

NSC BRIEFING

3 December 1953

JACQUET'S STATEMENT AND
VIETNAMESE REACTION

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- I. First reaction ^{29 November} from responsible French official was from Marc Jacquet, Secretary of State for the Associated States, in Paris.
- A. He said Ho's reply was "news of world importance"; declared France would not refuse to negotiate.
 - B. Rejected newspaper interview as point of departure but observed that official channels were open to Ho.
 - C. French Government statement shortly afterward merely stated that views were not "official."
- II. Bao Dai, who had at first taken Ho "offer" ^{on December} in stride, greatly disturbed by Jacquet statement.

- A. Regarded it as real indication that France might actually negotiate.
 - 1. Had viewed earlier French references to desirability of negotiations as made for benefit of French public and Assembly.
- B. Said if French reached an armistice he would go into exile and hope to reconquer Vietnam from without.
- C. Said if Ho had addressed himself to his ^{Vietnam} government, as he should have, the reply would have been: Good, just lay down your arms and we'll negotiate a surrender.

III. Official statement of French Government,
issued ^{2 December} last night, said: "Viet Minh has
a right to make its position known by
means of an official declaration. In
accordance with the Associated States, ...
it would be examined with the wish to do
everything to re-establish a durable peace
assuring the independence of the Associated
States as well as the liberty of its
citizens..."

A. Bao Dai's deputy in Paris yesterday
told American officials, if France
wants to open negotiations as a
deliberate delaying tactic and to
appease certain elements in France,
Vietnam would go along.

- B. If negotiations are opened with a view to early French withdrawal, Vietnam would have to seek assistance elsewhere, with Formosa, South Korea, US, with view to continuing anti-Communist struggle.
- C. All leaders on Bao Dai side regard an armistice now as surrender to Viet Minh.
- D. This attitude will put strong barrier in the way of any actual negotiations.

Statement on Ho's offer by Secretary of State for Associated States

official and really comes from Ho himself, news of world-wide importance. Interview appears designed exportation and Ho's replies charged propaganda, but even so, of great interest especially if one takes into account proximity Bermuda Conference. And near four-power conference. French position has been expounded by Laniel. We are not refusing negotiate if occasion presents itself. Obviously we cannot consider this interview as point departure. But if Ho wishes make some statements officially, he does not lack means doing it, in particular through intermediary Swedish Embassy Peking. Statements this type have been made on several occasions past two months by Moscow and Peking. New element is that Ho now making them himself. Equally interesting is allusion in these replies to eventual negotiations being conducted directly between Viet Minh and France. That means Ho does not wish, in any case, to negotiate with Government Bao Dai. From French side, on contrary, have asserted no measure would be taken without accord Associated States."

29 Nov.