

*Cancelled due to brother's
death
file*

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 29, 1967

TODAY, I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT
VIETNAM AND ABOUT THE AMERICANS WHO HAVE SERVED
THERE.

WE HAVE TODAY IN THIS ROOM, AND IN THIS
COUNTRY, A NEW GENERATION OF VETERANS -- VETERANS
OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM. SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND OF
THEM HAVE RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE
PAST YEAR. THERE WILL BE THREE-QUARTERS OF A
MILLION MORE IN THE YEAR AHEAD.

THEY RETURN FROM WHAT IS SURELY THE
MOST FRUSTRATING AND DIFFICULT WAR THIS NATION
HAS EVER FOUGHT IN ITS LONG DEFENSE OF FREEDOM.

IT IS A LIMITED WAR, A WAR IN WHICH
POLITICAL AND MILITARY REQUIREMENTS ARE
INEXTRICABLY MIXED AND OFTEN CONTRADICTORY.

IT IS A WAR WHERE FIGHTING AND BUILDING,
DEVELOPMENT AND DESTRUCTION GO HAND IN HAND.

IT IS A WAR IN WHICH THE RESTRAINT AND
JUDGMENT OF THIS GREAT NATION ARE BEING TESTED AS
MUCH AS ITS POWER.

THIS NEW GENERATION OF VETERANS RETURNS TO A
NATION WHERE THE ENORMOUS COMPLEXITIES OF THE WAR THEY
HAVE FOUGHT ARE REFLECTED IN DIVIDED OPINIONS AMONG
THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND CONGRESS.

THE GREAT MAJORITY OF AMERICANS SUPPORT OUR
EFFORT. SOME DO NOT.

AS A RESULT, I FEAR, THOSE BRAVE VETERANS
RETURN NOT TO A WELL-DESERVED HERO'S WELCOME, NOT TO
TRIUMPHAL PARADES AND THE SOUND OF BRASS BANDS, BUT TO
THE SOUNDS OF A GREAT DEMOCRACY DEBATING ITS POLICIES.

THE SACRIFICES THOSE PATRIOTIC MEN HAVE MADE
IN THIS COMPLEX WAR ARE NO LESS -- AND PERHAPS THEY ARE
GREATER -- THAN THOSE OF ANY OTHER GENERATION OF
AMERICAN SOLDIERS.

THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE OWED THEM BY THOSE
WHO STAY BEHIND IS NO LESS BECAUSE THE WAR IS COMPLEX --
IT IS GREATER.

AND THE DEBT BELONGS NO LESS TO THOSE WHO
OPPOSE OUR POLICIES THAN TO THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM.
IF ANYTHING THE DEBT IS GREATER FOR THOSE WHO DISSENT,
FOR THOSE FIGHTING MEN HAVE BEEN DEFENDING THE ESSENCE
OF DEMOCRACY, THE RIGHT TO DIFFER.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY ONCE SAID, "A NATION REVEALS
ITSELF NOT ONLY BY THE MEN IT PRODUCES BUT ALSO BY THE
MEN IT HONORS, THE MEN IT REMEMBERS."

IS THERE ANY AMERICAN WHO DOES NOT HONOR
THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT IN VIETNAM? IS THERE ANY
AMERICAN SO NARROW THAT HE IS NOT PROUD OF THOSE
WHO NOBLY SERVE THEIR COUNTRY? I HOPE AND BELIEVE NOT.

BUT I WANT TO SAY TODAY, FROM THE BOTTOM OF
MY HEART, TO THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT SO WELL IN VIETNAM:
WE KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. YOUR NATION IS PROUD OF
YOU. WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL.

SO DO NOT TAKE THE SOUNDS OF DEMOCRACY IN
ACTION AS THANKLESSNESS; TAKE THEM AS PROOF THAT THE
UNITED STATES REMAINS WORTHY OF YOUR SACRIFICE.

YOUR ADMINISTRATION FULLY RECOGNIZES ITS DEBT
TO YOU, AND TO VETERANS OF EVERY WAR. PRESIDENT JOHNSON
RECENTLY SAID, "OUR GOVERNMENT AND OUR PEOPLE HAVE NO
GREATER OBLIGATION THAN TO ASSURE THAT THOSE WHO HAVE
SERVED THEIR COUNTRY AND THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM WILL NEVER
BE FORGOTTEN OR NEGLECTED."

WE HAVE MADE SOME IMPORTANT PROGRESS DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND IN VETERAN'S BENEFITS GENERALLY.

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND OF THE VETERANS WHO HAVE RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY FINDING JOBS.

IT IS UNTHINKABLE THAT THOSE MEN SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A LIVING, AND IT IS JUST AS UNTHINKABLE THAT THEIR SKILLS AND ENERGIES SHOULD NOT BE UTILIZED.

ON AUGUST 14, THEREFORE, PRESIDENT JOHNSON INSTRUCTED SECRETARY OF LABOR WILLARD WIRTZ TO ESTABLISH A NATION-WIDE PROGRAM OF PERSONALIZED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE TO INSURE THAT EVERY RETURNING VETERAN HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FIND MEANINGFUL AND REWARDING EMPLOYMENT.

HEREAFTER EACH AND EVERY RETURNING VETERAN WILL BE PERSONALLY CONTACTED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF A

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE, WHOSE JOB IT WILL BE TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALLY TAILORED JOB-FINDING ASSISTANCE. THAT REPRESENTATIVE WILL OFFER COUNSELING AND TESTING, REFER VETERANS TO TRAINING PROGRAMS, OR PROVIDE ANY OTHER SERVICE WHICH WILL INSURE THAT EVERY VETERAN WHO WANTS A JOB IS PROMPTLY EMPLOYED.

THE OTHER GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE VETERAN'S PENSION AND READJUSTMENT ACT OF 1967, PASSED BY CONGRESS LAST WEDNESDAY IS NOW LAW. THIS ACT, UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY BOTH HOUSE AND SENATE IS A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S UNPRECEDENTED SPECIAL MESSAGE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS DELIVERED TO CONGRESS LAST JANUARY.

THIS NEW ACT PROVIDES:

- THE SAME FULL WARTIME BENEFITS TO THOSE GALLANT MEN WHO HAVE WAGED THE DIFFICULT STRUGGLE IN VIETNAM AS IT HAS PROVIDED FOR VETERANS OF PREVIOUS WARS;

- A 5.4 PERCENT COST OF LIVING INCREASE TO 1.4 MILLION DISABLED VETERANS, WIDOWS AND DEPENDENTS, WITH GREATER INCREASES FOR WIDOWS IN THE LOWER INCOME CATEGORIES;
- INCREASES OF UP TO 30 PERCENT IN SUBSISTANCE ALLOWANCES FOR VETERANS IN COLLEGE;
- FULL EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE VETERANS WHO NEED TO COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL WITHOUT REDUCING BENEFITS THEY MAY ^{LATER} WISH TO USE FOR COLLEGE;
- SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICESHIP AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING.

THERE ARE MANY OTHER PROVISIONS DESIGNED TO ERASE INEQUITIES IN PREVIOUS LEGISLATION.

THIS LEGISLATION MAY STILL NOT BE ENOUGH. IT MAY NOT ERASE ALL INEQUITIES; IT MAY NOT PROVIDE ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES IT SHOULD.

IF THAT IS THE CASE, WE SHOULD KNOW WHAT ELSE MUST BE DONE IN JANUARY WHEN WE HAVE THE REPORT OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S BLUE RIBBON PANEL ON VETERANS AFFAIRS, WHICH IS NOW CONDUCTING A NATION-WIDE, GRASS-ROOTS STUDY OF VETERANS' PROBLEMS.

I PLEDGE TO YOU THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION, WHICH HAS INCREASED ITS BUDGETARY REQUESTS FOR VA PROGRAMS AN AVERAGE OF 300 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR SINCE 1963, IS NOT GOING TO STOP HERE. WE WILL NOT REST UNTIL WE HAVE DONE ALL WE CAN TO OPEN DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RETURNING VETERAN, AND TO CARE FOR THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO DO NOT RETURN.

THAT IS OUR INTENTION, THAT IS OUR PLEDGE. AND THIS IS THE LEAST THIS NATION CAN DO FOR THOSE FEW WHO SERVE THE MANY IN SUCH FULL MEASURE.

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NOW, AS TO VIETNAM ITSELF.

THE DEBATE IN OUR COUNTRY -- THE DEBATE I REFERRED TO A MOMENT AGO -- HAS TAKEN AS ITS FOCUS THE NATIONAL ELECTION WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE IN SOUTH VIETNAM WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

WE HAVE HEARD CHARGES BY PROMINENT AMERICANS THAT THE ELECTION WILL BE A "FRAUD" AND A "FARCE" ... THAT THE RESULT HAS ALREADY BEEN FIXED ... AND THAT THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM IS THEREFORE NOT WORTHY OF CONTINUED AMERICAN SUPPORT.

NO ONE WHO HEARS THESE CHARGES CAN HEAR THEM COMPLACENTLY OR WITHOUT GIVING THEM FULL ATTENTION. FOR, AS A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, WE ARE REPELLED BY THE IDEA THAT THAT PROCESS MIGHT BE SUBVERTED -- ESPECIALLY IN A PLACE WHERE SO MANY AMERICAN LIVES AND RESOURCES HAVE BEEN COMMITTED.

TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU MY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION AND ABOUT THE CHARGES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE.

FIRST, MAY I SAY THAT THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH VIETNAM DOES NOT RESEMBLE ONE IN DAVENPORT, IOWA -- NOR SHOULD WE EXPECT IT TO. THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL, BUT THEY ARE INEXPERIENCED IN SUCH THINGS AS A NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

THEY ARE ALSO TRYING TO CONDUCT THAT CAMPAIGN IN THE MIDST OF A MILITARY CONFLICT AND IN THE FACE OF TERRORISM AND ASSASSINATION BY THE FORCES OF THE VIET CONG, WHICH HAVE AS A PRIME OBJECTIVE THE UNDERMINING OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. SO THINGS ARE NOT TIDY AND ORDERLY. THEY ARE CONFUSED AND DISORDERLY.

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THAT CAME A FEW DAYS AGO --
WHEN A PLANE CARRYING SEVERAL NON-GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES
TO A POLITICAL RALLY WAS DIVERTED TO ANOTHER AIRPORT
BECAUSE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS. BECAUSE OF THIS, THE
SMALL CROWD AT THE ORIGINAL DESTINATION MISSED THE
CANDIDATES.

NOW IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN IN THE UNITED STATES --
AND IT HAS -- IT WOULD BE THE SUBJECT FOR SOME HUMOR
ON THE HUNTLEY-BRINKLEY REPORT, AND, AT THE MINIMUM, A A
NEWSPAPER COLUMN BY ART BUCHWALD OR MY FRIENDS EVANS
AND NOVAK. I CAN SEE IN MY MIND'S EYE THE HEADLINES:
"WINDS BLOW, HUMPHREY MISSES CROWD AT RALLY" OR "HHH
PLANE DIVERTED: OOPS, SORRY WRONG AIRPORT" OR EVEN
"HUMPHREY TO PILOT: WHAT GOES ON HERE?"

NOW IT HAPPENS THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL AMERICAN
OBSERVERS WHO WITNESSED THAT INCIDENT IN VIETNAM. THEY
REPORTED THAT THE WIND WAS BLOWING, THAT THE CANDIDATES'
PLANE WAS DIVERTED, AND THAT THE SMALL CROWD ASSEMBLED MISSED
the rally.

SEVERAL
THEY ALSO REPORTED THAT SEVERAL OF THE CANDIDATES
ON THE PLANE, WHEN THEY FOUND THEMSELVES STRANDED AT
THE WRONG AIRPORT WITHOUT ANY VOTERS, WERE LESS THAN
PLEASED.

SO WHAT DID THAT INCIDENT BECOME FOR SEVERAL
CRITICS HERE AT HOME OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT
AND OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM? IT BECAME A DEEP
PLOT BY THE REGIME TO UNDERMINE THE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES.
IT BECAME A SUBJECT FOR SPEECHES AND PUBLIC DENUNCIATIONS.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE CRITICS SPOKE OUT IN
GOOD FAITH. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THEIR CONCERN WAS
GENUINE.

BUT I WOULD ASK THIS: WHEN THE STAKES ARE SO
HIGH ... WHEN IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS AND IS NOT GOING ON IN VIETNAM, WOULDN'T
IT HAVE BEEN A GOOD IDEA TO CHECK THE FACTS?

WHAT ARE THE FACTS CONCERNING THIS ELECTION?

IN JANUARY 1966 -- SEVEN MONTHS AFTER ASSUMING POWER -- PRIME MINISTER KY ANNOUNCED HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO SEEK CONSTITUTIONAL, REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BY THE END OF 1967. THAT SCHEDULE HAS BEEN ADHERED TO.

IN SEPTEMBER OF ALAST YEAR, ELECTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO DRAFT A CONSTITUTION. IN THOSE ELECTIONS SOME 532 CANDIDATES COMPETED FOR 117 SEATS. SOME 4.3 MILLION PEOPLE VOTED -- OR OVER 80 PER CENT OF THOSE REGISTERED -- DESPITE CALCULATED TERROR AND DISRUPTION ON THE PART OF THE VIET CONG.

DESPITE PREDICTIONS THAT IT COULD NOT BE DONE, THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY -- AFTER OPEN AND OFTEN ANGRY DEBATE -- COMPLETED A DRAFT CONSTITUTION WITHIN THE STIPULATED PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS. DESPITE PREDICTIONS THAT IT WOULD NEVER DO SO,

THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT PROMULGATED THAT
CONSTITUTION WITHOUT CHANGE ON APRIL 1 OF THIS YEAR.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS
OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION, THE ASSEMBLY PREPARED DRAFT
ELECTION LAWS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL AND LEGISLATIVE
ELECTIONS. THESE LAWS PROVIDE FOR ALL NORMAL SAFEGUARDS
FOR A FREE ELECTION, INCLUDING FULL AND EQUAL
REPRESENTATION BY ALL CANDIDATES IN CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES,
IN VOTE-COUNTING AND ELECTION SUPERVISION.

ON SEPTEMBER 3 -- NEXT WEEK -- PRESIDENTIAL AND
UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD. LOWER HOUSE
ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE OCTOBER 22.

FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, 19 -- YES, NO
LESS THAN 19 SLATES FILED. ONE DROPPED OUT AND SEVEN
WERE DISQUALIFIED BY THE ASSEMBLY (NOT BY THE RULING
DIRECTORATE), FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS UNDER THE
ELECTED ASSEMBLY'S OWN GROUND RULES. THIS LEAVES 11
SLATES IN THE RUNNING.

FOR THE UPPER HOUSE, 64 SLATES FILED. OF THESE, 16 WERE DISQUALIFIED FOR FAILING TO MEET REQUIREMENTS OF THE ELECTION LAW. THIS LEAVES 48 SLATES REMAINING, OR 480 CANDIDATES, OFFERING A WIDE CHOICE OF PERSONS FROM ALL SECTS AND NON-COMMUNIST POLITICAL PERSUASION, FOR THE 60 SENATE SEATS.

IN ADDITION TO THESE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, ELECTIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN TAKING PLACE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. ELECTIONS FOR VILLAGE COUNCILORS WERE HELD ON SUCCESSIVE SUNDAYS IN APRIL. SOME 77 PER CENT OF THE REGISTERED ELECTORATE IN THE VILLAGES VOTED,-- SOME 2.5 MILLION PEOPLE.

THERE WERE 12,719 CANDIDATES FOR THE 8,948 SEATS ON THESE COUNCILS. THE VIET CONG RESPONDED TO THE VILLAGE ELECTIONS BY THREATENING VOTERS AND BY KILLING 12 AND KIDNAPING 31 CANDIDATES.

IN MAY AND JUNE ELECTIONS WERE HELD ON SUCCESSIVE SUNDAYS FOR HAMLET CHIEFS. SOME 78 PER CENT OF THOSE REGISTERED FOR THESE ELECTIONS VOTED -- SOME 2.3 MILLION PEOPLE. SOME 4,476 HAMLET CHIEFS AND 507 ASSISTANT HAMLET CHIEFS WERE ELECTED FROM AMONG 11,643 CANDIDATES. THE VIET CONG HARRASSED VOTERS AND POLLING PLACES AND ASSASSINATED TWO HAMLET CHIEFS. BY THE END OF THIS YEAR ABOUT HALF OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S HAMLETS WILL HAVE HELD ELECTIONS FOR THEIR LOCAL LEADERSHIP.

NOW, IN THE IMPORTANT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE THIEU-KEY TICKET ENJOYS AN ADVANTAGE BECAUSE IT IS IN POWER .. BECAUSE IT IS BY FAR THE BEST KNOWN OF THE 11 PRESIDENTIAL SLATES ... AND BECAUSE ITS OPPOSITION IS DIVIDED AND FRAGMENTED.

YET, ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS FILED BY OUR DIPLOMATIC AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THEIR ELECTION IS BY NO MEANS A SURE THING.

THERE HAS BEEN CRITICISM HERE, AND IN SOUTH VIETNAM, OF PRESS CENSORSHIP, BUT SINCE JULY 21 THERE HAS BEEN NO CENSORSHIP; NUMEROUS ARTICLES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED WHICH ARE CRITICAL OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT; AND ALL CANDIDATES' VIEWS HAVE BEEN GIVEN COVERAGE.

THERE HAVE BEEN CLAIMS THAT SOME OF THE CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN HARRASSED, YET, OUR OBSERVERS CAN FIND NO SOLID EVIDENCE OF THIS. THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM -- PERHAPS BECAUSE OF EXPRESSED CONCERN ON THIS POINT -- HAS GONE BEYOND THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS TO SEE THAT EACH CANDIDATE HAS GOTTEN A FULL HEARING.

FREE TRANSPORTATION (NOT REQUIRED BY LAW), FREE RADIO-TV TIME, AND EVEN CAMPAIGN FUNDS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO EACH CANDIDATE. POSTERS AND LEAFLETS FOR EACH CANDIDATE HAVE BEEN PRINTED AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THESE ARE THINGS THAT IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH CANDIDATE TO DO FOR HIMSELF.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE ISSUES IN THE CAMPAIGN?

MUCH OF THE CAMPAIGNING HAS FOCUSED ON CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE THIEU-KY TICKET.

THERE HAS BEEN A GOOD DEAL OF DEBATE ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT -- AND ON THE BEST WAY TO FIND PEACE.

MOST OF THE CANDIDATES ADVOCATE NEGOTIATIONS HANOI AND SOME ACCEPT THE IDEA OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE VIET CONG. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE CANDIDATES' INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES SEEM TO BE PLAYING AS IMPORTANT A ROLE AS ANYTHING ELSE.

WHAT IS OUR INTEREST IN THIS ELECTION?

THERE IS NO DOUBT WE HAVE A STAKE IN IT. WE HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED -- AND THE DOCUMENTS AND BROADCASTS SHOW THAT HANOI BELIEVES -- THAT A POPULARLY-ELECTED, REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON WOULD BE A POWERFUL

AND POSITIVE ANTIDOTE TO THE PRESSURE, TERROR AND
PROPAGANDA OF THE VIET CONG.

AND WE AS A GOVERNMENT HAVE MADE IT CRYSTAL
CLEAR THAT, IN OUR VIEW, ANY SUBVERSION OF THE
ELECTORAL PROCESS ... ANY DENIAL OF THE CHANCE OF
SELF-GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD BE A SETBACK
ON THE ROAD TO PROGRESS AND TO PEACE.

LAST WEEK PRESIDENT JOHNSON APPOINTED A
DISTINGUISHED GROUP OF AMERICANS -- A CROSS-SECTION OF
THE LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY IN THIS COUNTRY (INCLUDING,
AS YOU KNOW, YOUR FORMER COMMANDER) -- TO GO OUT TO
SOUTH VIETNAM AND TAKE A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE ELECTIONS
ON HIS BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

OTHER NATIONS ARE ALSO SENDING OBSERVERS --
INCLUDING JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, LAOS, NEW ZEALAND, BELGIUM,
TURKEY, AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA SO FAR.

AND THE ELECTION WILL OF COURSE BE OBSERVED
AND COVERED BY HUNDREDS OF AMERICAN AND OTHER REPORTERS.

BUT UNTIL THOSE REPORTS COME IN, I SUGGEST
THAT IT IS TIME FOR SOME RESTRAINT AND SOME APPLICATION
OF A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE BY THOSE WHO WOULD PRE-JUDGE
THOSE ELECTIONS.

I THINK, IN SHORT, IT IS TIME FOR A MORATORIUM
ON HASTY IMPRESSIONS AND GALLOPING CONCLUSIONS.

I THINK, IT IS TIME TO WATCH, TO WAIT, AND
TO LISTEN.

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FINALLY, MAY I SAY THIS:

EVEN IF NEXT WEEK'S ELECTIONS PROVE TO BE AN
UNQUALIFIED TRIUMPH FOR POPULAR GOVERNMENT ... EVEN IF
THE STERNEST OF THE SKEPTICS IS PROVED COMPLETELY WRONG,
THOSE ELECTIONS WILL BE ONLY ONE MORE TORTUOUS STEP --
AN IMPORTANT STEP, TO BE SURE -- ON THE ROAD TO PEACE
IN VIETNAM.

FOR WE ARE DEALING THERE WITH A STRUGGLE THAT HAS BEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING AND THAT IS BEING WAGED NOT JUST MILITARILY, BUT ABOVE ALL, SOCIALLY, POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY,

AND WE ARE DEALING WITH AN ADVERSARY WHO -- ACCORDING TO ALL OUR INFORMATION -- STILL GENUINELY BELIEVES THAT TIME IS ON HIS SIDE ... AND ADVERSARY WHO, DESPITE HIS MILITARY SETBACK AFTER SETBACK, STILL BELIEVES THAT WE MUST ULTIMATELY TIRE AND WITHDRAW, AND THAT IS WHY HE WILL NOT COME TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE,

OUR HEARTS CRY OUT AT THE HUMAN AND MATERIAL LOSS WE SEE IN VIETNAM. ALL OF US DESPERATELY WANT AN END TO THE STRUGGLE,

BUT, DESPITE THESE FEELINGS, WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO PERSEVERE, CHOOSING NEITHER THE EASY CHOICES OF MASSIVE ESCALATION OR OF WITHDRAWAL, BUT STICKING WITH THE DIFFICULT BUT NECESSARY MIDDLE COURSE WHICH CAN FINALLY BRING THE CONFLICT TO A PEACEFUL END.

No, WE DO NOT SEEK TO DESTROY THE NATION OF NORTH VIETNAM OR TO THREATEN THE SAFETY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF HER ALLIES,

No, WE WILL NOT ABANDON THE NATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND JEOPARDIZE THE SAFETY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF OUR ALLIES AND OF THE NEW AND INDEPENDENT STATES ALONG THE RIM OF ASIA.

WE WILL KEEP TIRELESSLY, DAY-BY-DAY, AT THE BUSINESS OF MEETING AND DEFEATING THE ENEMY FORCES ... OF BUILDING SECURITY AND A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING IN THE VIETNAMESE COUNTRYSIDE ... OF DOING WHAT WE CAN TO NURTURE STABLE, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT ... OF TIRELESSLY SEEKING HONORABLE NEGOTIATION, UNTIL ONE DAY OUR ADVERSARY REALIZES THAT TIME IS NOT ON HIS SIDE.

I HAVE TALKED FIRST-HAND AND FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE LEADERS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE NATIONS OF NON-COMMUNIST SOUTHEAST ASIA. WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THEY HAVE TOLD ME THAT,

IF WE FAIL AND WITHDRAW IN VIETNAM, THEY CANNOT HELP BUT FEAR FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY AND INDEPENDENCE IN THE FUTURE. AND THE PRESSURES WOULD BE GREAT FOR THEM TO COME TO ACCOMMODATION WITH THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE THEIR WAY IN ASIA BY SUBVERSION AND FORCE.

IN THE MEANTIME THESE NATIONS ARE STRIVING, INDIVIDUALLY AND TOGETHER, TO USE THIS TIME TO STRENGTHEN THEMSELVES.

LEE KUAN YEW, THE NON-ALIGNED PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE, SUMMED IT UP WHEN HE SAID RECENTLY:

"I FEEL THE FATE OF ASIA -- SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA -- WILL BE DECIDED IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS BY WHAT HAPPENS OUT IN VIETNAM."

MANY AMERICANS BELIEVE THIS IS NOT SO. THAT IS THEIR PRIVILEGE.

I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE, AND OTHER ASIAN LEADERS, HAVE SAID, MAY BE TRUE.

IN ANY CASE, I BELIEVE THE RISKS ARE FAR TOO GREAT
TO ACT ON ANY OTHER ASSUMPTION.

TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE, AND TO BE PROVED WRONG,
WOULD GO DOWN AS ONE OF THE MASSIVE BLUNDERS IN HISTORY.

SO WE MUST PERSEVERE.

AND AS WE DO I HOPE YOU WILL GIVE OUR BRAVE
MEN AND WOMEN IN VIETNAM, BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ...
THE STRUGGLING NON-COMMUNIST NATIONS SEEKING THEIR
WAY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ... AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES YOUR PRAYERS AND YOUR CONSTRUCTIVE
SUPPORT.

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