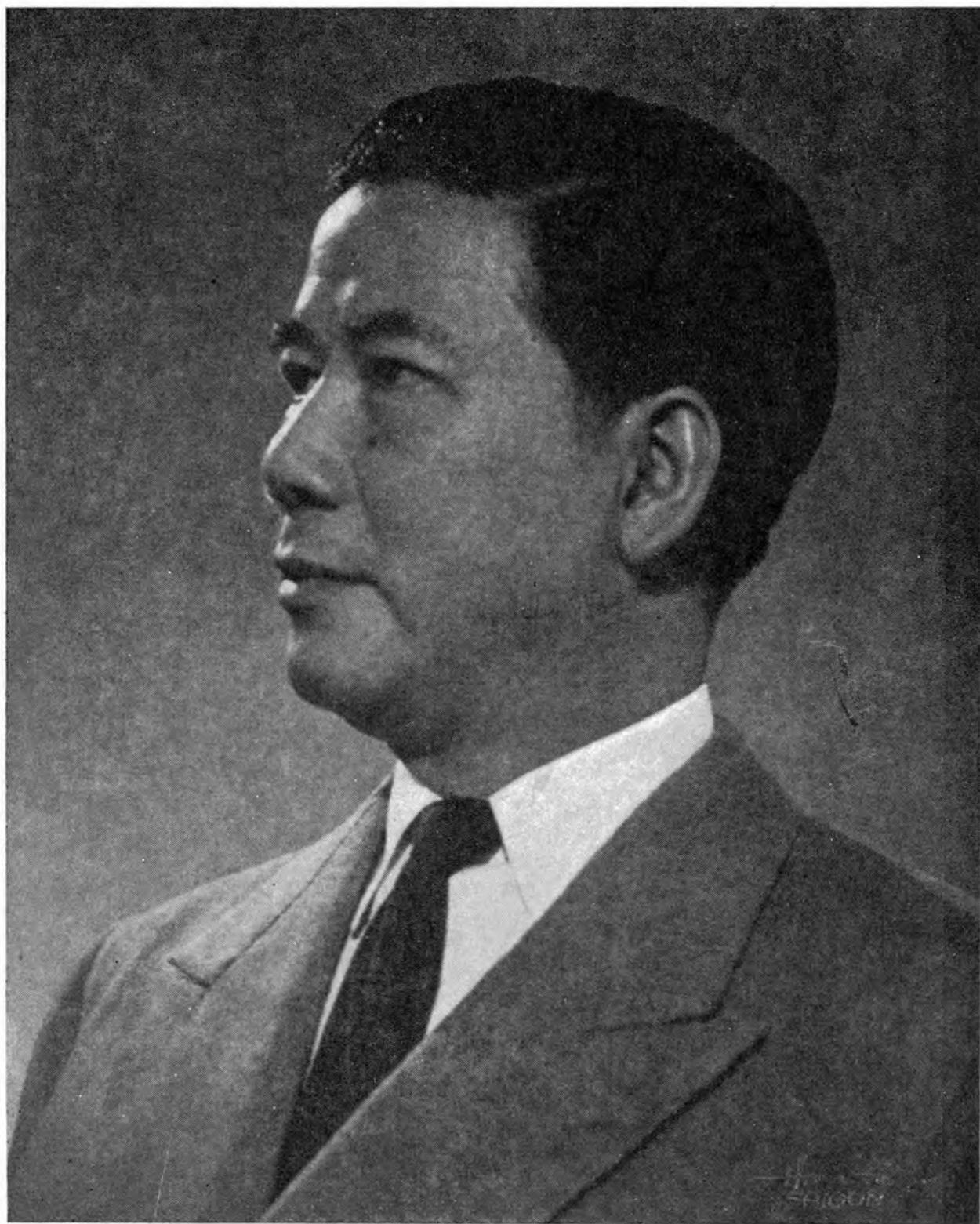


Photo HADI

**Mr. NGO DINH DIEM**  
*President of the Republic of Viet Nam*

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**MAJOR POLICY SPEECHES**  
**BY PRESIDENT**  
**NGO DINH DIEM**

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*The Cover* : Independence Palace — Saigon (Photo HADI)

**STATEMENT OF JUNE 18, 1954**

**(Paris)**

Several times in the past I have had to refuse to take office, in spite of the friendly urging of His Majesty Bao-Dai.

This time I accept. This is the hour of decision. I face a grave military situation which is in urgent need of correction. It is the logical result of a long series of misunderstandings and errors. A fruitful and durable peace, founded upon the independence of the nation and the liberty of the people, poses a crucial problem. Only a new political orientation can solve it, while continuation of the errors of the past will lead to a dead end and probably to an extension of the war, this war which has done us so much harm. Only the prospect of such military and political corrections can give impetus to the Geneva negotiations and reaffirm the opportunity for peace they represent.

The unwillingness to compromise which made me refuse office did not signify willful ignorance of unpleasant realities nor deliberate hostility toward the legitimate interests of a friendly country.

It stemmed from a sincere conviction, shared by the people, that as long as national ideals cannot be immediately and faithfully followed, all efforts exerted will, rather than profit the people, only deceive, divide and demoralize them and will render impossible the solution of a problem already difficult.

With regard to France, the feeling of our people was expressed on August 20, 1945, by His Majesty Bao-Dai in his message to the people of France : The Vietnamese people passionately desire their independence and France will be able to safeguard her interests in Viet-Nam only if she will remain there as a privileged friend.

No one thought it necessary to pay attention to this wise warning. Military reverses, in spite of the valor and the heavy sacrifices of the fighting forces and of the people ; France's lone effort in the battle which was, however, for a common cause ; the lukewarm attitude of the Vietnamese people in a struggle which should have been their own ; the hostile neutrality of asiatic nations strategically and morally bound to Viet-Nam ; the relative ineffectiveness of American aid, though still important — all of these things which have momentarily overcome us, which could cost Viet-Nam her liberty, France her

rank as a world power, the free world the key to Southeast Asia, have been caused only by persistence in turning aside or even defying the intangible reality that embodies the **will** of a people for independence.

The people of France have been sorely tried by recent military difficulties. Just as cruelly, the late diplomatic developments at Geneva have shown the Vietnamese people the willingness of false patriots to divide the country, to subordinate it to foreign interests and the danger of false remedies.

Now that the people have no illusions and that the masks have been removed, a radical change in policy has finally become possible.

Nothing is lost yet, because the gravity of the situation itself must bring about a lucid revision of a fatal policy. I believe in my people. I believe in their unsurmountable revulsion towards lies and oppression inherent in dictatorial regimes. I believe in their profound love of truth and liberty.

The Vietnamese people, long deceived, are seeking a new path which will lead to their ardently desired ideals. I am firmly determined to lead the way to this path, overcoming any and all obstacles.

France, which has just initialled the recent treaties of independence and association, will not stint in giving effective aid. This aid alone can make real both the true sovereignty of Viet-Nam and the territorial integrity whose mutual preservation constitutes the justification of the French Union.

I will not go forward alone on the path of a just and noble cause. With the peoples of France and Viet-Nam and of other free countries, we will close ranks. Together we will win the only desirable kind of Peace, a peace of free and proud men.



**MESSAGE TO VIETNAM'S FRIENDS IN THE FREE WORLD  
FOLLOWING THE VICTORY OVER THE BINH XUYEN**

**(May 1955)**

If the policy pursued and the war waged in this country during the last ten years have retained your attention, the events of the last few days have, I think, done so still more. Various views have been held in the United States, France and other countries. I think it is my duty, as head of the Government, but especially as a Vietnamese, to acquaint you with the real facts in which thousands of my compatriots have struggled in order to defend what you yourselves defend at home: Independence, Liberty, Democracy.

I shall not go back to the facts antedating the Geneva Accords.

The States which have signed these accords know very well what the latter represent: not a solution, but, to some, a bitter punishment, to others, a provisional recognition, punishment and recognition behind which it would be difficult to find anything that would satisfy the aspirations of the Vietnamese people.

When I had to assume office, ten months ago, the legal authority of my country still had no control over the command of its army. The Chief-of-Staff of that army was an officer of the French Army.

And to this army had been welded armed bands — called sects — some of which, from the day they had « rallied », had no other concern than that of setting themselves up as feudal powers.

Our security services had been placed in the hands of an armed band which had the monopoly of the most gigantic gambling and prostitution organizations of Asia.

This state of affairs was known to eminent men from Europe and America, and they have said so.

It was obviously not under such conditions that a Government responsible for the fate of millions of non-communist Vietnamese was going to face Communism.

Such was not either what hundreds of thousands of refugees, whom you have aided, have abandoned North Viet-Nam for.

Such was not the independence which the Vietnamese desired.

There can be no independence in shame. For over nine months, I have endeavoured to convince the opponents of my Government of the necessity for Viet-Nam to achieve the unity of its army, administration and policy.

The only nationalism which could and can be conceived for a Viet-Nam expected by the world not to bow to communism, demands the end of all trace of the colonial regime, but also of feudalism, injustice and conception.

And such nationalism would be without soul if it was condemned never to achieve its flowering in democracy.

Several military Chiefs like General Trinh Minh The, General Le Van Ty, General Nguyen Thanh Phuong, General Nguyen Giac Ngo are in accord with me. But such is not the case with the Binh-Xuyen leaders who utilized the funds of the security services to organise commandos inside our very capital. During the same time, with the scandalous resources at their disposal, they have acquired considerable properties : rubber-plantations, transport and hotel businesses, big stores, opium traffic, smuggling, control of the fish and charcoal trade... nothing escaped their greed.

My Government was faced with this alternative, and any other Government would have had to solve the same problem :

— Either to retreat from one concession to another, which represented what a common euphemism would call the solution of compromise, and which would have been, considering the demands of the Binh Xuyen, that of abdication ;

— Or to defend the essential, that is the unity of the national institutions of Viet-Nam without which there would be no democracy, but simply disorder and so, until the final disintegration.

What made the difficulties greater was that, under the terms of Conventions signed by the French High Command with the sects, it had been stipulated that these would be disbanded as soon as their existence was no longer necessary.

It had been further stipulated, that the French High Command would have the control of the arms detained by the sects or lent to them.

Yet since 1954, and in spite of the cessation of hostilities in Indochina, the sects have not been disbanded.

I have been reproached for having failed in the mission entrusted to me, but which I also claim as mine, that of achieving national unity.

But then I will ask a question.

If, in 1944, General De Gaulle had in front of him and in liberated Paris an armed band similar to the Binh Xuyen, which would have



maintained commandos with funds drawn from a gambling lease or opium traffic, and which would have resorted to threats of civil war to preserve their feudal privileges, what policy that general, who had fought so hard for France, would have adopted to achieve French national union ?

Yet the solutions which I had proposed had nothing unacceptable since a general, Trinh Minh The, had integrated his troops in the national Army, and found death in fighting the Binh Xuyen, in his capacity of general of the Vietnamese Army.

Peace ceased to prevail in Saigon only from the moment the Binh Xuyen had mortarshelled the Government Palace located in the heart of the town itself.

The Vietnamese army reacted in the manner you know.

To day, peace has returned to Saigon. I am glad for my compatriots, but also for the foreign, especially the French residents.

The Vietnamese population has expressed in various demonstrations what it disapproved of and what it wished for.

Its choice is seemingly undisputable. It has solemnly condemned all that was contrary to national independence and freedom.

It will determine its destiny by democratic means, principally by elections which must be prepared for at once.

Henceforth, the politicians of my country will know that one can no longer govern by allying oneself with reactionary forces, under one cover or another.

The Vietnamese people no longer accepts to be deceived.

The example of neighbouring states of South East Asia is there to be observed.

It is not a constructive criticism to claim gratuitously that my policy throws the doors wide open to the Communists.

Friends of the Free World.

If I have addressed this message to you, it is not in order to defend a policy. My purpose is to tell you that, in this corner of Asia, which has only suffered too much, there are people who, like you, have a passion for freedom, and who, whether they are understood or not, will defend it to the end.

The independence of Viet-Nam has been often invoked as a reason for neutrality by some nations of the Free World in regard to our internal affairs.

On the military plane, we wish so.

But whether we like it or not, the future of us all is at stake here.

In the perspective of that freedom which is the reason and the honour of our civilisation, the neutrality which covers indifference or hostility in the presence of the progress resolutely achieved by a brother-people on the road of nationalism, freedom, and democracy, is an abdication.

**That**, in the name of the Vietnamese who ardently believe in the same ideals, I wanted to say.

You may rest assured. However passionate my compatriots may be of independence, freedom and democracy, they are not xenophobes in the least, and are grateful for real friendships.

## REOPENING OF THE DONG CAM DAM

(Tuy-Hoa, September 17, 1955)

Dear compatriots,

Last month, in the course of various trips made to Da Nang, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and Thua Thien..., I have emphasized the efforts that you have unceasingly made in the work of national reconstruction.

Today, another opportunity is once again offered to me to verify the results of these efforts. The Dong Cam Dam which has just been inaugurated, constitutes in effect a magnificent work, since it has been accomplished in record time. In spite of difficulties, we have been able to achieve these results, thanks to the spirit of struggle of the entire population, from supervisors to workers. 23,000 mau (1 mau = 1/3 hectare) of rice land will be made arable, which will bring to the three hundred thousand farmers of Phu Yen, condition of life much better than before. For the government, this is only the first step on the way of national economic reconstruction ; the way is still long and new efforts are indispensable.

I would like to take this opportunity to present to you essential points of the government's economic program. I know that this problem is of concern to industrial, agricultural and commercial classes. Yesterday, an « economic conference » gathered in Nha Trang many representatives of these groups in order to study measures which can better our national economy.

I hope that the program that I am going to present to you, will bring you the desired clarifications on this subject.

Dear compatriots,

You certainly know the tragic situation of our country after ten years of war. During this period, the Viet-Cong blindly pursued a policy of general impoverishment and destruction. Because of that, our economy is almost totally paralysed.

The annual production, compared to that of the pre-war period, shows a decrease of 50 %. Nearly half of the formerly cultivated area is now abandoned.



The figure of beasts of burden has been reduced by 50,000. Much damage has been caused to farm implements. Everywhere irrigation works have deteriorated.

Many rice mills have been dismantled and transported abroad.

All these things have greatly weakened our agricultural activity.

Industrial plants established outside of big centers of population were equally destroyed. Handicraft is now only a secondary branch of activity, due to the damages caused to implements of manufacture and to invasion of foreign goods on local markets.

Besides, due to the war, numerous communication lines have been cut.

As to means of river transportation, only approximately 20 % is left, compared to that of the pre-war period.

But the biggest danger resides in the upset of our economic organization, due to these events. These last years, for reason of security, a great number of inhabitants have taken refuge in urban areas. To earn their living, they practice trading — they buy in order to sell : all goods before reaching the hands of consumer, thus pass through many intermediaries ; the cost of living becomes consequently very high and the workers suffer the worst consequences.

Today, the war has come to an end, but we have to face numerous difficulties. The exodus of one million of our compatriots from the North, forced to leave everything to take refuge and to rebuild their life in the South, often empty-handed, as well as the resettlement of these refugees cause the government the most difficult problems.

Moreover, certain commercial and industrial activities born of the war, disappear after the re-establishment of peace and the repatriation of the French expeditionary corps, thus plunging many people into unemployment.

My dear compatriots,

I have just presented to you the difficulties we have to face in the economic field.

However, we must not worry, because many favorable factors will help us surmount these difficulties.

First the consolidation of the national authority all over the territory of Free Viet-Nam. The suppression of the rebels assures the execution of the orders of the Central Government all over the territory, thus there are no more obstacles separating the Government from the people. That is the essential condition for the implementation of economic plans in the present as well as in the future.

Another factor allows us to be yet more optimistic : that is the revolutionary spirit which you have shown so brightly these last months and which has cleared us of the last vestiges of feudality as well as the out-of-date processes of work. I am persuaded that with this revolutionary spirit, the rehabilitation of the national economy can be achieved in the shortest time.

Finally it is proper to mention a third factor which is so precious to us at the present time : the generous aid of friendly democracies, thanks to which we have been able to avoid a monetary crisis, to import indispensable goods although our export is weak, and to balance our national budget, in spite of enormous expenses occasioned by the refugees' resettlement.

With these factors I have mentioned, it is with much confidence that I present to you the economic program that we are going to put into effect beginning this year.

This program is aimed at two principal objectives :

1) The first is the achievement of complete economic independence for the country.

2) The second consists in renewing the national economy in order to raise the standard of living of the population.

#### **A. — Why must we perfect our economic independence ?**

Our national economy has always been essentially agricultural. Other branches of this economy, such as industry, commerce, transportation, insurance are in the hands of foreigners. It is evident that agriculture must be the basis of our economy, but the Vietnamese farmer will remain a victim of exploitation until we succeed in recovering our sovereignty in all vital branches of activity.

Statisticians have established that, before the war, only 12 % of the total value of exported rice and paddy, went to the farmers. The remaining 88 % represents the salaries and benefits of banks, insurance companies, importers, exporters, transporters, owners of rice-mills... which is to say that the majority of agricultural revenue serves to provide the support of foreign intermediaries. It is evident that these foreign intermediaries transfer these revenues to their countries, which causes the poverty of our peasants in spite of their labor.

This situation is not only unfair but it also presents big dangers for the future. Only Vietnamese people are bound to Viet-Nam's fate, while foreign enterprises established in this country are aimed at nothing but a selfish objective. When everything is well, they carry on their activities with pleasure ; in difficult circumstances, they seek refuge elsewhere. If this is to happen, our economy will be paralysed,

because we cannot immediately replace them. Thus, to complete our independence, we must take resolutely in our hands the keys of our own economy.

On this point, I would like to insist on the extremely important role of Vietnamese industrialists and businessmen.

Until now, because of the political situation of the country, these industrialists and businessmen can only fulfill secondary roles, those of intermediaries giving useful services to foreign companies.

This situation has totally changed. Vietnamese businessmen and industrialists from now on can rely on the unstinting support of the National Government, that I am heading, to develop their activities.

A very large credit policy will be implemented in order to give loans to those who need them for the development of their enterprises. The government has already created an investment fund to help industrialists with loans to increase their output. At the same time, the National Bank is now organizing a « business » department, which has the purpose of aiding businessmen in the import-export fields.

Many people think that our industrialists and businessmen do not have enough experience to replace foreigners in technical activities such as banking, insurance, marine transport, external commerce... such is not my point of view. I have the conviction that our compatriots have all the capabilities which up to now have not yet been fully expanded, this is due to the absence of a logical industrial and commercial organization as well as the lack of direction on the part of public authorities.

To organize our industrialists and businessmen into a fighting economic force, the government has organized an entirely Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce where businessmen will have the opportunity to meet one another and to achieve among them a fruitful collaboration. The economic conference held yesterday in Nha Trang constitutes a step towards the convening of an Economic Council of Viet-Nam. When all the branches of economic activity are organized and oriented according to a general plan, our economic sovereignty will be assured.

I affirm that the Government has no xenophobic feelings. We are ready to welcome all foreigners desiring to invest their capital in Viet-Nam. Their enterprises will be fully protected. They will not have to fear either a sudden nationalization of their enterprises, — as it has happened in some countries — or a regime of exorbitant taxes, or difficulties in the transfer of their annual profits. On this point, the government will strive to satisfy them according to its reserves in foreign currencies.



It is understood that these foreign establishments must work within the framework of laws and regulations in force in Viet-Nam, from both the security and social viewpoint. I would like to make allusion here to activities of concern to public security or to essential conditions of the population. I cite the example of industries concerned with supply, the equipment of the army, and the means of basic transport. Outside of these restricted fields, foreigners will be free to invest their capital in various enterprises, with the condition that they will not form a monopoly. It is only these virtual monopolies born of the colonial regime which Viet-Nam is forced to fight against.

**B. — To perfect our independence is not sufficient, we must also modernize our economic system.**

This is the essential condition to raise the standard of living of the people.

We must recognize that several economic activities of ours are merely routine. In the rapidly evolving world as that of today, if we persist in using out-of-date methods, our people will never be able to enjoy a happy life.

1) Let us take the example of agriculture. Most of our farmers still use the agricultural methods of a thousand years ago. This is why our productivity is very low and our exported rice cannot compete in the international market. Why don't we use machine to lessen the work of our farmers? A mechanical plough or harrow, a pump, a rice mill, a truck... are not luxuries but implements necessary to the work of farmers. Let us not hesitate to abandon archaic tools for modern machines. Some people will contend that our peasants are poor and don't have enough ricefield to justify the use of machines. If they unite in cooperatives, large areas will not be lacking and if they need money, the agricultural banks will be there to help them.

For individual farmers, the grant of loans can present some difficulties because of insufficiency of collateral, but this problem is overcome through cooperatives.

Outside of the mechanization of agriculture, farmers should also interest themselves in new progress of science. The Ministry of Agriculture is ready to guide them in the choice of seeds, fertilizers and varieties of crops seeds capable of giving the best results.

I would like the Vietnamese farmers to realize the present situation of the international rice market. For 15 years, Vietnam's exports have decreased much because of the very low agricultural productivity, while other countries have bettered their production and have superseded us in the international market. Because of that, now even if our production is bettered, it would be difficult to find markets.

Let the farmers prepare from today to face this eventuality, and no longer to concentrate their efforts on growing rice. That is the only way which would help us avoid the crisis.

2) In the field of commerce, the majority of our businessmen are only retailers, having the mere role of intermediaries between wholesalers and consumers. During the war, some big businessmen have appeared but very often for many of them, commerce is only a matter of speculation, or else a kind of gambling.

They only sought big profits, even against regulations. Regrettable abuses were thus committed and our businessmen have not been able in the long run to compete with foreign establishments.

Nowadays, the modernization of our processes of commerce is necessary. Serious businessmen will be supported by the government, while speculators and useless intermediaries will be gradually eliminated.

Primordial conditions of success in commerce are a good organization and a perfect knowledge of the market. A family-scaled commerce could not of course compete with organized companies with numerous branches and representative firms. Thus I would like to advise the businessmen to unite in powerful establishments instead of remaining isolated as in present times.

3) Finally I would like to emphasize a fundamental point of the economic program of the government : the industrialization of the country.

The past years' experience proves that if we entirely rely upon imports, the standard of living of our fellow countrymen will never be bettered. Imported goods, especially manufactured goods, before coming to the hands of consumers, are subject to so many additional expenses (transport, insurance, profits of intermediaries, customs duty...) that the price becomes much too high and therefore practically inaccessible to the mass. One admires the high standard of living of the American worker : every family has its house, its refrigerator, its washing machine, its television set, its car... all these thanks to the industrial power of the United States which produce all that their inhabitants need. The example of this great country shows that the betterment of the standard of living of our compatriots depends upon the industrialization of our country.

When I speak of industrialization, don't think, dear compatriots, that our country must have today big industries, as in the case of evolved powers. It is not necessarily so. Let us be realistic and let us not forget that industries established in our country are mostly destined to interior markets. Let us not, for the time being, think of exports, and let us seek first to manufacture products for the local consumption. The interior market sale being not very important, let

us only set light industries, for example rice mills, spinning mills, weaving mills, paper-mills, brick-fields..., in a word, all the industries in which market sale does not lack. Our purpose is to work in a way so that in near future, there will not be in the country dirty slums and badly fed and clothed people and so that our compatriots can enjoy facilities of modern life: running water, electricity supply, clothes, books and newspapers.

To achieve this objective, many industries are to be set up and large quantities of products are to be manufactured.

It is understood that outside this light industry, we will not neglect some big enterprises capable of transforming the economic potential of our country. I would like to talk of big hydro electric works, such as the Danhim dam in the P.M.S., which, once completed, will supply South Viet-Nam with power at very low prices. Thanks to it, other chemical industries can function: factories of fertilizers, sulfates, plastic products, aluminium. I have not yet mentioned all those factories working with some simple electric motors but capable, with a very small capital, of providing decent support to a whole family of craftsmen.

I take this opportunity to remind you all the solicitude of the public authorities towards craftsmen. The government will seek all means to guide you and to help you economically and technically. But I also allow myself to give you a friendly advice: Have the sense of progress, show your initiative, don't be the slaves of out-of-date processes. Modernize your means of production. Take an example on Japanese craftsmen, who always strive to better their production.

My dear compatriots,

I have just presented to you the principal points of the economic program of the government. Many will wonder: what is the doctrine of the government? Does it want a directed economy, or on the contrary, will it let free private initiative? Is this economy capitalist or socialist?

In present conjunctures, such preoccupations seem to me purely theoretical and do not bring any contribution to the forward march of our country. Actually, the government headed by me, only aims at one objective: the independence of the country and the happiness of the people. Which is good for the country which is profitable to the people, my government will do it with the entire people. On the contrary, which is prejudicial to the nation or which can harm the interests of her children, will be radically suppressed. Our country is at present devastated by war: the first duty of the government is to reconstruct, to rehabilitate ways of communication, dams, bridges, canals... There are now one million of our Northern brothers who have taken refuge in the South: the government has the duty to resettle them and to find work for them. Foreign enter-



prises are preparing to leave our country. It is also our duty to help Vietnamese enterprises replace them. If Vietnamese enterprises fail to do so, the government will have to take their place.

In short, the policy of the government is based upon present needs, it neglects theoretical speculations.

Feudal vestiges as well as those of the colonial period, remain numerous in our society. We must attain an effective economic democracy in which will be realized a harmonious and equal cooperation between capital and labor. The question here is of an equality not only juridical but one which should be applied in the daily life. Such democracy is only possible with the instauration of a system of social security, in which every citizen, during his lifetime and whatever class he may belong to will be assured of protection against cold starvation, unemployment, illness and old age. This social security depends upon our national revenue's attaining a high enough degree because as long as our country remains poor, even with the leveling of capital realized, the standard of living of the population will not be raised. Thus the government wants to raise the national revenue. At the same time, it promotes actively the agrarian reform for the safeguard of working-class interests. The government will equally better social legislation to protect workers against all forms of exploitation.

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My dear compatriots,

Before ending this speech, I would like to recall once more the profound meaning of our economic policy. We are now pursuing a gigantic fight to perfect the independence of our country and to assure the freedom of our people. Upon the issue of this fight, depend our life, our freedom, our happiness as well as those of our children. If the Viet-Minh win out in this contest, our beloved country will disappear and it will be only mentioned as a Southern province of Communist China. Moreover the Vietnamese people will eternally live under the yoke of a dictatorship, inspired by Moscow and denying religion, fatherland and family.

It is evident that the Communist Viêt-Minh will seek by every means to foster troubles in our ranks. Our eventual economic crisis will be at their advantage. Their secret objective is to create for us many obstacles in the economic field and to obstruct all the works of reconstruction performed by the National Government. The more unemployment expands, the more our enemies are pleased. But our enemies will not attain their aim. I am sure that my compatriots are clear-sighted and know where the way to freedom and happiness lies.

To the rebuilding of the Dong Cam Dam, each of you, dear compatriots, have brought your contribution. You have proved there that you have understood your duty as a citizen, which is to collaborate with the government in the national rehabilitation and in the betterment of the standard of living of the people. Besides, you have with your own hands, reconstructed schools for your children. You have set there a good example to those who only stay inactive and wait for the government to do everything.

Really, what is the government and what is the people ? The government and the people are the same. Their responsibilities are identical, their duties common.

No comparison can be made between the communist and the national regime. In a communist regime, leaders use lies to exploit the people. They would repeat thousands times to you that they work with scientific and rational methods, following the purest dialectical materialism. The fact that they oblige hundreds of thousands of our compatriots to dig a canal through the village of Hoa Dinh, wasting hundreds of hectares of riceland, without coming to any result, proves the inefficiency of their science. Ricefields in Hoa Dinh remain dry and unfertile as before. Such is the practical value of the dialectic of the communists. Besides, the communists have slogans of humanitarian color like « to serve the people », « for the rice and clothes owed to the people », but do you remember, brothers, of those thousands of our compatriots who are forced to work to death somewhere in the dark forest or at the bank of far away rivers, after being exploited by the communists like beasts of burden. Such is the humanitarian spirit of the Viet-Minh.

You will never forget, dear compatriots, the quantity of rice that you were obliged to pay in to the communists in Spring, in Summer, in Autumn. Then only remain for you, for your subsistence, tree barks and wild roots. The Khoai-Khai campaign, at Phu Yen as well as at Quang Nam, Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh, is there to prove the humanitarian feeling of the communists !

Before this evidence, I am convinced that hesitation is no longer permitted.

Tighten your rank behind the National Government in order to carry out our economic program immediatly.

We must win. We will win. Since the just cause is on our side.

## BROADCAST DECLARATION ON OCTOBER 22, 1955

Compatriots,

Tomorrow, October 23rd, for the first time in our history, men and women of Viet-Nam, you will exercise one of the fundamental rights of all democratic countries : the right to vote.

In compliance with the unanimous wish that you have clearly expressed, you are called upon to exercise your sovereignty by deciding whether or not you agree to withdraw legally the title of Chief of State from a man whose overthrow you have demanded.

For ten years, our revolution has gone forward under the most bitter suffering. If your vote prohibits any backward motion, a decisive step will be made on the road to order, freedom and dignity.

Twenty-two years ago, when I was in power, I insisted on the installation of an elected Assembly. Since men and circumstances opposed it, I handed in my resignation.

Thus, the advent of a democratic regime is not due solely to circumstances. It corresponds with an ideal for which I have never ceased to struggle.

The first act that you will perform as citizens of a free nation will open the way to other consultations on the political life of the country, especially to the holding of the coming general elections throughout Free Viet-Nam.

Dear Compatriots,

Together we have already overcome difficulties which were sometimes tragic.

Together, we will fight for the triumph of democratic ideals, against subjugation, direct or indirect, of totalitarian communism.

In all circumstances, I will continue to serve the country as in the past, with all my might. If, by approving the policy I have adopted since my return to Viet-Nam, you will entrust me with a new charge tomorrow, you will have voted for the building of a free and democratic Viet-Nam in which all of us will have equal rights in the handling of public affairs, social progress, and collective prosperity.

It depends only on you whether or not I will be put in a position to proclaim the Republic.

God bless Viet-Nam !



## PROCLAMATION OF THE REPUBLIC

(October 26, 1955)

Fellow Countrymen,

A year ago, with the anguish that was in our hearts, who among us could have foreseen that we would, in the not to distant future, finally extricate ourselves from an impossible and almost desperate situation ?

But in the darkest hours of our history, our people have always joined together and now, in a moment of supreme unity, we have broken the bands of iron and fire which encircled us, taking the path towards independence and liberty.

In the terrible battle which men and women, both military and civilian, have waged for more than a year against interior as well as exterior forces, this same unity of feeling has allowed us to liquidate an outdated regime. The focus of our national interest has been placed in the South, where hope for a better future for every human being was born. It is this new hope which drew a million refugees to us from the North, and their presence among us further reinforces our confidence in the righteousness of our cause.

Compatriots,

The October 23rd Plebiscite in which you took such an enthusiastic part constitutes an approval of the policies pursued thus far and at the same time augurs a whole new era for the future of our country.

The new responsibilities which you entrust to me today — to form a democracy in our beloved country — are heavy for my shoulders alone, however.

Democracy is not a group of texts and laws, to be read and applied. It is essentially a state of mind, a way of living with the utmost respect toward every human being, ourselves as well as our neighbors. It requires constant self-education, careful practice, flexible and patient attention, in order to achieve a harmonious balance between the desirable diverse conceptions of men and the inevitable complexity of reality. Democracy demands from each of us, then, infinitely more efforts, understanding and goodwill than any other form of government.

Confident in the unity which you proved during the difficult times we endured, confident in the moral strength of our people whose spirit has been enriched by elements from the oldest and most highly developed civilizations, I know that together we will be able to throw off all forms of oppression and to build the ideal political and economic state to which our people aspire with such fervor.

Compatriots,

It is in this spirit that the Constitution of our country will be written and the members of our National Assembly elected.

On the threshold of this new era which presages true democracy for Viet-Nam, let us ask for divine guidance for our country, and let us reverently remember all those who, long ago or only recently, made the supreme sacrifice in order that we might lead free and independent lives.

Let us express our gratitude towards those friendly countries which, even in the darkest hours of our struggle, had faith in us and in our eventual success.

United and determined, we shall see a unified, free and prosperous Viet-Nam emerge triumphantly.

With this conviction and following the desires you expressed by your vote of October 23, 1955, I solemnly proclaim that the State of Viet-Nam is a Republic.

Long live the Republic !

Long live the people of Viet-Nam !

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**MESSAGE TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(17 April, 1956)**

Mr. President,

Deputies,

By virtue of the mandate which the Nation vested in me by the referendum of October 23, 1955, and by the terms of the provisional Constitutional Act, I have the honour to transmit to the National Assembly my viewpoint on the constitutional problem.

Numerous constitutions have been drawn up and promulgated in the past with the intention of setting up Democracy. During the 18th and 19th centuries constitutions were drawn up which established political regimes, later known as political democracies, in which individualism and economic liberalism were advocated as proper formulas to emancipate man and to lead mankind toward happiness.

While this system in its application brought relative freedom to a minority of its citizens, at the same time it lessened the effectiveness of the state, which became impotent to defend collective interests and to solve social problems.

The events preceding the two world wars revealed these weaknesses more than ever before, and in certain States led to the birth of fascism, which aims at a concentration of powers and a personal dictatorship.

On the same pretext of organizing power effectively and achieve social justice, another reaction has been manifested in the form of communism and the so-called popular democracies. At the cost of heavy restrictions and the sacrifice of individual liberties, these systems have merely imposed party dictatorships.

Even in the regimes of political democracy which were faithful to the traditional concept of democracy, an important current of ideas has for a number of years led thinkers and jurists to revise the basic notions of modern democracies, as well as their methods and structures.

Most democratic states have endeavored, either by constitutional changes or by legislative enactment, to modify their political institutions in important respects. Although they have been diverse, these



transformations of Public Law which aim at reconciling the demands of collective discipline and social justice with those of individual liberty reveal a personalistic tendency. In addition to the negative liberties of a political nature, it is recognized that the human person has positive freedoms, a number of freedoms of an economic and social nature. At the same time the state, organized on a more democratic basis, is given a wider, more stable and more effective grant of power to bring positive assistance to the citizen against the massive dangers of materialist civilization, and to guarantee to him the right to live and exercise his liberties.

Viet-Nam welcomes gladly the teaching born of the experience of these democratic states, all the more as it is consistent with the political humanism and the historical situation of Viet-Nam.

Placed by its geographical position at the outpost of the free world, at the confluence of great currents of thought and on one of the great axes of human migration, Viet-Nam is continually exposed to multiple dangers which threaten its political stability. Thus the grave problems which we have to solve now are not transitory or accidental phenomena. The risks of relapsing into anarchy and servitude brought about by the internal feudalism or foreign imperialism that lies in wait for all newly emancipated peoples weigh more heavily on our country than on others, because of our geographic position. This is all the more true since the communism which has been established in the North constitutes a continuing latent menace for South Viet-Nam. Even after reunification, Viet-Nam, located at the nerve center between great demographic masses, will remain a sensitive zone subject to instability.

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These, gentlemen, are the present tendencies of public law among free peoples and the constant geopolitical facts of Viet-Nam.

It is in the light of these experiences, of these realities, and of the tradition of Vietnamese humanism that I invite you to examine the problems of the future political regime of our country. In that which concerns us as Vietnamese, we must increase tenfold the dialectical efforts by which our elders in democracy have tried to smooth the conflict between social justice and liberty for the sake the human person.

Faced with the massive forces of material and political oppression which threaten us constantly, we feel more than other peoples the essential necessity of grounding our political life in a clear cut and solid basis, and to rigorously concentrate the successive stages of our action along the same line towards an increasingly great democratic progress.

Such a basis can only be a spiritualist one ; such a line, that which the human person follows in his innermost reality as in his community life, in his transcendent vocation as in his free pursuit of intellectual, moral and spiritual perfection.

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Thus we affirm our faith in the absolute value of the human person, whose dignity antedates society and whose destiny is grander than time.

We affirm that the sole legitimate end and object of the State is to protect the fundamental rights of the human person to existence and to the free development of his intellectual, moral and spiritual life.

We affirm that democracy is neither material happiness nor the supremacy of numbers. Democracy is essentially a permanent effort to find the right political means for assuring to all citizens the right of free development and of maximum initiative, responsibility, and spiritual life.

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In the name of these principles, we solemnly declare :

1) Viet-Nam is an independent Republic, one and indivisible,

2) Citizens are born free and equal before the law. The State should assure them equal conditions for the exercise of their rights and the accomplishment of their duties. It owes aid and protection to the family so that harmonious family life can develop. Citizens have the right to a secure and peaceful life, to justly remunerated work, to sufficient individual property to assure a dignified and free life, to democratic freedoms, and to the full development of their personalities.

They have the duty of developing the national heritage for the Common Good and for universal peace, of safeguarding freedom and democracy, of defending the Nation and the Republic against all those who seek to destroy the foundation of the common life and the Constitution.

3) Sovereignty belongs to the people.

The elected National Assembly is vested with legislative competence.

The President of the Republic, also elected by universal, direct and secret ballot is vested with executive competence. The family vote

is admitted, and the voting rights and eligibility of women is recognized. The separation of powers should be clear and the responsibilities of the different organs of the State well defined, and their activities well coordinated to assure a maximum of stability and efficiency. A High Court of Justice will be established to decide cases of high treason.

4) The judiciary should be independent in order to make an efficacious contribution to the defence of the Republic, of order, of freedom and of Democracy.

5) A Supreme Court should be organised for the control of the constitutionality of laws.

6) Economic forces should associate in the exercise of power in the form of a National Economic Council composed of representatives of union and professional groups and which will present suggestions and opinions on bills of economic interest.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The constitutional principles which have just been outlined are intended to guarantee to the individual the full development of his capacities, and to the state a harmonious and fruitful functioning of its organs by means of the correct working of concerted actions and reciprocal control.

You are to decide upon a question of major interest to the Nation. On the solution that you will have chosen will depend the future and the prosperity of Viet-Nam. I am convinced that you will succeed in this historic mission.



**BROADCAST ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY  
OF PRESIDENT DIEM'S TENURE OF OFFICE**

**(7 July 1956)**

Dear Compatriots,

You are celebrating today the second anniversary of my tenure of office, which is at the same time that of our National Revolution.

I wish above all to express specially my gratitude to all the compatriots, dead or alive, who have sacrificed everything, including their pride, and contributed to the work of national salvation and reconstruction.

This day, a year ago, together with you, I looked back on the road behind us. You could then see that, during the first year, we had recovered our internal and external sovereignty, thus fulfilling the basic conditions for proceeding to the second phase, that of freeing the people from the feudal yoke and restoring order and security.

In this second phase of our struggle, the achievements have been much more important, and they have proven the determination and farsightedness of our people.

This time last year, the feudal forces had been ejected from their main bases. Nevertheless they constituted a great threat to public security and order, because of their connivance with the enemies of our people.

Our valiant army, shouldered by the administrative services and supported by the people, has, by its brilliant successes, annihilated the last hideouts of the rebels, at Rung-Sat as well as in the Western and Eastern Provinces, restoring thereby security to our compatriots and enhancing the prestige of our country abroad. Some prophesied that we would require ten years to complete this pacification. We have done it in the space of six months. This is accounted for by the fact that our people, faced with the dangers that imperilled the future of our race, had regained possession of itself and, waking up to unity, had exerted all its efforts in order to save the Fatherland.

While supporting our combatants on the front-line, our compatriots at the rear, fully aware of the situation, have enlisted in vast

political campaigns to fight the opposition of the feudal forces, annihilate the attempts at sabotage by the communists, and create the favourable conditions for a change of regime.

It is precisely that upsurge of revolutionary spirit that accounted for our brilliant success of October 23, 1955. By national referendum the people has put an end to an equivocal regime and trust me with the task of bringing into being a democratic one. Immediately thereafter, on October 26, I proclaimed the Republic and decided upon the organization of general elections, thus giving cause for satisfaction to all. These elections took place on March 4 last, had the National Assembly which came into existence as a result of them, has completed the drafting of a Constitution.

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On the international, like on the national plane, we have scored successes thanks to the fighting spirit of our people.

You are not unaware of the designs of the communist Viet-Minh on South Viet-Nam. On one hand, they seek to hinder the movement of refugees to the South and increase their military potential, thus violating openly the Geneva Agreements which they themselves have signed. On the other hand, they treacherously claim the authority of the same agreements to demand the holding of preliminary talks with a view to organising faked general elections in order to deprive us of our liberty and impose upon us the yoke of communist dictatorship.

In response to the desire of our people, the Government has, time and again, confirmed before world opinion the unshakable position of our people in this matter : we want to seek the unification of the country by all peaceful means, including truly general elections.

To prove our will for peace, we have reduced the size of our Army, demanded the withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps, and we are always prepared to collaborate in fact with the International Armistice Control Commission to preserve the present state of peace.

Our position has been approved by world opinion.

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Dear Compatriots,

The basic conditions for our policy having been all fulfilled, as I have just explained, the Government has settled down to the task of raising the standard of living of the population.

The economic program which I outlined at the inauguration of the Dong-Cam Dam on September 17, 1955, is being put into effect. Appropriate steps have been taken and all means have been mobilised in order that we may be in a position to repair the damages caused by the war and the policy of destruction applied by the Viet-Cong, so that the living conditions of our compatriots are improved, especially those of the working and peasant classes whose lot has been the most neglected hitherto.

With regard to agriculture, the Government has stepped up the land reform, increased production, put in cultivation large tracts of land in the Southern High Plateaus, and in particular in the Transbassac, the Reeds Flatland, and the Cai-San complex, for the benefit of the refugee compatriots as well as the local population, mechanised farming, expanded the cooperatives, repaired and set up a system of water-hydraulics, made loans to the agriculturists and the farmers to make it possible for them to open up and cultivate their lands.

The Government has instituted the National Investment Funds and the Commercial Bank to help the traders, industrialists and handicraftsmen ; it has reorganised foreign trade in such a way as to encourage local production, protect the interests of the consumers and combat inflation.

At the same time, the Government has given attention to the improvement of national finances by a policy of thrift and tight control over expenditures. It has likewise sought to defend our currency and find new sources of revenues for our budget.

The new regime not only looks after the interests of the workers but it also accepts as members of the National Economic Council now being set up representatives of the working class to allow them to participate more actively in the management of the national economy, by contrast with the communists who seek to impoverish the people in order better to enslave it.

As regard the branches of activities which directly concern the life of the population, such as Health, Social Action, Information, Youth and Sports as well as the technical branches such as Communications, Public Works and Reconstruction, the efforts of the Government during the past year have borne concrete results, as you have seen for yourselves.

Together with these efforts, the reforms carried out in the administrative and legal fields equally converge on the aim of building a modern and strong Viet-Nam, bringing together the necessary conditions to ensure security, liberty and happiness to all our compatriots.

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Dear Compatriots,

If our first year of exertion was the year of the recovery of our complete independence, and the past year was that of laying the foundations of democratic institutions, the coming one must be devoted to the achievements of democracy in the economic and social spheres. But in order that our constructive efforts shall not be wasted, it is indispensable that the results obtained be preserved, constantly exploited and expanded. In order to move forward, we must firmly maintain the successes already attained and break up all attempts at sabotage by the enemies of the people.

Let us be prepared for the important tasks that await us in the coming stage.

## SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFUGEE MOVEMENT

(Honai, 11 October 1956)

I am happy to come here to preside over the ceremony commemorating the second year of your Refugee Movement.

In the joyful atmosphere of today, remembering the sorrowful situation two years ago, under the cruel oppression of the combined reactionary and communist force, I think it necessary to redefine the historical mission of the present generation, especially the mission of the refugee fellow brothers.

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The deep cause of the immense refugee movement from the North to the South, over innumerable obstacles, is the consciousness, deep in the body and soul of the whole nation, of the fact that with the huge mass of Communist China next door, if the Vietnamese people allows itself to be welded into that Communist bloc, our beloved Viet-Nam will lose all hope of achieving the national objective of playing the role of vanguard of South East-Asia.

Such is the profound meaning of your colossal Refugee Movement, such is the innate moving force which has urged our people for centuries, in this land, to unite in order to preserve the identity of our nation, and fulfil at all cost the mission of our Fathers.

For that reason, this Refugee Movement is no accident. It is a national Movement, in keeping with the right historical direction of the Vietnamese Fatherland.

The Refugee fellow-brothers have been the first to respond to the time-old call of the Fatherland, leave their beloved homeland for the South to seek and create appropriate conditions for the building of a bright future for the Country in this South East-Asia area. That is a great honour, but that is also great responsibility for you.

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Dear fellow countrymen,

You remember that my most important task on returning to the country to assume responsibility was first of all the restoration of the authority of this government. After a hundred years of foreign domination, after ten years of war, the people lost all notion of righteousness, the concept of the state became nebulous, and the Government was respected by no one. Faced with an extremely critical situation, and having to cope with the trouble-avoiding mentality of people around me, I had to resort resolutely to operations which were painful to the national body in order to restore the authority and the prestige of the national Government. And I must continue to do so. Because such is the condition of the survival of the nation. A Government which is not respected either internally or abroad, which cannot enforce law is a Government incapable of protecting the legitimate rights of its people as well as of the foreigner living in the shade of our flag.

In the life of a nation, there are principles which must be respected, their value is irreducible because otherwise it would be an act of suicide for the whole nation.

There are people who avail of their abuses, of the corruption existing in the Government agencies to take upon themselves the right to stand above the law. That is the gravest mistake, especially with regard to this Government which is determined to clean up its administration with resolution and impartiality.

Moreover, beside the legacy of past foreign domination and war who among us can claim that he has no responsibility in the moral crisis of today. Each of us must search his own soul, and not point a blaming finger at his neighbour.

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Dear fellow countrymen,

If today I have recalled this point, it is because I wanted to place the Refugee Movement in its right context, in the perspective of the destiny of the nation. In this bright perspective, I wish to bring out the part of responsibility which goes to you and help you understand the policy of the Government. With your historical mission, you must be exemplary, resolute, enlightened citizens, worthy to be the disciplined vanguard of the nation.



Excellencies,

Gentlemen,

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Refugee Movement, looking at the gigantic results achieved during the last two years of hardship and endurance I want to express the deep gratitude of the Government and the people of Viet-Nam toward the friendly Governments and people which have efficaciously aided us morally and materially in this Refugee enterprise.

I sincerely congratulate the administration, people and army for having contributed energetically to the reception and resettlement of our compatriots.

To the Refugee fellow-brothers, I need not say much. You fully know my feelings towards you. I will only say this : I am convinced that time will bring proof of the faith I placed in you.

**MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
PROMULGATION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

**(October 26, 1956)**

My dear compatriots,

On this solemn occasion when in fellowship we worship our heroes with the joy of a great hope, we celebrate the anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic and the Promulgation of the Constitution, I should like to invite you to look back upon the past in order to measure the road covered and thus to prepare the way for the future. For the democracy that we want to build must be a heroic and continuous effort and not a closed and impassive system.

By virtue of the mandate that the Nation has vested upon me with the Referendum of October 23, 1955, I was given the mission to assume the functions of Chief of State and to organize a democratic regime. As soon as the results of the Referendum were known, I proclaimed the Republic in the Declaration of October 26, 1955 and took the title of President.

Organized according to the provisions of the Ordinance of February 23, 1956, the general elections of March 4, 1956 designated the deputies to the National Constituent Assembly.

After six months of intensive work, the National Assembly has elaborated the Constitution that I have just had the high honour to promulgate.

While in other Asian countries, a period of several years was necessary to organize a republican regime, Viet-Nam, in a much more critical situation, has taken only one year to lay the foundations for democratic institutions.

The pace with which we have organized Democracy in our country demonstrates at the same time the determination of our people and the heroic character of our destiny. It also indicates what is left to us to achieve in order to perfect the historical mission which has devolved upon our generation.

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It is a fundamental truth that laws do not cover all the aspects of life, and a Constitution does not create a democracy. Democratic institutions will prosper only when the spirit and will of the people supply the adequate precedent conditions. For Democracy is a moral system which will develop gradually as the concept of common good will become, day after day, broader and more profound in the mind of the citizen as well as of the governing.

Now for more than a century, abnormal political conditions have corrupted the sense of civic responsibility in many a mind. It behoves us now to restore the spirit of public service, the spirit of honour and of national dignity, moral and intellectual honesty, the spirit of sacrifice, the sense of discipline, and personal responsibility, courtesy in human relations which is simply the expression of respect for others as for oneself.

In other words, it is necessary to revive the honour for Vietnamese traditional civic virtues, « Thành » and « Tin ». « Thành », intellectual loyalty and noble morality, an acute consciousness and clear vision of the compass of one's duties toward the Creator, toward the country and toward oneself as well as toward one's fellowman. « Tin », sincere and courageous practice of all these duties, no matter how grievous. A profound and acute sense of the entirety of one's responsibilities, a constant and sincere practice of all one's obligations, which create the climate of social confidence necessary to the life and to the development of all democracy.

In fact, if the sense of civic duty derives its supreme justification from the ethical principles of the respect for the human person and for the common good, however, it thrives with vigour only in a political, administrative and economic climate which is alive and congenial. In addition to the institutions which allow him to take part in the direction of public affairs and draw the attention of his leaders to his legitimate grievances, the citizen must be able to rely on just laws, on an equitable apportionment of social duties, on a courteous and effective administration as well as on the impartiality of the courts.

Even in a healthy environment, the sense of civic responsibility must further be nourished by a careful education of which the moulding of character, the sense of personal responsibility and discipline, honesty and the devotion to work and to public service must be the constant object, in the school as in the family, in political and social organizations, as at all echelons of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of Government.

My dear compatriots,

Democracy exists only where a concrete democratic experience exists. And democratic life is in short but the putting into practice,



by all citizens and all the custodians of public power of the most perfect loyalty and of a mutual confidence which is thus total and justified.

It is in this sense that we ought to endeavour to complete the laws and to apply the Constitution.

It is in this sense that we will effectively work for the unification of the country. For it is only with a regime which elevates loyalty and confidence as supreme civic values that we will unify our ravaged fatherland.

It is in this sense that a moment ago I took the oath before the almighty and before the people.

For therein is the import of the human person, the true meaning of Progress.

May the Almighty forever protect Viet-Nam !

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APPENDIX I

STATEMENT OF JUNE 16, 1949

(Saigon)

Recently my name has often been the subject of communiques either in the press or on the radio. The formation of a Ngo Dinh Diem Cabinet was talked about at the same time as its postponement was discussed. Different reasons were given, more often than not they were pure fantasy.

Friends as well as adversaries have talked without keeping in mind the motives which might have dictated my conduct. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I feel that I should outline in three points the ideas which appear to me capable of providing a solid enough basis for our loyal compatriots to rely upon in achieving independence and national reconciliation.

First, I am convinced that the hopes of the Vietnamese people will be fulfilled only on the day when our Nation will have obtained the same status which Hindustan and Pakistan enjoy. Friendly relations between France and Viet-Nam will be solidified when the two partners feel fraternal and equal among the peoples of the French Union.

Second, the actual struggle is not only a struggle for national independence. It is also a social revolution for the Economic independence of the Vietnamese farmer and laborer. I advocate the most advanced and bold social reforms, while preserving human dignity and respect, in order that all people in the new Viet-Nam may earn a living as truly free people.

Finally, I think it is only fair that the best positions in new Viet-Nam be reserved for those who have merited the country's gratitude : I am speaking of the Resistants. The only criteria which should be followed in choices for public office should be moral qualities, technical competence and democratic rule.

It is time to end the sufferings of the people, whose unanimous collaboration permitted the existence of the Resistance, whether active or passive. I think that, in setting to work with a spirit of personal disinterest and sacrifice to obtain international and social justice for our people, we will contribute to the happiness of our people, without which Vietnamese Fatherland are only empty words. In view of the unheard of sacrifices made by the Vietnamese people during the last three years, no personal or ideological matter, however respectable, should be considered.

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## APPENDIX II

### SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF PRESIDENT NGO-DINH-DIEM

*President Ngo Dinh Diem was born on 3 January 1901 in Hue, capital of the former Viet-Nam Kingdom, the third son to the late Ngo Dinh Kha, Minister and Counsellor of Emperor Thanh-Thai. Mr. Ngo Dinh Kha was the initiator of a modern system of education based on the combination of western and eastern cultures, and the founder and director of the National School «Quoc-Hoc» in Hue, where that system was applied in Viet-Nam for the first time.*

*After completing very brilliantly his studies at the School of Administration in Hue, President Ngo Dinh Diem entered the mandarinat (corps of high civil servants) at a very early age, and reached the top very rapidly. Everywhere he is remembered as a honest and highly competent administrator, loved and respected by all.*

*At 32 he was made Minister of the Interior, a position corresponding to that of Prime Minister in other countries. At once he objected to the policy of encroachment upon Vietnamese independence practised by the French Protectorate, and demanded from the Vietnamese Court reforms aiming both at the modernisation of the country and a real participation of the people in public affairs.*

*His views were not accepted and for this reason he resigned by way of protest, and thereafter he led a secluded life, devoting his time to the study of political and social problems.*

*President Ngo Dinh Diem continued to remain in close touch with the leaders of various patriotic movements, and was closely watched by the French authorities. In 1944 he narrowly escaped from arrest by the French who wanted to exile him to Xieng-Khouang, in Laos.*

*After the Japanese coup of March 9, 1945, President Ngo Dinh Diem twice declined Bao Dai's invitation to him to form a Government, considering that the situation created by Japanese occupation did not permit his country to attain real independence.*

When the Viet-Minh came into power, he was arrested at Tuy-Hoa in September 1945, declined to participate in the Viet Minh Government and was deported to the Highlands of North Viet Nam.

In January 1946, during the negotiations with France, Hô Chi Minh, in order to placate Catholic opposition, ordered President Ngô Đình Diêm brought back to Hanoi, and invited him to participate in the Government, but the latter declined the offer.

In 1948 Bao Dai requested President Ngô Đình Diêm to come to Hong Kong. The latter was opposed to the immediate formation of a Provisional Central Government and proposed the setting up of a Preliminary National Committee bringing together the most representative personalities of the country to study all the problems to be discussed with France in order to insure the independence and unity of the country. But his proposal was not accepted. For this reason, he was the first one to protest against the Agreements of 8 March 1949. These Agreements negotiated without the participation of representatives of the country, and giving Viet Nam only a nominal independence, were in his opinion insufficient to bring about peace and independence. Under such circumstances, he declined once more Bao Dai's invitation to form a Government.

President Ngô Đình Diêm left Viet Nam in 1950 and visited several countries of Asia, America and Europe, in particular Japan, the Philippines, the United States, Belgium. Everywhere he pleaded the cause of his country and of freedom with energy. He stayed several months in the United States as the guest of Mary Knoll College, and in Belgium at Saint Andre Abbey, Bruges. In 1953 he came to and stayed in France. He felt that the day was coming for him to look after his country's fate.

On 19 June 1954, in Paris, following the French disaster at Dien Biên-Phu, he received delegation of full military and civil powers from Emperor Bao Dai and accepted to form a Government. On June 26 his plane landed in Saigon.

President Ngô Đình Diêm formed his first cabinet on 7 July 1954 under very critical circumstances :

- General confusion occasioned by the fall of Diên Biên Phu,
- Sudden evacuation of the Catholic provinces of North Viet Nam by the French Forces on 2 July,
- Geneva negotiations which were to result a few days later in the partition of the national territory.

In spite of innumerable difficulties, of which the influx of refugees from North Viet Nam was not the least one, President Ngo Dinh Diem succeeded little by little in recovering full independence and in relieving the internal situation.

*On 23 October 1955, in a national referendum, the Vietnamese people called for the destitution of Bao Dai and the proclamation of a Republic with Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem as President. On 26 October 1955, in response to the people's wishes, President Ngo Dinh Diem proclaimed Viet-Nam a republic and assumed the functions of Président until the country is provided with a Constitution by a National Assembly elected by the people.*

*President Ngo Dinh Diem has five brothers :*

*— Mr. Ngo Dinh Khoi, former Governor of Quang-Nam, killed by the Viet Minh in 1945 ;*

*— Monseigneur Ngo Dinh Thuc, Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Vinh-Long ;*

*— Mr. Ngo Dinh Nhu, Political Advisor to the President ;*

*— Mr. Ngo Dinh Luyen, Viet Nam Ambassador in London ;*

*— Mr. Ngo Dinh Can who, in accordance with Vietnamese traditions has renounced all other activities in order to look after his mother, Madame Ngo Dinh Kha, who is now 87 years of age.*





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**PRESS OFFICE**  
Presidency of the Republic of Vietnam  
**SAIGON - 1956**