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RICHARD M. NIXON: The Pursuit of Peace in Vietnam

Within the first month after taking office, President Nixon had decided that the only way to deal with the Vietnam war was through unilateral withdrawal of American combat troops. But such a policy was predicated upon some reciprocal action by the North Vietnamese government. An exchange of letters between the President and Ho Chi Minh in the summer of 1969 seemed to indicate that North Vietnamese attitudes were intransigent. Nevertheless the President and his advisors pressed ahead with plans for the withdrawal of American forces, but not in such a way as to leave South Vietnam vulnerable to an immediate Communist takeover. In a television address to the nation on November 3, the President explained his policy to the public. The heart of it was the "Vietnamization plan" whereby the American withdrawal would be paced to allow for a strengthening of the South Vietnamese forces. Portions of Mr. Nixon's address are reprinted here.

Source: *Department of State Bulletin*, November 24, 1969.

GOOD EVENING, MY FELLOW AMERICANS: Tonight I want to talk to you on a subject of deep concern to all Americans and to many people in all parts of the world—the war in Vietnam.

I believe that one of the reasons for the deep division about Vietnam is that many Americans have lost confidence in what their Government has told them about our policy. The American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy which involves the overriding issues of war and peace unless they know the truth about that policy.

Tonight, therefore, I would like to answer some of the questions that I know are on the minds of many of you listening to me. . . .

Let me begin by describing the situation I found when I was inaugurated on January 20.

—The war had been going on for four years.

—31,000 Americans had been killed in action.

—The training program for the South Vietnamese was behind schedule.

—540,000 Americans were in Vietnam with no plans to reduce the number.

—No progress had been made at the negotiations in Paris and the United States had not put forth a comprehensive peace proposal.

—The war was causing deep division at home and criticism from many of our friends, as well as our enemies, abroad.

In view of these circumstances there were some who urged that I end the war at once by ordering the immediate withdrawal of all American forces.

From a political standpoint this would have been a popular and easy course to follow. After all, we became involved in the war while my predecessor was in office. I could blame the defeat which would be the result of my action on him.

RICHARD M. NIXON: The Cambodia Invasion

An incursion into Cambodia to destroy enemy sanctuaries and to disrupt supply lines had been discussed for several years, but never had such an operation seemed so feasible as in the spring of 1970. The existence of the sanctuaries posed a real threat to President Nixon's Vietnamization program and to the withdrawal of American troops. The sudden overthrow of Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk by General Lon Nol in March 1970 made the situation even more inviting. For Lon Nol took an extremely anti-Communist stance by ordering all Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops out of the country. The debate within the Nixon Administration over a Cambodian incursion was henceforth argued not so much from the military standpoint as for its possible effect on the American public. The generals in Saigon and in the Pentagon urged an invasion using American forces. Other presidential advisers, more fearful of the domestic reaction, were hesitant, suggesting that only South Vietnamese troops be used. But by late April the President had decided to go all the way and use the full force of American as well as South Vietnamese troops. On the evening of April 30 he made a nationally televised address to the nation announcing the invasion and the reasons for it.

Source: Department of State Bulletin, May 18, 1970: "The Cambodia Strike: Defensive Action for Peace."

GOOD EVENING, MY FELLOW AMERICANS. Ten days ago, in my report to the Nation on Vietnam, I announced a decision to withdraw an additional 150,000 Americans from Vietnam over the next year. I said then that I was making that decision despite our concern over increased enemy activity in Laos, in Cambodia, and in South Vietnam.

At that time, I warned that if I concluded that increased enemy activity in any of these areas endangered the lives of Americans remaining in Vietnam, I would not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation.

Despite that warning, North Vietnam has increased its military aggression

in all these areas, and particularly in Cambodia.

After full consultation with the National Security Council, Ambassador Bunker, General Abrams, and my other advisers, I have concluded that the actions of the enemy in the last 10 days clearly endanger the lives of Americans who are in Vietnam now and would constitute an unacceptable risk to those who will be there after withdrawal of another 150,000.

To protect our men who are in Vietnam and to guarantee the continued success of our withdrawal and Vietnamization programs, I have concluded that the time has come for action.

Tonight I shall describe the actions of

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Kent State—May 4, 1970

No action of President Nixon's first term aroused such vehement response as the Cambodian invasion. Although the public at large seemed to support the venture, the President's April 30 speech proved to be the catalyst that revived the flagging antiwar movement on campuses across the nation. The student disturbances were unprecedented in their ferocity. At Kent State University in Ohio the reaction culminated in a riot on May 4 in which the ROTC building was burned down. The governor declared martial law and sent National Guard troops onto the campus. As the demonstrations continued on Monday, May 4, guardsmen suddenly opened fire, killing four students and wounding eleven. The killings stunned the nation and gave greater impetus to a previously planned mass demonstration in Washington, D.C., on May 9. By May 10, 448 colleges and universities were on strike or closed. Official investigations as to exactly what had happened at Kent State were inconclusive, although the case was reopened by the Justice Department in 1971 for further study. The following selection reprints the conclusions and recommendations of the Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest. The commission, under former Pennsylvania governor William Scranton, issued its report on September 26, 1970.

Source: *The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest*, Washington, D.C., 1970.

CONCLUSION

KENT STATE WAS A NATIONAL TRAGEDY. It was not, however, a unique tragedy. Only the magnitude of the student disorder and the extent of student deaths and injuries set it apart from similar occurrences on numerous other American campuses during the past few years. We must learn from the particular horror of Kent State and insure that it is never repeated.

The conduct of many students and nonstudent protestors at Kent State on the first four days of May 1970 was plainly intolerable. We have said in our report, and we repeat: Violence by students on or off the campus can never be justified by any grievance, philosophy, or political idea. There can be no sanctuary

or immunity from prosecution on the campus. Criminal acts by students must be treated as such wherever they occur and whatever their purpose. Those who wrought havoc on the town of Kent—those who burned the ROTC building, those who attacked and stoned National Guardsmen, and all those who urged them on and applauded their deeds—share the responsibility for the deaths and injuries of May 4.

The widespread student opposition to the Cambodian action and their general resentment of the National Guardsmen's presence on the campus cannot justify the violent and irresponsible actions of many students during the long weekend.

The Cambodian invasion defined a watershed in the attitude of Kent

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43.

An All-Volunteer Army

On March 27, 1969, President Nixon created an advisory commission to develop a plan for eliminating military conscription and to plan for all-volunteer armed services. Chairman of the commission was Thomas Gates, who had served as Secretary of Defense from 1959 to 1961 under President Eisenhower. The Gates Commission report, issued early in 1970, called for just such a volunteer military force as the President envisioned and inveighed against peacetime conscription, or the draft, as it was usually called. In September 1971 the Senate gave final approval to a bill ending the draft, effective June 1973. Under the authority of the law, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird actually proclaimed an end to the draft on January 27, 1973, six months ahead of schedule. But establishing a volunteer army and making it work proved to be two different things, as the first year of its operation demonstrated. In an interview published in August 1973, entitled "Toward a Professional Army," Lt. General Bernard W. Rogers, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Dept. of the Army, analyzed the problems of maintaining an all-volunteer force. The selections reprinted here comprise the conclusions of the Gates Commission Report of February 21, 1970, and the interview with General Rogers.

Sources: Congressional Record, 91 Cong., 2 Session, February 24, 1970.

Soldiers: Official U. S. Army Magazine, August 1973.

THE GATES COMMISSION REPORT

SINCE THE FOUNDING of the Republic, a primary task of the Government of the United States has been to provide for the common defense of a society established to secure the blessings of liberty and justice. Without endangering the nation's security, the means of defense should support the aims of the society.

The armed forces today play an honorable and important part in promoting the nation's security, as they have since our freedoms were won on the battlefield at Yorktown. A fundamental consideration that has guided this commission is the need to maintain and improve the effectiveness, dignity and status of the armed forces so they may continue to play their proper role.

Now the second reason for atrocities that occur is because it doesn't take very long for an infantryman in the field to realize that he is fighting for nobody's freedom. You can ask any of the men here. They may have thought they were fighting to protect their mother when they got there, but they sure didn't believe that very long. And this isn't just the grunt. It's the lieutenants, it's the officers

in the field. Our captain believed it.

It takes only a few months to be subjugated to the circumstances of Vietnam when you come to the realization that you are not fighting for Ky's freedom, you are not fighting for Thieu's freedom, you are not fighting for your mother's freedom or anybody's freedom. You're just getting your asses shot up and all you want to do is go home.

47.

Trial of Lieutenant William Calley

Probably the bitterest lesson to be brought home to Americans concerning the Vietnam war was the realization that the war was, as one author-psychologist put it, "an atrocity-creating situation." The whole issue of war crimes centered on the famous My Lai massacre of March 1968, and the visible symbol of that affair became army Lt. William Calley. In 1970 Calley was charged with slaying civilians at My Lai. His trial, which ran from November 12, 1970 to March 28, 1971, ended in a verdict of guilty. He was sentenced by the court martial to life imprisonment, but there was such a public outcry over the sentence (many felt that Calley was simply a scapegoat) that it was reduced to 30 years. While the public outcry was going on, President Nixon took the unusual step of ordering Calley freed from the stockade and confined to his bachelor apartment under house arrest. Nixon then announced that he would review the case personally. In response to the President's involvement in the case, the prosecutor in the court martial, Captain Aubrey M. Daniel III, wrote a widely published letter to the President criticizing his handling of the matter. The first selection here is Lt. Calley's statement to the court on March 30, just after the verdict had been handed down. The second selection is Captain Daniel's letter to the President.

LIEUTENANT CALLEY: Statement to the Court

LET ME KNOW if you can't hear me sirs. Your Honor, members of the court, I asked my attorney, George Latimer, and my other attorneys not to go into mitigation in this case. There's a lot of things that aren't appropriate, and I don't think

it really matters what type of individual I am.

And I'm not going to stand here and plead for my life or my freedom.

But I would like you to consider the thousand more lives that are going to be lost in Southeast Asia, the thousand more to be imprisoned, not only here in the United States, but in North Vietnam.

mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes.

The two sides agreed that it is desirable to broaden the understanding between the two peoples. To this end, they discussed specific areas in such fields as science, technology, culture, sports and journalism, in which people-to-people contacts and exchanges would be mutually beneficial. Each side undertakes to facilitate the further development of such contacts and exchanges.

Both sides view bilateral trade as another area from which mutual benefit can be derived, and agreed that economic relations based on equality and mutual benefit are in the interest of the peoples of the two countries. They agree to facilitate the progressive development

of trade between their two countries. The two sides agreed that they will stay in contact through various channels, including the sending of a senior U.S. representative to Peking from time to time for concrete consultations to further the normalization of relations between the two countries and continue to exchange views on issues of common interest.

The two sides expressed the hope that the gains achieved during this visit would open up new prospects for the relations between the two countries. They believe that the normalization of relations between the two countries is not only in the interest of the Chinese and American peoples but also contributes to the relaxation of tension in Asia and the world.

President Nixon, Mrs. Nixon and the American party expressed their appreciation for the gracious hospitality shown them by the Government and people of the People's Republic of China.

62.

ARTHUR H. WESTING AND E. W. PFEIFFER: The Cratering of Indochina

No land in history has been so ravaged by war as Indochina, particularly North and South Vietnam. The authors of the article from which this selection is taken surveyed the environmental damage while the U.S. was still involved in the war, and their report was published in May 1972. As it happened, some of the heaviest American bombing of the war took place in December 1972, shortly before a truce agreement was signed. Arthur H. Westing is professor of biology at Windham College, and E. W. Pfeiffer is professor of zoology at the University of Montana.

Source: *Scientific American*, May 1972.

THE UNPRECEDENTED USE of herbicides on a massive scale as an instrument of war in Vietnam has prompted several studies of the probable long-term effects

of these chemical agents on the land of Indochina. Much less attention has been paid to the effects of the tearing up of the land by bombing and shelling. The

GEORGE S. MCGOVERN: Where I Stand

Having announced his candidacy in January 1971 and come successfully through the primaries a year later, Senator George S. McGovern of South Dakota was nominated for the presidency at the Democratic National Convention in Miami on July 12, 1972, with Senator Thomas F. Eagleton of Missouri as his running mate. When Eagleton was forced off the ticket early in August, owing to news stories about his previous hospitalization for nervous exhaustion, he was replaced by R. Sargent Shriver, former director of the Peace Corps. In the November election President Nixon won by a huge landslide over the McGovern-Shriver ticket, obtaining 521 electoral college votes to McGovern's 17. Only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia went for the Democratic challenger. In July 1972, Senator McGovern published a statement defining the issues of the campaign as he saw them. Portions of his statement are reprinted here.

Source: The Progressive, July 1972.

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE the Democratic Party could make in this election year would be to underestimate the deep sense of public disgust at government, which scarcely changes regardless of which party is in power. The American people will not be impressed if we just try to lie a little bit less, if we suggest a slightly stronger commitment to peace, or if we propose to tinker with the system and call it "new priorities." It is bad tactics and bad policy to snuggle up to President Nixon—if, indeed, we can find out where he is or where he might be by November.

Instead of clutching at some mythical foggy "center"—a place which has meaning only to a few pundits anyway—we must offer change that is substantial enough to affect the lives of ordinary people. The primaries have given us some idea of where the people are. Instead of dragging them back to the status

quo, we must stand with them in seeking a truly just and decent society. . . .

We have heard many times that Vietnam will no longer be an issue by the time the fall election approaches. I don't know whether it will be or not. For the sake of the thousands of Vietnamese peasants still dying from American bombing raids, the GIs still dying of booby traps and heroin, the American POWs rotting in the jails of Hanoi, I sincerely hope it will not be an issue. But *Vietnam thinking* surely *will* be an issue, regardless of what happens in Indochina in the next four months. By "Vietnam thinking" I mean wasting our strength on paranoiac defense policies while neglecting the needs of our own people. . . .

I believe the American people are ready to turn away from Vietnam thinking if they are given leadership whose judgment they can respect and whose word they can believe. In place of the mad-

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66.

HENRY KISSINGER: Vietnam Truce

During the autumn of 1972 presidential adviser Henry Kissinger conducted negotiations in Paris with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam to gain a settlement of the war. On October 26 Kissinger announced that the negotiations had been successful and that "peace was at hand." But it turned out that the bilateral settlement with Hanoi lacked the approval of South Vietnam, and thus peace was stalemated again. In mid-December President Nixon ordered saturation bombing of North Vietnam. By the end of the month the bombing was ordered stopped, and the Paris peace talks were scheduled to resume. On January 15, 1973, the President ordered a halt to all military action against North Vietnam because progress was being made in Paris. On January 23, in a televised address to the nation, Nixon announced that Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had initialed an agreement to end the fighting. Details of the agreement were explained by Dr. Kissinger in a nationally televised news conference on January 24. Portions of the news conference clarifying the main points of the truce are reprinted here. In addition to the agreement, there were several protocols relating to such matters as the return of American prisoners, implementation of an international control commission, cease-fire regulations, institution of a joint military commission, and the removal of mines from Haiphong harbor.

Source: Department of State Bulletin, February 12, 1973.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The President last evening presented the outlines of the agreement, and by common agreement between us and the North Vietnamese we have today released the texts. And I am here to explain, to go over briefly, what these texts contain and how we got there, what we have tried to achieve in recent months, and where we expect to go from here.

Let me begin by going through the agreement, which you have read.

The agreement, as you know, is in nine chapters. The first affirms the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, as recognized by the 1954 Geneva agreements on Vietnam, agreements which established two zones divided by a military demarcation line.

Chapter II deals with the cease-fire.