

## VIETNAM

At last, we seem near peace in Indochina.

The news from the White House last week answered the hopes and longing of all of us. We can only pray now that nothing blocks the final agreement.

At this moment, of course, the President has my strongest support.

There have been deep divisions over the continuation of this war. But ending the nightmare cannot be a partisan issue.

I know my party will back the President now -- just as we welcomed his trip to China and the arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. The world should know that whatever our differences on other questions, all Americans are united in their yearning for peace.

But we will need that unity long beyond the signing of a settlement in Paris. For this war has been more than killing and destruction in Indochina. It has torn at the soul of America and left fearful scars on our spirit as a people.

The healing will only begin when the guns fall silent in Southeast Asia. We won't truly end this long ordeal until we also make peace with ourselves here at home.

There may soon be a ceasefire in Vietnam.

But there is not truce in sight for the thousands of Vietnam veterans who have come home to unemployment lines.

There is still no truce for over-taxes workers on assembly lines, for the besieged family farmer, for housewives losing the battle against inflation.

This is still no truce for our older citizens without adequate incomes, or for millions of Americans who must surrender their life savings to pay medical bills.

There is no truce yet for our strangles transportation, for our dying rivers and lakes, for our bankrupt colleges.

And there is still no truce in the unseen destruction of children's minds -- in slum tenements, in dirt-floor farmhouses, on forgotten reservations.

Until we turn to those struggles, all those tragedies, the real promise of peace for America will remain unfulfilled.

We saw the tragic irony in this during the last few days. While the White House proudly ~~pre~~dicted reconciliation in Indochina, the President vetoed funds for the reconciliation of America.

... for veterans health care

... for economic development in areas of high unemployment

... to help industries fight pollution.

And we are told there are more vetos to come.

None of us -- Democratssor Republican -- wants higher taxes. None of us wants to live with rising prices or a deepening natural debt. But we cannot ask the poor, the unemployed, or the hard-pressed average family to pay the price of our economic problems.

There are other policies to deal with those questions ... policies that put people ahead of bureaucratic waste and special interests.

And a President who followed those policies ... who sought peace at home as earnestly as we now seek it in Vietnam ... would find behind him the same bi-partisan unity President Nixon now has in these final negotiations.

Most of all, peace and unity depend upon our learning the harsh lessons of this war. No other chapter in our history has been so deeply disillusioning. But no other experience has so clearly pointed the way out of that despair.

First, we have learned the danger and the folly of deception in government. We must have again a government that tells the truth to itself and to the American people. That kind of leadership could fall the limits of our power ... and its mistakes. And it would deserve again the trust of its citizens.

Second, we learned in this war the terrible cost of a weak Congress and an all-powerfull Executive. We must restore the independence of the Congress, fortify it to deal with the complex problems of defense and foreign policy, and make it the equal partner in government .. the people's voice ... that the Founders intended it to be. That kind of Congress would prevent the abuse of power that led us into Vietnam ... and that Congress would deserve your respect.

Finally, I believe we must all face what our country has done to the peoples and lands of Indochina ... and reach back into our ideals to restore a basic humanism to American foreign policy.

For after the documents have been signed, after our negotiators have returned, ~~the~~ prisoners released and ~~out~~ troops come out, we will have left behind a cruel legacy.

For too many people in Indochina, America has become not the symbol of peace ... but the steel splinters that lacerate their children ... the ashed of a village obliterated so impersonally from 40,000 feet ... the 70 million bomb crators that will poison the land for decades.

And though I will certainly support the President's pledge in the peace settlement to help reconstruct all the nations of the area, that will not be the whole answer. The ultimate reconstruction from this war must be in the way we look at the world.

Abroad, as at home, we must learn to feel what we know.

That kind of policy would never again send our men ~~and~~ kill and be killed when our security was not at stake. And it ~~own~~ would rest not on the favor of foreign dictators or imaginary security in a world largely beyond our vital interests, but on what was right.

The American people don't want it to declare war on other countries every time there is evil in the world. But they do expect it to declare American on the side of life and justice.

We can learn those lessons. We can make peace with ourselves. We can emerge from one of the ~~cruelest~~ and most ~~devisive~~ periods in our history to a new era of unity and decency.

We can. But the moment is now.

We cannot sign a settlement in Vietnam and leave America in torment -- and call it peace.

We cannot end this war with its lessons unlearned -- and not pay its awful price again.

We have met these moments of rendezvous with history before ... in the Depression, in World Wars.

And we can and must do it together, Republican and Democrat ... regardless of the party in the White House.

The columnist William Shannon put it this way:

For the strength of America is not in the Presidency but in the people. A President who brought out the best qualities of the American people rather than manipulated their anxieties and exploited their divisions would find himself leader of a nation that was mighty because it was a nation renewed.



I believe we can do that. Because I believe that our greatness as a people lied in a basic decency that puts America above partisan division.

The end of this war can be the beginning of that renewal of the American spirit.

And that renewal can begin to repay the sacrifice of more than 50,000 Americans and a million in Indochina for whome peace came too late.





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