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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

January 28, 1975

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you very much for your letter of January twenty-seventh.

I assure you that it is the war in South Vietnam, and not the country or its people, which has obsessed me for so many years. And I cannot live easily with killing by either side.

What moves me now, however, is my conviction that our policy should be reflected in the Paris peace agreement which we negotiated and signed two years ago. I think you know the Paris agreement did not represent a victory for the United States, the Nixon Administration's inflated descriptions notwithstanding. It was far less than that. But it did represent a way to end our involvement, to win the return of our prisoners, and to provide for the creation of machinery to resolve the political differences in South Vietnam by peaceful means. And on that point, it is important to recognize that the war was not fought only so a ceasefire could be achieved. It was fought over deep seated philosophical and political disputes. And much as we regret it, it was inevitable that the ceasefire would falter if the political provisions of the agreement failed.

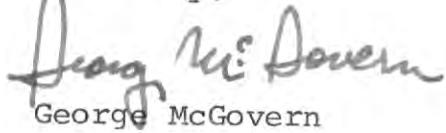
That is what has happened now, and I frankly fault the Thieu government for that result. From the beginning Mr. Thieu has attempted to thwart the steps that were envisioned by the agreement to establish political freedoms, to create a National Council on Reconciliation and Concord, and to pave the way for elections in which all parties would participate. Perhaps that is understandable, because the agreement does not serve Mr. Thieu's interests. It is not wholly satisfactory to us either. But that is beside the point, because it did represent the best of a number of unhappy options.

Therefore, as I read the present situation, Mr. Thieu wants our open-ended support for a continued effort to seek a military solution, in contravention of what the agreement provides. We have concluded -- based on bitter and bloody experience -- that such a result cannot be achieved, even

with a massive direct involvement by the United States. Under the circumstances, I think more aid to Thieu only serves to sabotage the agreement. That is why I oppose the Administration's request.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,



George McGovern

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