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BRIEFING ON VIETNAM

PART
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HEARINGS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
NINETY-FIRST CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
WITH
SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM P. ROGERS AND
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MELVIN R. LAIRD

NOVEMBER 18 AND 19, 1969

(Secret hearings held on November 18 and November 19, 1969;
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icy. Tomorrow the committee will receive testimony from Secretary of Defense Laird on the military aspects of the policy.

Mr. Secretary, do you wish to begin by commenting on the President's speech and the implications as we discussed earlier?

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM P. ROGERS, SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to have this opportunity to meet with you today to discuss the administration's position on Vietnam.

As you suggested, Mr. Chairman, I will address myself briefly to the five questions referred to by the President at the beginning of his speech on November 3. I will make this brief, because I am sure that the committee would like to have an opportunity to ask questions, so I will not take too much time.

HOW AND WHY THE UNITED STATES GOT INVOLVED IN VIETNAM

The first question was, How and why did the United States get involved in Vietnam in the first place?

I do not have to remind the members of this committee that the history of our involvement in Vietnam is a long and controversial one. It has, nevertheless, been marked throughout by one clear, consistent, and worthy aim: to help preserve for the people of South Vietnam the opportunity for free choice as to their future. The stake we have in achieving this aim has been recognized in varying degrees and in different ways by both the executive and the legislative branches of our Government on many occasions.

In the midfifties, President Eisenhower, in response to the request of the South Vietnamese Government, sent economic aid and military equipment to assist the people of South Vietnam. In 1962, President Kennedy sent 16,000 military personnel to Vietnam as combat advisers. In 1965, President Johnson sent U.S. combat forces to South Vietnam.

One can, of course, disagree with those decisions. Certainly, everyone deplores the heavy cost in lives and material which they have involved. As President Nixon suggested in his recent speech, the timing, the magnitude, and the implementation of our policy have been severely criticized by many. However, I believe that most people support our objective, which is to permit the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future without outside interference. However, we do not wish to—

The CHAIRMAN. Could I ask right there about outside interference? Do you not consider we are outsiders?

Secretary ROGERS. Oh, yes; we consider we are outsiders. However, this administration does not wish to debate the past. We are faced with the present and the future. We do not think our longstanding objective in South Vietnam should be abandoned, but we do think that the war should end at the earliest possible date, preferably through negotiations. In any case we think that conducting the war as it has been conducted is counterproductive and denies responsibility to the very people who should have it, the South Vietnamese.

We are reducing the 540,000 American troops that were in Vietnam in an orderly and planned way by turning over the fighting to the

South Vietnamese themselves. This policy of troop replacement or Vietnamization will make it possible for the United States to achieve an end to the American involvement in the war and at the same time it is our hope it will permit the people of South Vietnam to decide their own future.

HOW NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS CHANGED POLICY OF PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION

The second question asked was, How has this administration changed the policy of the previous administration? Well, the present administration—I do not want to refer to the previous administration—just let me say what the present administration has done.

First, it has proposed complete withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces as soon as possible and in answer to the chairman's question, of course, we do recognize that the American forces are outside forces.

Senator GORE. Is that mutual withdrawal or unilateral withdrawal?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, it has to be mutual. Proposed complete withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces as soon as possible. So that includes North Vietnam as well as American, Australian, Korean, New Zealand, Philippine, Thai forces.

Second, we have offered to negotiate supervised cease-fire or cease-fires under international supervision to facilitate the process of mutual withdrawal. We have proposed internationally supervised elections organized by joint electoral commissions which would include representatives of the other side.

Those commissions as we envisage them, could include representatives from other nations, so-called nonaligned nations, as well as representatives from North Vietnam and the NLF or PRG. We have announced that we are prepared to accept any government in South Vietnam that results from the free choice of the South Vietnamese themselves.

Now, on the battlefield there has been significant deescalation of the war. I do not want to leave the impression that this necessarily is a continuing trend because I realize that there have been too many optimistic predictions that have been made in connection with this war, but I do want to state these as facts. They are facts.

The orders to our military commanders have been changed. The orders previously in effect were described by President Johnson in a letter, I think, to General Abrams as requiring maximum pressure on the enemy. I might say, so that there is no misunderstanding on that point, that the orders that went to the field did not include that phrase but in a letter to—

Senator CASE. What phrase, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary ROGERS. The phrase "maximum pressure." But as I understand it, there was a letter from President Johnson to the commander in the field, either General Westmoreland or General Abrams—I think General Abrams—saying that the orders required maximum pressure. Now, these orders have been changed.

The CHAIRMAN. What are they now?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, if it is agreeable with you, I think Mr. Laird will make those available to you, at least discuss them tomorrow,

and I think he is in a better position to do that than I am, although I would be glad to talk about it if you want to.

LEVEL OF ENEMY TROOP REPLACEMENT LOWERED

So that the orders have been changed. The level of fighting has been substantially reduced. It can be argued as to why the reduction occurred, who is responsible for it, but the fact is that the level of fighting has been reduced. Casualties have been greatly decreased, as you know. The figures for the last several weeks are the lowest they have been since 1966.

Here again, I do not think we should put too much emphasis on that because they may go up again but the fact is that they have been considerably reduced for the last 2 or 3 months. The levels of enemy infiltration have been substantially down; down by about two-thirds. Now, I might say in this connection that there is some intelligence to the effect that in recent days the infiltration has increased some. But over a period of time, certainly since March, the level of infiltration has been substantially down compared to the previous year or the previous 6 months. Enemy troop replacement has diminished by about 40,000 in this period and by enemy troop replacement I mean that the estimates of the intelligence community and the military MAC/V are that the casualties, deaths of one kind or another, on the part of the enemy have exceeded the replacements in Vietnam by about, in South Vietnam, by about 40,000.

Senator MUNDT. Over what period?

Senator SYMINGTON. Excuse me. In context, you are not saying that they could not replace those if they wanted to.

Secretary ROGERS. No. I am glad you asked that question.

Senator SYMINGTON. The implication is that they are deescalating also.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, what I would like to do, Senator, is not to—at least not for the moment to analyze or predict but just state facts. In other words, these are facts I believe. As far as I can tell, the things I am saying are facts. Now, whether they have any political significance or whether they are a portent for the future or not, I think it is better at least for the moment not to discuss it. The fact is these are facts.

Senator SYMINGTON. One more observation, in Townsend Hoopes' book he points out that the number of 17-year-old North Vietnamese available for military service even in the years when they were fighting their heaviest is far more than they need to replace the cadres they have and that being true, the reason for my question is, if they are cutting down, is it because they are playing along with us, or is it because you think their casualties have been so heavy? If you do not want to comment, that is all right.

Secretary ROGERS. I think the honest answer is that we just do not know.

Senator MCGEE. Can you go back to that fact, then? The fact is, if we understand it correctly, that there are 40,000 fewer replacements going in now than there are casualties or deaths on the other side? Is that it?

Secretary ROGERS. No. Not quite, Senator. What I am saying is that over a period, I believe it is about 9 months roughly in that time frame, the casualties on the part of the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong have exceed their replacements by about 40,000.

Senator CHURCH. So the total level of their forces is down by 40,000 as compared to what it was. The total level of our forces by the end of the year will be down by 60,000 as compared to what it was.

Secretary ROGERS. As I said, it might be helpful—this is a short statement—if I finish the statement and come back. I do not want to leave the impression, though, that the fact that 40,000 less necessarily means it is going to continue that way. As Senator Symington suggested, it may be increased and they have the ability to increase it fairly quickly.

Senator CASE. May I ask a question, Mr. Secretary? Does that 40,000 include troops in Cambodia, in sanctuaries across the line, and so forth?

Secretary ROGERS. [Deleted.]

INFILTRATION OF TROOPS FROM NORTH TO SOUTH VIETNAM

Senator GORE. Mr. Secretary, I am a bit confused. You speak at one time of infiltration and then the next time of replacement and include both North Vietnamese and Vietcong in replacement. Would you mind telling us what the breakdown of the North Vietnamese—

Secretary ROGERS. I meant—

Senator GORE. It could not be that they have 40,000 less.

Secretary ROGERS. When I use infiltration, I am talking about troops provided by North Vietnam which are sent to South Vietnam.

Senator GORE. All right.

Secretary ROGERS. [Deleted.]

Now, when I talk about troop replacement I am talking about when those troops get to South Vietnam plus recruitment of the Vietcong. So when you talk about troop replacement, that includes both.

Senator GORE. [Deleted.]

Senator CHURCH. Would you also provide us with your estimate of the strength of the Vietcong, current strength?

Secretary ROGERS. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Will you proceed and finish so that we can ask our questions in an orderly manner, please, sir?

NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS AND BATTLEFIELD IN VIETNAM

Secretary ROGERS. Thank you. Turning now to the second question, what has really happened in negotiations in Paris and on the battle front of Vietnam. The United States has put forward in Paris far-reaching and comprehensive peace offers which include, as I have said, mutual withdrawal of forces, international supervised cease-fire or cease-fires, and elections organized by joint commissions under international supervision, the results of which the United States and the Government of the Republic of Vietnam are pledged to accept regardless of the outcome.

We and the Government of Vietnam have publicly stated our readiness to meet with the other side in public or private without any preconditions, to discuss these proposals as well as those that they put forward.

On October 30 we made a new proposal for restricted sessions with limited attendance on each side and only brief statements to the press after each session. The other side has thus far shown no disposition to accept our offers to negotiate seriously.

The North Vietnamese have advocated despite their earlier agreements to four-party negotiations that the war could not be settled unless the present government be excluded from the peace discussions and in fact removed from office.

This, of course runs counter to our basic aim in Vietnam which is to secure the right of the people to determine their own political future and, of course, the North Vietnamese are well aware of this. Their position in private talks has been as intransigent as in public talks. What is needed to get serious negotiations—

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT FIGURES ON NORTH VIETNAMESE IN
SOUTH VIETNAM

Senator GORE. [Deleted.]

Secretary ROGERS. When was this, Senator, and who gave it to you?

Senator GORE. May I ask the staff to identify it? Defense Department.

Secretary ROGERS. Let me see it. Why do I not finish my statement first?

Senator GORE. I hate to interrupt but [deleted].

Secretary ROGERS. As I say, I am perfectly willing to sit down and go over this with you later but it gets a—

Senator GORE. Well, I apologize.

The CHAIRMAN. Proceed, Mr. Secretary. We will resolve that numbers game afterward. We killed more than that every month there for a while, did we not?

Go ahead.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I was talking about negotiations and—

The CHAIRMAN. You were right in the middle of negotiations.

NO WILLINGNESS ON PART OF ENEMY TO NEGOTIATE

Secretary ROGERS. What is needed, of course, to get negotiations going is a willingness on the part of the other side to negotiate. So far we have not seen any willingness on their part to negotiate. We would hope that the speech by the President on November 3 would convince them that in the long run a negotiated peace will be in the best interests of all concerned.

As for the situation in the battlefield of Vietnam, Secretary Laird will be dealing with this in full tomorrow when he appears before you.

Senator MUNDT. Will you ask him to give us the figures so we will have that?

Secretary ROGERS. I will, and I will hope on these things we can straighten them out because I think part of it is the fact that a lot

of people are involved and a lot of people get different figures in different ways and I think when we finish this we can get an understanding about figures. Of course, you have to keep in mind that some of these are estimates, so you cannot be precise about the numbers. But we certainly can be closer than that.

Certainly, there has been a lowering of the level of combat activities for sometime in Vietnam and this has made it possible for the Government to make progress in bringing Government support to more areas.

SECURITY IN THE HAMLETS

The most important thing for the hamlets is security. As the Government has been able to provide security, the people have been more willing to work together for their own benefit. Most of the population now are considered to be living in hamlets under considerable Government control.

Now, this is debatable. I fully understand that there have been a lot of statements made of this kind in the past but I think on a relative basis things are better than they have been and I think most objective observers who go to Vietnam including those who are quite strongly opposed to the efforts there have come to that conclusion: that things in the pacification program seem to be better. The Vietcong are defecting at nearly three times last year's rate. Last month some 5,600 former enemy changed sides. This is by far the largest in the history of the war. In August, and for the first time since the Tet offensive in 1968, the number of refugees went below the 1 million mark and now stands at less than 600,000. Over 800,000 people have returned to their homes or have been permanently relocated this year. And that, I think, is a fact. It is a significant fact, that it is that number of people. It is quite an effort to get 800,000 people relocated.

Many steps have been taken to make these communities more self-reliant, less dependent on Central Government direction and control.

Another evidence of increased support of the Government is the success of the citizens volunteer self-defense organization known as the People's Self-Defense Force. Over 2 million people have joined up to defend their homes and I think it is the estimate that about one-fifth of those have been armed. So that there are 2 million people in the Self-Defense Force and about 400,000 have been armed with rifles.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, I wonder if we could not get along a little faster. We should get on with questions.

Secretary ROGERS. I have been pretty fast. I could read this in 10 minutes.

The CHAIRMAN. Ten more minutes?

Secretary ROGERS. No, no. I could have read the whole thing in 10 minutes without interruption.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you summarize the rest of it?

SIGNIFICANCE OF PACIFICATION

Secretary ROGERS. I will not take long. The significance of what has been happening in pacification is that the trend seems to be in the Government of Vietnam's favor and that the population susceptible to Vietcong pressure and coercion has been decreasing. The Vietcong

require a base of population to recruit or impress from, to transport ammunition and supplies, to grow foods, to supply information, to circulate propaganda and to hide among. According to all available information this base has been declining. Let me add here that I do not cite these facts to suggest that the other side is incapable of continuing the war. I believe that the enemy has the capability of continuing the war on a reduced scale for several years.

CHOICES AVAILABLE IF THE UNITED STATES ENDS THE WAR

What choices do we have if we are to end the war? President Nixon said on November 3:

I am sure you recognize from what I have said that we really only have two choices: I can order an immediate, precipitate withdrawal of all Americans from Vietnam without regard to the effect of that action, or we can persist in our search for a just peace through a negotiated settlement, if possible, or through continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization, if necessary—a plan in which we will withdraw all of our forces from Vietnam on a schedule in accordance with our program, as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom.

As the President has often said, it is the preferred objective of the United States to negotiate a mutual withdrawal of both the United States and North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam.

OUTLINE OF PRESIDENT'S WITHDRAWAL PLAN

In the event the North Vietnamese continue to refuse to negotiate with us to that end, the President has directed the execution of a plan which would make it possible for the United States to withdraw its forces from combat in South Vietnam and enable the forces of the Republic of Vietnam to assume the burden of that nation's defense.

The plan provides for completion of the transfer of the combat role at the earliest practical date consistent with our objective. The schedules of redeployment have been drawn up to take into account changing levels of enemy threat, the combat capability of Vietnamese forces, and other pertinent factors.

As the President said in his speech, the plan envisages a phased withdrawal of U. S. troops. The President announced the first phase on June 9 and the second on September 16. The redeployment packages provide an orderly transfer of combat responsibility throughout Vietnam, bearing in mind logistical problems and such factors as the enemy deployment. This might be referred to, Mr. Chairman, as the first part of the plan and will provide for the replacement of American ground troops by those of South Vietnam, and thus provide an orderly transfer of combat responsibility. The remaining force will be support for the South Vietnamese. The plan envisages a second part involving the replacement of remaining troops at appropriate times after the Vietnamese have assumed the full combat role. The size and duration of this force will depend on developments with respect to the enemy threat and the ability of the South Vietnamese to take over full support of the war.

These are the broad outlines of the President's withdrawal plan. As the President has said, he does not intend to announce a timetable, although he has such a specific timetable clearly in mind. The Presi-

dent, in the exercise of his constitutional duties as Commander in Chief, will give the necessary orders to implement the plan when he believes it is in the best interests of the Nation.

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE?

What are the prospects for peace? Most of what I have said to you today concerns policies we have set in motion to reduce and end American involvement in the war in Vietnam. I have also discussed the proposal we have made that would lead swiftly to a just settlement of the war if the other side will agree to negotiate seriously. We are confident the steps we are taking will lead to an end of the American engagement in hostilities in Vietnam. What we cannot tell is whether the other side will come to an agreement that would end the war completely. Until that happens the people of South Vietnam are going to have to continue to defend their own freedom.

It may well be that the level of violence, as it has in recent months, may decline but one cannot be sure. Certainly, a solid and lasting peace for all of Vietnam can come only when the two sides resolve their differences and reach an agreement on the future course of their divided country.

The United States stands ready to do all it can to bring about that end and would gladly accept any result that accords with the desires and aspirations of the people of Vietnam.

As President Nixon said in his speech on November 13:

I am sure, as I understand here, that we are going to reach a goal of a just and lasting peace in Vietnam, one that will, I trust, promote rather than discourage the cause of peace—not only in Vietnam but in the Pacific and the whole world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I will try to limit this as best I can so that everybody will have an opportunity to question.

U.S. AID TO FRANCE IN EARLY FIFTIES

There are one or two points I would like to concentrate on. I believe you stated that the fundamental objective—the purpose of the United States presence in Vietnam—has been from the beginning to allow the South Vietnamese to determine their own future, is that true?

Secretary ROGERS. That is true.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to remind you of this. In 1950, when President Truman first extended aid to France in Vietnam, was this to help the Vietnamese have their self-determination or was it to retain colonial control by France? Do you think that in helping the French this was to give the Vietnamese self-determination? It was exactly the opposite purpose, was it not?

Secretary ROGERS. My reference was to the middle fifties.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. We will come to the middle fifties, but you admit that was not the objective when we first gave aid to France, was it? That was our first real involvement in Vietnam. It was just the opposite of self-determination. That is true, is it not?

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I would have to go back and look. I suppose that the time that the aid was given it was thought that that is what the people wanted.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, there was no South Vietnam. There was Vietnam. Do you mean that President Truman thought that the people of Vietnam wanted the French control and, therefore, we would give aid to France?

Secretary ROGERS. I honestly do not know the answer to that. There are cases where it happens. I know in some of the African countries they wanted France to stay for a while.

Senator MCGEE. Was this not a move to get France into NATO and—

The CHAIRMAN. That is another long story but our objective clearly was not self-determination in Vietnam. I want to carry it on a little further into 1954. You had a surrender of the French and we were at Geneva. Mr. Dulles declined to stay, leaving behind Mr. Bedell Smith. He did not agree to the Geneva Accords. That was in June, I believe, of 1954. Mr. Dulles proceeded within months—I think in October or November—to create SEATO, and the objective, it seems to me, clearly was to deny the Vietnamese their right to self-determination under the Geneva Accords. We proceeded to create the Diem Government and to support it morally and financially.

In other words, our objective was not self-determination. The real fear, to be truthful about it, was communism and Red China. I think it clarifies it if we try to get this through. Right or wrong, that is not what I am arguing about. But it was not self-determination. Why did we interfere? We had no interest in there, previously, other than aid to France. It was not self-determination. Whatever else it may have been it was not self-determination, because we were undertaking to tell them what to do and to back a man whom we, in effect, imposed upon them. Is that not true?

Secretary ROGERS. I think that is probably a fair assessment as far as France is concerned, but I think we also can argue quite properly that the fear of communism on the part of many at that time was that the Communists would take over and deny the people of the area the right to determine their own future. So that the fact that you have a fear of communism is not inconsistent with your interest in self-determination. In fact, the reason that the free nations oppose communism is because the people do not have the right to determine their own future.

U.S. PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA QUESTIONED

The CHAIRMAN. But our real motive, I think, in all honesty was to contain communism. Our primary objective was not to give them self-determination as such. Our assistance to Franco in Spain was not to give them self-determination, was it? Our assistance to the junta in Greece is not to give self-determination. I am not arguing good or bad, whether you ought to or not. It is a fact, we did not do it with that in mind. I do not see how you could possibly say that. We were afraid of the strategic implications of an extension of Chinese Communist imperialism, not whether they had self-determination or not. It is a fiction and I think it would help our reasoning and our whole process

of government if we would try to get this straight. That is all I am trying to do.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I understand the argument you are making, and I do not disagree with it, except to say that one of the reasons that people fear communism is that it denies the right of self-determination to people and when you say that you are opposed to a Communist takeover—

The CHAIRMAN. There are all kinds of Communists. Do you think today in Yugoslavia that the people would not support Tito if they had a free election? With everybody—

Secretary ROGERS. I do not know the answer to that.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not know whether they would or not. The point of all this is that up to today you say it is self-determination and freedom from outside interference. Who is interfering? You say there are [deleted], we will say, North Vietnamese. We have 500,000. Who is really interfering in the course of events there? You do not think we are?

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, let us be sure—I did not say [deleted].

The CHAIRMAN. All right [deleted]. I do not care about that. But how can this country have self-determination when it is occupied for all practical purposes by 500,000 Americans? Clearly they cannot have self-determination.

INSISTENCE OF AN ELECTION UNDER THIEU GOVERNMENT

Now, you insist in effect, and all along I have felt that this is the critical element here, that whatever is done by way of elections, and so on, is done under the aegis of the Thieu government. It has to be there. We can say "international supervision" by calling in the ICC or somebody comparable but I think the sticky point from everything I have been told and I have read is that the North Vietnamese, if you want to negotiate a settlement, will not accept an election as being a free election so long as the full police power, the full control of the country, is in the hands of the Thieu government. To make the point, if it could be a provisional government, in which they may have membership but also all other elements are represented and in a fairly equal manner, they might make a political settlement. But our Government seems to take the position that there can be free elections only while the Thieu government continues to function.

I will end it by just saying the President, as you have said, wants to give them self-determination free of outside interference. Then you conclude your statement by saying he has a plan for them.

PRESIDENT'S "PLAN" IS INCONSISTENT WITH GOAL OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Well, now, is this self-determination according to the Vietnamese idea? If it is according to a plan that the Government of the United States has developed—a plan or timetable the President will not tell us, but I guess he has told Mr. Thieu—and he is going to impose it on them. And then you call that self-determination. It seems to me in all fairness that is an inherent self-contradiction. The only way they can have self-determination, if they can have it at all, is for us to get out and leave them to their own devices. In other words, we cannot impose

a plan on them and then say that is self-determination. It is inherently contradictory, it seems to me, for us to say, "Here is your plan, it is for your good, and it is self-determination"—but it is our plan.

Does not that strike you, as a high-class lawyer, to be an inherently inconsistent statement?

Secretary ROGERS. Yes, absolutely, and we never—wait a minute, now. We never made that statement.

The CHAIRMAN. You just made it.

Secretary ROGERS. Not at all. There is nothing in my statement that suggests anything along those lines.

The CHAIRMAN. Then I have completely misunderstood because I thought you said that the President has a plan and a specific timetable for the solution of this which, of course, he has not told us, but if he has a plan, is that self-determination by the Vietnamese? It seems to me—

Senator CASE. The plan is for the withdrawal of our troops.

Secretary ROGERS. Of course. It does not have anything to do with self-determination.

Senator CASE. I suppose it is unrelated to the objective either.

Senator SYMINGTON. If I may say with respect, I understood the idea was that there was a plan, and if they accepted the plan, we would move out and they would move out; and if they did not accept the plan, we would move out combat troops anyway and turn more things over to the South Vietnamese. That is the way I understood it.

Secretary ROGERS. That is right. Let me say—

The CHAIRMAN. To the Thieu government.

Senator GORE. But you leave enough force there to support the Thieu government and hold it in power.

The CHAIRMAN. That is right. To keep the Thieu government in. Part of the plan, of course, is supporting the Thieu government.

Senator SYMINGTON. I am asking if I was correct in my thinking.

Secretary ROGERS. I will be glad to answer any questions if I could take them one at a time.

Senator CASE. I think the Secretary ought to have a chance to comment on the statement. I am much interested in this myself and I think there are inconsistencies.

Senator SPARKMAN. I think probably there is some misunderstanding of the Secretary's statement because we did not let him go straight through the statement and then ask questions.

The CHAIRMAN. I yield to Senator Sparkman.

THREAT OF COMMUNIST EXPANSION

Senator SPARKMAN. Mr. Secretary, with reference to these last couple of questions that have come up, Senator Fulbright asked you something about the beginning of our involvement, if I understood him correctly, being from the fear of Communist expansion.

The CHAIRMAN. Not self-determination.

Senator SPARKMAN. Well, being from the fear of Communist expansion. I agree with you.

Now, I am not talking about just recently. I am referring way back to Dien Bien Phu.

The CHAIRMAN. 1950 first and then later—

Senator SPARKMAN. I remember that Secretary Dulles was in favor of our sending planes in at Dien Bien Phu and I think the Chiefs of Staff wanted to do——

The CHAIRMAN. Radford.

Senator SPARKMAN. Admiral Radford, and it was vetoed by President Eisenhower.

Senator PELL. And supported by the Vice President.

The CHAIRMAN. Radford was supported by the Vice President. That is correct.

Senator SPARKMAN. So I agree with that point. But let me ask you this: Is there not still a threat of Communist expansion in that area?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, certainly, several of the countries in the area think so, at least some of the officials think so. And I think there is a concern on the part of the Soviet Union that there may be some expansionist ideas that the Chinese have.

Senator SPARKMAN. May I interject a little experience right there? Maybe this ought to be off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

The CHAIRMAN. You are helping to make the point I am making. It really is not self-determination. This confuses our thinking. It is self-determination provided it is the kind of government we approve of.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, if you will——

The CHAIRMAN. If they are determined to accept our plan.

Secretary ROGERS. If we accept your premise that is right, but we do not accept your premise for a moment.

PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Senator SPARKMAN. I was going to ask you a second question. Isn't it true that the principle of self-determination has been attached to our operations there from the very beginning?

Secretary ROGERS. Right.

Senator SPARKMAN. Now, putting it into effect is a different proposition.

The CHAIRMAN. When Truman intervened on behalf of France, it was self-determination?

Senator SPARKMAN. No, I didn't say that. I am talking about the beginning of the involvement of the war in Vietnam. No. I know at Dien Bien Phu there was a move to go in with bombers and even Secretary Dulles suggested the possibility of nuclear attack. Do you remember his massive retaliation concept?

The CHAIRMAN. That was the purpose of the aid to France, to retain their control in that area, which is the opposite of self-determination. It was like somebody aiding the British to defeat George Washington. Would that have been self-determination or not?

Senator SPARKMAN. I think on this self-determination idea there is another principle and that is that we know that North Vietnam, if they have a vote, will be voting strictly according to the commands of the Hanoi government.

Now, I want to get away from that. I know my time is about up.

PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

Let me say this, Mr. Secretary. I followed the President's speech very carefully. I was in India, by the way, when it was made, and the first copy that we got from USIS only had about a fourth of it. They couldn't get it over the radio, but the next day we got a complete copy, and I liked that speech.

I do think that perhaps there was one part in it that undoubtedly caused a good bit of misgiving and that was when he spoke of a plan to bring the war to an end and a timetable to bring out the troops and leaving the details of that suspended without saying what we can do. I realize he cannot divulge it. But it seemed to me it would have been better if he just said we are going to continue to do our very best to bring this war to an end.

And there is something else I have been thinking of. I was up at the DMZ in Korea the other day and I couldn't help but recall that, in spite of that armistice agreed to in the early part of 1950, it is almost like being on the battlefield to be up there. I hope to goodness that when we settle this we won't consider it settled until we do get the real settlement.

I think the President is trying to do a real job. I think he is sincere in it. I think his offer to withdraw combat troops as they can be replaced by South Vietnamese combat troops is a good arrangement and naturally I think that can be expedited as much as possible. I strongly believe in the conference table in Paris. I hope they will continue working regardless of how futile it may seem.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Mundt?

U.S. INVOLVEMENT CAUSED BY FEAR OF COMMUNISM

Senator MUNDT. I cannot see what all the confusion is about, really. We got into the thing originally—rightfully or wrongfully, and I think we all agree we got in the wrong way, whether we should have gotten in at all. The time of the Tonkin Gulf resolution was when we put in our 16,000 troops. But as the Secretary said in his statement, and I quite agree, you never solve the future by discussing the past. But I think we got in because of the presence and the fear of communism. Anyway you look at it, that is how we got into the fight.

The CHAIRMAN. And not because of self-determination. That is the only point I was trying to make.

Senator MUNDT. Wait a minute. I want to finish because they are the same thing. If communism takes over, there is no self-determination so that the same target to begin with—

Secretary ROGERS. That was the point I made.

Senator CASE. This is a euphemism the President was using.

Secretary ROGERS. Not a euphemism.

Senator CASE. I am not critical of the President's—

Senator MUNDT. Just using different words to say the same thing.

Senator CASE. That is what I mean by euphemism.

Senator MUNDT. We certainly stayed in and moved up over 500,000 troops because of communism. We have the domino theory. I do not think the Secretary will take offense at this because we Senators

have lived with this a little longer. I think the best defense came from Dean Rusk in the Supreme Court Chamber where he pointed out that if it weren't for the fear that communism would move in where we moved out and expand—whether you call it domino theory or infiltration or what—and imperil the security of the United States. We would not have moved up to 500,000 troops. And we would not be sending troops over there to police an election and try to have some kind of self-determination at a time when there are so many other places in the world we could be called on to send troops to.

The CHAIRMAN. Very few places do have.

Senator MUNDT. So I think we are talking about the same thing, because where you have communism we all know you have no self-determination.

Now, President Nixon is talking about self-determination, but it is the same thing, to look at it realistically. Where you have communism you do not have self-determination. Where you have self-determination you haven't got communism any place in the world and never have had. So I think we are talking about the same thing, but we keep changing the words which confuses the public and as far as I am concerned in defending my position which has been to defend and support Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, I do it not at all on the concept of self-determination, except as it is related to the alternative of a Communist dictatorship which I think would be dangerous to our security. It would grow.

U.S. EFFORTS TO KEEP BALANCE IN AN UNSTABLE AREA

Senator CASE. Will the Senator yield for one-half minute on my time? I think one very troublesome thing, Mr. Secretary, about the President's choice of this as our objective is that it moves right into the charge that we are trying to police the world and we are not.

Senator MUNDT. We are not.

Senator CASE. What we are doing is trying to maintain some kind of a balance in an area which otherwise would be wholly unstable, when it is in our interests to do so. I think it is most unfortunate to use this kind of expression because it does, as Senator Mundt says, confuse everybody. It leaves us open, and the chairman is right to tear us apart every time we use it because it is not our objective to be the policemen of the world or even to let people decide whether they want to be Fascist or not. We do not care what they want to be as long as it does not disturb the peace in effect. That is what we are trying to maintain in a broad way.

Senator MUNDT. I want to clarify my own thinking and see if anybody agrees with me. I think President Nixon unhappily used a much less felicitous phrase by using this term. He puts it in terms of a narrow concept of self-determination unrelated to the Communist alternative because there are a lot of people that are not very happy. I do not think there is self-determination in Greece. I would not like to peel off 100,000 American troops to watch it over there. I do not think they have self-determination in Portugal.

I am not for this world policeman idea one single bit except as it is related to our security. Unless you can justify our posture over there directly or indirectly in the long run and relate it to our security and

the maintenance of international peace, then I think you are paying far too big a price for too small a gain.

I would like to keep these things related. That is the point I was trying to make. And I think it should be kept in our concept as we meet this.

WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION?

Now, where I disagree with the Secretary is when he argues against himself, when he says that he thinks the way to get self-determination is for us to tell the government of Thieu what to do. I do not think that is self-determination, either. If we go over and say, "look, you have got to have a provisional government," that is not self-determination. That is Uncle Sam determining what is going on. I do not think you get it that way.

I think self-determination is the way to fight communism and to do that, you have to try to set up a fair and honest system for having elections, let them have it, and then live by the results.

If they vote Communist, that is too bad.

The CHAIRMAN. Will the Senator yield there? Maybe we are not far apart. I would agree with you that if it were feasible to do it, that we just tell both sides that we made a mistake and encourage them to arrange this anyway they want. The purpose of urging a provisional government is in order to get an agreement with North Vietnamese on the way we disengage. I am not at all in disagreement with you that the better way to disengage is next year to say: "It isn't our responsibility to give you self-determination. You people set up an election and we will go along with the results."

Senator MUNDT. Well, you cannot do that unless you establish some system. That is why I ask what is all this about having an honest election? Let's supervise it. Communists, Vietnamese, Russia, and America; just supervise it. We can keep an honest election. They are not going to cheat when we are looking at them.

RESULTS OF A FREE ELECTION IN VIETNAM

I happen to believe, and I could be entirely wrong because I cannot read the minds of people 10,000 miles away, I cannot even read the minds of my own voters, but I do not think they would vote Communist in an election but if they do, then they have asked for it. They have self-determination, let them live with it.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not know whether they would either, Senator. I certainly agree it is not self-determination.

Senator MUNDT. Self-determination is not unrelated to Communism. I say it has been the same all the way through.

The CHAIRMAN. We make progress if we eliminate that. Then we come down to the significance of communism in that government. Is it worth all we are doing or not when you look at other places? I do not know.

Senator MUNDT. I will just summarize by saying this: If in the end by a vote of the people they reject Communists, the Communists have been defeated in the war, because that is what they want. They want to control it. They know they can have self-determination. Communism in history has never won a contest, and I doubt if it will in Vietnam. I yield.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gore.

ESTIMATE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOP STRENGTH IN SOUTH

Senator GORE. [Deleted.]

Secretary ROGERS. [Deleted.] I would like, before we get into a discussion about the figures, to be sure we put an agreed-upon set of figures on the record tomorrow, when the Secretary of Defense is here.

Senator GORE. I did not quite understand. You gave us a total amount. I really wanted a separate figure for organized North Vietnamese military forces present in South Vietnam. Do you have that?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, as I say, I do not want to give you a definite figure now.

Senator GORE. We understand that.

Secretary ROGERS. [Deleted.]

Senator CASE. The difference is so great that I think there ought to be some clearing up of this matter.

Secretary ROGERS. [Deleted.]

Senator GORE. Well, Mr. Chairman, this is a figure that has been furnished the committee by the Department of Defense, beginning with 1964. [Deleted.]

Senator MUNDT. Senator, if you will yield, I think the thing to do is serve notice on the Pentagon now that tomorrow we want to get the exact figures. The Secretary of State probably does not have the information. But the Secretary of Defense—

Senator GORE. Mr. Chairman, I want the record to be correct.

Senator MUNDT. I am looking at Senator Gore's figures. No question they are in there.

Senator GORE. The figure the distinguished Secretary has given us is nowhere within the ball park. He is speaking—

[Deleted.]

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I am sure, if we could have a little time, we could straighten it out. If you want to keep talking about it on the record, I think you are going to add to the confusion. I think there has to be a mistake.

Senator GORE. I agree.

Secretary ROGERS. We can straighten it out. I do not believe there is going to be any difficulty.

Senator GORE. Mr. Chairman, would it be appropriate to put in the record this secret table that has been supplied here over a period of years?

The CHAIRMAN. It certainly would.

(The classified information is in the committee files.)

Senator GORE. It also shows, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN. Yes; without objection, it will go in the record. It should never have been secret in the first place.

Senator GORE. As a matter of fact—

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, in the meantime could we look at what you are reading from, so we have a chance to study it?

Senator GORE. We handed it to you a few minutes ago. While I am calling attention to it [deleted]. But, anyway, may we go to something else, Mr. Chairman, for the remainder of my time?

The CHAIRMAN. I wish you would. I know you are capable of a better question than that.

Senator GORE. Well, it is very important. We hear a great deal about—

The CHAIRMAN. I know it is, but this is not the first time we have run into these discrepancies on figures. He has admitted his mistake.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I do not want to admit it is a mistake. I think it is a misunderstanding. I do not think it is any mistake.

If we find out the documents, compare them to other documents, we will find there is no mistake, but probably a misunderstanding. At the moment we are talking about different documents.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, proceed, Senator.

IS UNITED STATES STILL INSISTING ON A MUTUAL WITHDRAWAL?

Senator GORE. Three times in the President's speech of May 14 (see appendix) he spoke strongly against one-sided withdrawal of the U.S. troops. Yet, in June, unilateral withdrawal was announced and we have proceeded, according to press estimates, on a unilateral withdrawal of up to 60,000 troops by the end of this year.

Secretary ROGERS. December 30. I mean December 15.

Senator GORE. December 15. Does this mean that we are no longer insisting upon mutual withdrawal?

Secretary ROGERS. Senator—

Senator GORE. Proposed mutual withdrawal? Just what is our position on withdrawal?

Secretary ROGERS. I have made it, I think, fairly clear in my statement and I think sometimes, on these things, the reason we have some misunderstanding is that people aren't listening.

Now, what I said in the statement is that there are two positions that you have to keep in mind. The first position that we have is the negotiating position. We would like to negotiate a settlement.

Now, in a negotiated settlement, we have made it clear that we are prepared to negotiate in several areas: One, a mutual withdrawal of troops. And we are willing to withdraw our troops on a reciprocal basis over any period of time that is feasible and, if the North Vietnamese would do that, we are fully prepared to do that at any time.

Second, in answer to the point that the chairman made, insofar as a political settlement is concerned, we made it clear to the other side that we fully recognize the validity of what the chairman said; that is, you could not have a fair election from their standpoint under the present circumstances in Vietnam. No one denies that.

We have said that to the other side. They know it. We have said we will withdraw our troops on a mutual basis or we will locate our troops some other place. We will have an international commission that will set up procedures for the election, and that commission could be as large as necessary to guarantee the fairness of the election.

We have talked to everybody, explaining that, obviously, we could not have a fair election under the present circumstances. But the United States is committed to a fair election, and we are willing to provide any guarantees that the other side wants to be sure that the election is fair. We certainly cannot renege on that national commitment. So, we are prepared to engage in any kind of discussions to provide for a fair election.

Now, the other side, of course, says it does not want to have anything to do with the present government. It wants the present government thrown out. And it wants to put its own people in there.

We say we are perfectly willing to have the people of South Vietnam make the decision. If they decide that they do not want the present government, we will be bound by that. The present government says so, too. But let's not have the election results determined before the election. Let's have the election.

HAVING A FAIR ELECTION

Now, in terms of how do you have a fair election, we say let's talk about it. We realize what the Senator says—Senator Fulbright. We realize it is difficult to have a fair election under the present circumstances. What do you propose to do about it? We will make concessions you want to that end: Concessions meaning that we will have people come in to supervise the election. We will move our troops; we will withdraw our troops. All we are interested in is an election.

I do not know of any other way to determine what the people want under the circumstances. We are prepared to do it. Now, that is our negotiating position.

PLAN FOR SYSTEMATIC TROOP REPLACEMENT

The other question you asked relates to the fact that, as I have said in my statement, if we can negotiate a peace, we would like to. But we have to have another plan in case we cannot negotiate a peace. Our other plan, in case we cannot negotiate a peace—and so far the other side shows no willingness—is what we refer to as Vietnamization. It provides for an orderly systematic troop-replacement program. We have had two retrenchments. We will have more. The President has a definite program in mind, and we will replace our troops by South Vietnamese troops. That will be done.

If we can, at any time, if the other side wants to, negotiate a settlement, we are willing to.

In the meantime, we are going through this process and, at the end of this first part of the program, we will have American combat troops out of action. And then, later on, we will take the remaining support troops out.

Now, as far as we are concerned, those are the only two ways we know how to do it. You either negotiate a peaceful settlement or you do it the way the President is doing it. When he is talking about a plan now, he is talking about the Vietnamization plan.

In terms of our negotiating position, our negotiating position is quite flexible. We do not have any, as the Senator suggests—what he says has no relation to our position, of course. We have never said the plan we have for self-determination is Vietnamization. We say the plan we have for self-determination is "let's have an election."

FLEXIBILITY ON HAVING AN ELECTION

We will have an election on any ground rules agreed to.

Senator GORE. Could I ask a question on that now? Is my time up, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. No. I would hope you would try to be a little more specific on the plan for holding an election.

Senator GORE. The Secretary has just given what to me appears to be some encouragement. I would not quote his words, but you have heard the statement. So far as I know, there has been no such statement in the public sessions in Paris. Therefore, was it in private, in secret negotiations, that we have said this to the other side?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, we have said it to the other side [deleted] and we have made it clear that we are quite flexible about how an election should be conducted. We have said that over and over again. We have said it in our public sessions: "Why don't we talk about how an election can be conducted that is fair? Why don't you come in and talk to us about it?"

Now, what they say, "Yes, we would like an election but first you have got to get out, move all your troops out at once"; and second, "You have got to replace the present government. Then we will have an election."

You cannot do that. That is imposing a government that the other side wants on South Vietnam. This is deciding the election before it is held.

Senator GORE. Well, now, does this mean that we insist that such elections as may be held, including such concessions as they may seek and to which we may agree, must be conducted by the Saigon government?

Secretary ROGERS. No. We have made it clear that we did not expect that.

The CHAIRMAN. This is to me the very critical thing.

Senator GORE. It is very critical. And the Secretary has given us some enlightenment here. So far as I know, this committee has never had this information before.

The CHAIRMAN. This is to me the point of the whole thing.

Secretary ROGERS. We have said we are not going to change the government.

Senator GORE. This appears encouraging.

Secretary ROGERS. We are not going to throw the present government out. We think the present government has to continue in office to run the country.

On the other hand, we recognize that to have a fair election you have got to have some additional guarantees and you could have an election commission, an election commission consisting of different segments of the population, including the PRG, and including other nations, if that seems to be desirable, that would set up procedures to guarantee the fairness of an election.

And we say we do not have any precise formula. "Come in and talk to us about it and tell us what you have in mind." We cannot be involved in an election in South Vietnam, the United States cannot be involved in an election in South Vietnam, and say that we are going to have a fair election unless it is in fact a fair election.

Under these circumstances it would be totally impossible for the United States to engage in that kind of an election. We could not do that. We have to take part, we have to be sure that election is a fair one under the circumstances if the other side accepted it. The fact is they do not want to accept an election. That is a fact.

Senator CASE. Will you yield?

Senator GORE. Yes.

I agree with the chairman that is a very important point.

The CHAIRMAN. This is the critical thing. I do not minimize the difficulty. I am not saying it is easy to do it. It puzzles me deeply.

Secretary ROGERS. I am glad to have this opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN. How do you propose it? How can it be fair in view of the way the Government has treated those who disagreed with them, by putting them in jail?

It raises a question, how can it be a free election?

Senator MCGEE. Is that different from shooting them in the north?

Senator GORE. Let's not get into that.

Senator MCGEE. It is a basic thing. You are voting in Vietnam.

Senator CASE. May I just interject this because this whole matter is terribly important.

If the Secretary would carry this a little further—

Senator GORE. Well, my time has expired. I yield to you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, Senator Case, you carry it further.

Senator CASE. If I may just take it up.

The CHAIRMAN. You are recognized.

Senator CASE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MACHINERY NEEDED FOR ENFORCING RESULTS OF AN ELECTION

On this point which is terribly important, don't we have to go further than just holding an election, difficult as that is, and insuring that it is fair and that it produces a broad consensus or broad reflection of the actual feelings of what the South Vietnamese want?

Implicit in this, however, is a responsibility for seeing that once they have decided something, they are going to get it.

Now, you are not going to solve something just by having an election unless there is created by the agreement some machinery for enforcing these results. And so I do not think that just an election by itself is any answer to this problem.

Secretary ROGERS. Just on that point, of course, we recognize that and we have talked to many persons about that very point.

We have talked to nonaligned nations to see if they would be willing to assist in that procedure, and so forth.

Obviously, the two factors that have to be taken into account are, first, the fairness of the election and, second, the fact that the election will be effective, that people pay attention to the results.

What I am saying is that the other side won't talk about these things.

Senator CASE. I understand that and I understand, although I may be putting words in your mouth, that we are a little unhappy about the objective in terms of enforcing the desire of the South Vietnamese people to be free to make up their own minds as to how they want to be governed. Is that repeated deliberately for the purpose of underlining our proposal to the North and the Vietcong, that we want an election?

Secretary ROGERS. Of course. We say it because we mean it.

Senator CASE. This would make sense to me, to determine whether they want to throw us out or not. Our objectives are not to give them the right to an election. Our objectives are broader than that and deeper than that and they must be. Otherwise, you get into this trap, Mr. Secretary, of saying we are there to police the world and this

little segment is just one segment of that responsibility. I think it is a very difficult problem and I would be glad to have you comment on it. Then I have one other line of questioning.

Secretary ROGERS. I would like to comment.

I do not think that would add to the picture at all. I do not think it would be a constructive suggestion.

We are getting out. We would like to get out under conditions, though, that will permit the people to express their views, to express their will, and what we say is that the only way we know to achieve that is to have an election, and we are prepared to discuss with the other side the ways to make sure that the election is a fair one.

We recognize, fully recognize, the difficulty of having the election but we think it can be done. And we think that it can be done in such a way that people will abide by the results.

Senator CASE. You mean the South Vietnamese will, but not necessarily the North Vietnamese, and that is what I mention as a part of the problem, just to make it clear that this is no panacea.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I think if the election were conducted under these circumstances, it would have to have the support of other nations probably and certainly tacitly the support of the Soviet Union. I believe that both sides would, if you had that kind of election, be forced because of the situation, to abide by the results.

I am not at all sure that if we could get the election process started that the Soviets would not welcome it.

Senator CASE. They would, or would not.

Secretary ROGERS. I think they might welcome it.

Senator GORE. Would you yield for a question?

Senator CASE. I will be happy to yield.

BROADENING BASE OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT

Senator GORE. I thought, Mr. Secretary, that I could read into the President's speech of May 14 the possibility of a coalescence of forces through some process other than a plebiscite which is hardly in the tradition of that part of the world.

Have you explored the possibility of broadening the base of the government other than by election?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, yes. We have had many discussions about broadening the base but I think that phrase means something somewhat different than determining the will of the people.

Broadening the base usually is referred to when you are thinking about having more representative ministers in the cabinet, representative in the sense of a broader spectrum of public opinion.

Senator GORE. Including various factions and groupings?

Secretary ROGERS. That is right. And we have had a good many discussions about that, and as I am sure you know President Thieu attempted to do that. He did bring in some other groups into his Ministry. He also has had discussions with some who would not join his Cabinet, probably because they may have had aspirations themselves or maybe the position he offered was not the one that they wanted. But he has made efforts to bring in different segments of public opinion.

I think it should be said, though, in this connection, and I was impressed with this when I was there, there has not been much political cohesiveness in the country. None of the people that are prominently mentioned have much of a following. That is because of the history of the country.

HISTORY OF ELECTION PROCESS IN VIETNAM

The CHAIRMAN. They never had elections there, really.

Senator CASE. I appreciate that addition to this discussion because it goes to the question of the validity of the proposal for an election as the objective in your statement.

Secretary ROGERS. I might say they have had elections now in over 90 percent of the hamlets and they have gotten accustomed to voting.

They vote for hamlet chiefs and village chiefs. It is true that probably because of the nature of the nation now, that the elections are not exactly conducted in the way we have them because there aren't that many candidates.

In addition, it is sort of dangerous to become the village chief or hamlet chief. But they are accustomed to the election process. They have conducted them. They have a good turnout of voters. They have well over 90 percent of the voters for each one of these elections and I say, they have had a lot of elections.

Fortunately, I think President Thieu has done something that has not been done in the past. He has decentralized a good deal. He has turned over a lot more responsibility to the province chiefs and in turn to the village chiefs and hamlet chiefs, so they are getting a little accustomed to elections, and I think it is quite conceivable if the other side wanted to have an election, we could have one that would be fair.

Senator MUNDT. Will you yield?

Senator CASE. Yes, although I do think I should have 3 or 4 minutes after you get through.

USING THE UNITED NATIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE ELECTION

Senator MUNDT. The next question is how do you have an effective election, and obviously you could have an election over there and the Communists could win and it would be self-enforceable. But suppose our side wins and the Communists after that say, "Well, it was crooked and we are not satisfied."

Would there be any validity at all, Mr. Secretary, in our proposing to the U.N. a resolution providing that the way to resolve this is to have an election, fair and supervised, using every kind of supervisory authority you can get, and get the U.N. committed in advance to enforce the results of the election with some kind of an international force?

Secretary ROGERS. It would not make sense to do it now. If we get to the point where there is an election agreed upon, then we could consider it. The U.N. does not want to get involved. Neither nation is a member.

It is possible at some later stage that might—

Senator CASE. In that connection would it not be fair to suggest that the same disability applies to the possibility of U.N. actions in all other matters? When we and the Soviet Union are agreed, we may make the U.N. effective, and when we are not, it just is not going to work.

Senator MUNDT. It would be very difficult for the Soviet Union to oppose such a proposal.

SUCCESS OF ELECTIONS MAINTAINED

Senator CASE. I would like to come to my main question. My thesis on this is that negotiations will work. Elections as a means of both sides accepting a negotiated settlement may work, but only when North Vietnam comes to the conclusion that it is in its interest to do this rather than continue what it is doing now.

Secretary ROGERS. That is right.

Senator CASE. So that the heart of the question is whether or not South Vietnam is or is not increasing its own strength. It has to be accepted by North Vietnam that it would be better to negotiate now than at some later time, and that it will get a better deal by negotiating now than by waiting.

Secretary ROGERS. That is right.

Senator CASE. One of these factors, of course, is the question of whether American opinion will or will not require Americans to get out sooner rather than later, but this comes to my point that we have to accept that American opinion will not tolerate an indefinite support of a losing regime in South Vietnam. And so we come again to the question: Are the South Vietnamese shaping up? How long will it take them to do so?

USEFULNESS OF FURTHER PUBLIC HEARINGS ON VIETNAM

Now, I think that is the very heart of the question. We will get somewhere in other ways if that question is answered the right way. And that, it seems to me, is the issue, Mr. Chairman, which brings me to raise the question which I think is the chief purpose of asking Secretary Rogers to appear today. Is it going to be, or is it not going to be, helpful to the cause of peace to have this committee go into a full-dress consideration of the war, how it is going, and what its prospects are? This is what we have attempted to do before, I think usefully, although it caused great pain in some quarters, and anguish among many sections of the people.

My own feeling is that it can be useful again, but I would like to have your opinion on that question.

Senator McGEE. You mean a public hearing?

Senator CASE. A public hearing, and if so—we do want your advice—under what conditions, with what limitations, restrictions, and cautions? My own feeling is very strong that the more we get a public airing of all these questions, the better judgment we will have. Even though you are a person with enormous experience and great tact, and Secretary Laird is a gentleman who has got lots of ability, and the President has other able advisers, in the end what the President does and you do will depend upon support by the American people. And this

support can be based only upon confidence that they know what is going on.

I wish you would answer the question about the usefulness of our hearings on this matter.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I have been—

Senator CASE. Do you have any hesitancy?

Secretary ROGERS. I have some hesitancy. I have been around Washington a long time and I know when you recommend to a committee that it should not do something, it is apt not to—

Senator CASE. It is a sign of our respect for you that we want your judgment.

Secretary ROGERS. It is not the best way I think, to persuade—

Senator CASE. And you have to justify why you say so because we start out with a presumption that we ought to have them. At least, I do.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, my opinion is that at the moment public hearings would not be helpful. I think they might be harmful.

Let me say first I think that there has probably never been an issue in our Nation that has been debated more, discussed more. There has never been a war that has been more fully exposed to the public in television, radio, the press. There has never been a war in my memory where the newspaper people and cameramen can go out in the field and record everything that is happening and watch everything.

Certainly this committee has done a good job over the years in developing the issues. Young people have; colleges have discussed the issues; papers, magazines. So I really do not think there is any lack of discussion.

I think the difficulty tends to be—as this discussion this morning tends to show—the focus. How do you focus on the principal matters before the Nation? One of the reasons it is difficult to focus is because there are so many people who have so many different ideas.

SOME PUBLIC SUPPORT HELPFUL TO ADMINISTRATION

Let me say this. As we see it, if we could have considerable public support for a while and without too much public debate—I am not recommending that we oppose dissent; we realize that you people are going to talk about this a lot—but if we could have relative support for a while, we think that the other side might feel that they would be better off to negotiate a peaceful settlement.

They have taken tremendous losses. If you relate their losses and particularly you think of their population, they have suffered tremendously. We think that they could negotiate a peaceful settlement that would be in their best interests. In other words, we think they would have a better chance for a successful outcome from their viewpoint.

Senator CASE. That is, than to take over.

Secretary ROGERS. In other words, if they have the political strength they have, or if they could get it in the future, they could negotiate a settlement, political settlement, which would give them a fair shake as proving they have political strength. If, on the other hand, the program—the Vietnamization program for lack of a better word—continues to succeed, and up to this point it has been rather successful, we think, then their chances for gaining political strength decrease.

As I say, any objective observer who has gone to Vietnam recently has come back to the conclusion that things in the pacification area are really much better than they have been.

Senator CASE. I just want—

Secretary ROGERS Let me finish. So it may well be if that is correct, that the other side will come to the conclusion that they would be better off negotiating a peaceful settlement now. Their one hope is, and it is clear from all—I can fill the record if you are interested, in it—their one hope is that there will be an erosion of public opinion here. And I think that probably another public session by this committee would cause some erosion. So I would think that it would be preferable not to have one.

SHAPING UP OF SOUTH VIETNAM DUBIOUS

Senator CASE. May I just raise this point? The very heart of your question is how the Vietnamese in the south are shaping up and public exposure of this matter. I do not mean exposure in the sense of an exposé, but public development of this point which is the heart of what this committee has tried to get from Maxwell Taylor, from everybody else, from time immemorial; the public has not received anything from these gentlemen except hopeful words. The Americans will support the President. It is not a question of a couple of months or 60 days. I think it was so sad when the suggestion was made to give him 60 days of quiet and no criticism. You cannot do it that way. Either our policy is right or it is not and that depends on the factual situation. Up to now the dubiousness of South Vietnam's shaping up has been so strong in everybody's mind that this is the reason people feel that this is an endless war. I think this is the heart of the question.

Now, it is a delicate matter perhaps to expose the question and to discuss it publicly. Are the South Vietnamese ever going to really take over or, as soon as North Vietnam has decided the time has come, will they revert to 1965 or worse?

Secretary ROGERS. I have a feeling the only way we can convince the public is by our action, not by our words.

Senator CASE. Not by our action but by South Vietnamese actions.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, by both actions, both ours and theirs. I think things will occur. I do not think, in other words, that a large public debate, one more huge public debate, will assist us.

Senator CASE. Just some facts, Mr. Secretary, as to what is going on.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator, I believe your time is up.

Senator Church?

Senator CHURCH. Mr. Secretary, I would like to say just a word or two and then ask you a question or two.

OUR VITAL INTERESTS IN VIETNAM NOT AT STAKE

I have found what seems to me at least to be an element of unreality in the discussion this morning. My personal position is that it is wrong to send a conscript army halfway around the world to fight a war unless the vital interests of the United States are at stake, by which I mean the freedom and safety of the American people. I do

not think that our vital interests have ever been at stake in Vietnam; if they were at stake, we could not possibly leave the outcome of the war for other people to decide, even in a free election. That in itself demonstrates that our vital interests are not really involved at all.

But laying that aside—though I strongly believe that it lies at the base of the dissent in this country—it does not seem to me that it matters very much whether or not this committee holds public hearings again. The fact is that there has been an erosion of public support of the war that is deep and widespread. We have just had the largest public demonstration in the history of our country in Washington. Opposition to the war is really out of our hands. It is just there and it is very big.

But apart from that, let me say, to the credit of this administration, I am less vehemently opposed to Nixon's present policy than I was opposed to the policy of his predecessor. At least, now the direction seems to be outward. The attempt is to get us out rather than further in.

REASONS FOR LACK OF ENTHUSIASM ABOUT AN ELECTION

However, all of our discussion this morning, or nearly all of it, has dealt with the prospects for a negotiated settlement, which, in turn, depends on the possibility of an election. I am not at all sanguine about an election for a lot of reasons. From our standpoint, we are offering them terms that are unprecedented in their generosity. We are saying, in effect, that we are willing to negotiate a settlement of this war on the basis of a free election in which the people of South Vietnam will make their own choice. That seems utterly reasonable to us and utterly fair. But from their standpoint, after a 20-year war of extreme bitterness, it may very well be that they are in a highly unreasonable state of mind. We were uninterested in elections when we were involved in our Civil War. And elections, after all, are not the traditional means for making political decisions in Southeast Asia.

If, in the midst of our own Civil War, England had proposed that we let the matter of southern secession be determined by a plebiscite, I think Lincoln would not have been disposed to accept it, even though it might have seemed a highly reasonable idea to the English and in accord with the concept of self-determination.

Furthermore, Hanoi has been betrayed two or three times, or thinks she has, and there is also much indication of resistance to a free election in Saigon. So, given all of these factors, I just do not think that, even if it were possible to conduct a fair election under some kind of international commission, there is much prospect that Hanoi would concur or agree.

So we come, then, to the alternative which is your plan for Vietnamizing the war. I would like to ask a few questions about this plan so I will have a better understanding of it.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, could I just say—you know in their 10 points they did talk about an election—

Senator CHURCH. If it can be worked out, I think this would be the best way for us, for our own public opinion, for all concerned.

Secretary ROGERS. I share your doubt, although I think there is a slight possibility they might—

Senator CHURCH. I think we should continue to work for it, but if we must wait for Hanoi and Saigon to compose their differences in Paris we may have to wait until pigs sprout wings.

TROOP WITHDRAWALS DEPEND ON THREE FACTORS

Now, the alternative, Vietnamization; as I understand the President's proposal, he said in his speech that the rate of our troop withdrawals would depend upon three factors.

First, the progress in the Paris talks. Second, the level of enemy activity. And third, the progress in training South Vietnamese forces.

Now, my first question is, if these three factors are going to determine the rate of our withdrawal, haven't we really placed ourselves in the hands, so to speak, of two governments whose interests and objectives may very well differ from our own? In other words, have we not taken the timetable out of our hands and placed it in theirs?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, of course, those criteria were ones that he announced when he talked about the initiation of the phased-out withdrawal. He plans to continue his replacement program or Vietnamization according to the timetable that he has in mind. These other factors can enter into it to some extent, so they vary it one way or the other, but will not determine the outcome, if I make myself clear.

Senator CHURCH. In other words, though he has mentioned these three factors, they will not necessarily be determinative, that is what you mean?

Secretary ROGERS. Let me explain. You see—well, on the one about the ability of the South Vietnamese to take over their combat duties, we already are into that program quite a way. We have outfitted them with M-16 rifles. There are well over a million men trained now. We are continuing the training. We turned over the Navy boats to them so they are running all of those now. So we are convinced that they can do it. Now, as for the level of activity, of course, you cannot draw a lot of troops out if at the moment they are under attack or something like that. So these are factors that make the program somewhat flexible, but it does not mean that he is at the mercy of either the North Vietnamese or South Vietnamese in terms of putting the plan finally into effect.

TWO PHASES OF WITHDRAWAL PLAN

Senator CHURCH. Now, the second question, the withdrawal plan, as I understand it, has two phases. The first phase is the removal of our infantry and their replacement in the field with South Vietnamese infantry.

Secretary ROGERS. The general point which you make is a good one. You do not really just replace infantry. You have to replace units. Our purpose is to—

Senator CHURCH. I understand.

Secretary ROGERS (continuing). Get our troops out of combat.

Senator CHURCH. The combat units in the field.

Secretary ROGERS. They may include logistical support. You may take a division out that will have logistical support. But the purpose is to get our troops out of combat.

Senator CHURCH. Right; but in connection with phase 2, you have said that our support troops would remain to back up the Vietnamese.

Now, by support troops, do you mean engineers, supply troops, artillery, air force? This is what I understand to be support troops.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I think it really would be better for you to ask Mr. Laird that tomorrow, but, as I say, the general purpose is to get our troops out of the combat activity and to support the South Vietnamese.

Senator CASE. As organized combat units.

Secretary ROGERS. That is right.

Senator CHURCH. If Secretary Laird's testimony bears out that support troops would supply services of this kind, engineer functions, supply functions, artillery functions, air force functions, then it would seem to me that we would be leaving an expeditionary force of up to a quarter of a million men. Would that be unreasonable?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I would not want to discuss the numbers but I do not want to leave the impression that that force is going to stay there permanently. As I say, the second part of this is to do the same thing: phase them out as soon as we can.

Senator CHURCH. All right. But the President has said in his speech that the phaseout will depend upon the ability of the Saigon government gaining strength enough to assume the burden.

Now, the President has said that he will not disclose the timetable, perhaps he cannot, but it would seem to me that the best we can hope for would be to get our combat troops in the field replaced in another year, by the end of this coming year; then, assuming that the South Vietnamese hold up in the field, the removal of the remainder of our forces would be much slower.

Senator MUNDT. What does he mean "hold up"?

Senator CHURCH. Therefore, I think you are operating in a time frame that may very well be 3 or 4 years, even if it works, and based upon all of our past experience with the South Vietnamese forces, there is very little basis, it seems to me, to have much confidence it will work.

POSSIBLE RESULTS OF WITHDRAWAL PROPOSAL

I am afraid that the proposal may result in one of two things happening. At best, we may find ourselves with a large force left in Vietnam indefinitely, a kind of interminable war, and the American people will wake up to the fact that it is still costing us \$20 billion a year, and we still have a quarter of a million troops there to support this Thieu-Ky regime. At worst, as the level of our troops goes down, we may be faced with a collapse on the battlefield which would then face us with the most difficult of all possible choices at a time when our own forces had been reduced to the level where we are no longer completely capable of enforcing our own will. I foresee these as the inherent dangers in any plan for partial or piecemeal withdrawal, in any formula for keeping us partly in the war rather than taking us completely out of the war in a deliberate, orderly way.

I just do not have much confidence that Vietnamization is going to work out very well.

Senator MUNDT. Will you yield so I may ask him a question? Am I correct in assuming that troop withdrawal is running somewhat ahead of schedule?

Secretary ROGERS. It might be a little. When you say "schedule," do you mean the President's proposal for troop withdrawal?

Senator MUNDT. Yes.

Secretary ROGERS. As the President said in his speech I think it is going fairly well. You know, looking at it realistically, some of the risks that the Senator points out are there. I mean, you cannot deny them. Of course, they are. They are inherent in the situation. We hope we can overcome them.

DISCUSSION OF PRECIPITATE WITHDRAWAL

Senator CHURCH. I point them out for a reason, Mr. Secretary. When the President said we have two alternatives, I must disagree. His first alternative, precipitate withdrawal, is not what any responsible critic is urging the President to do. I think that was kind of a scarecrow.

Senator CASE. If the Senator will just yield at that point, I think he is developing now the question which is pertinent. Unless we define "precipitate" a lot more clearly than it has been defined, I cannot accept these two alternatives either.

Senator CHURCH. Nobody in the Congress is urging the President to preside over a Dunkirk-type evacuation. I do not think the President of the United States would ever accept such a course, and I would not personally urge such a course on him. Moreover, I do not think there is much support for that, even on the campuses, so I think the talk about precipitate withdrawal is really unrelated to the alternatives that anyone in the Government would seriously consider.

Senator MUNDT. Will you define for us what you mean by "precipitate"?

Senator CHURCH. "Precipitate," as defined by Webster, means sudden, unexpected, impetuous, reckless.

ALTERNATIVE OF A COMPLETE DISENGAGEMENT FROM VIETNAM

I think the actual alternatives are not just the two the President mentioned but three. The third alternative he did not mention is a national commitment to a full and complete disengagement from Vietnam brought about in a way that would permit an orderly transition on the battlefield within a reasonable period of time, whether it is 12 months or 18 months, whatever may be required to withdraw our forces in orderly fashion and to protect them as they are being withdrawn.

I personally think, under the present circumstances, that this third course has become the most intelligent policy for the United States. If we were to inform Saigon that we intended to move out in this manner, then, for the first time, I think we would begin to see these various factions in Vietnam start to work out a settlement. Conversely, as long as the Saigon generals believe that they can continue to depend indefinitely on a very large American military force, I think we will not see the accommodations within Vietnam that are going to be necessary if a viable political settlement is to be achieved.

Senator JAVITS. Would the Senator yield? Would the Senator amend the concept of "viable military force" to an American commitment to

assure against their defeat? That is a veto, too. If we are insuring South Vietnam against defeat, that is as much of a veto as they need.

Senator CHURCH. I agree. And I would add that, until we are willing to "bite the bullet" and recognize that our own vital interests are not at stake in such a way as to justify the prolongation of our own participation in this war, we have not laid the groundwork upon which a political settlement is ever likely to be worked out.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cooper?

PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION NOT NEGOTIABLE

Senator COOPER. I would like to give my view of what the President said on November 3. I heard him, read the speech carefully, and compared it to the speech he made on May 14. I thought it was much more explicit than the May 14 speech which really was a statement of general principle. The November 3 speech made clear the change in direction: that 60,000 troops would be withdrawn, that a disengagement of combat forces was intended, and that the President was following the principles he laid down at Guam.

Also he stated, explicitly, that the orders to the military had been changed. It seems to me that a good many of those who commented on the speech did not emphasize those parts at all.

The President has stated the one principle that is not negotiable—that of self-determination. At the same time he is seeking to implement that, I am sure, through negotiations, or, shall I ask you, through Vietnamization?

Secretary ROGERS. Yes.

Senator COOPER. The reason I ask is this: Assume we are able to Vietnamize the war, to arm and equip the South Vietnamese forces in such a way as to reasonably conduct the war. Would we then withdraw before they were sure of self-determination? I assume if you can get a settlement of some kind, in which the process of self-determination through elections or otherwise would be reasonably assured, then we would withdraw. But if there is no agreement of any kind with South or North Vietnam, and we believe we have equipped and armed these forces in such a way that they can defend and take care of themselves, would we then assume that the process of self-determination is reasonably assured and withdraw?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I think that goes to the point that Senator Church was making a moment ago. I rather hesitate to answer that on a hypothetical basis. I think that Senator Church has stated another variable of alternative 2. [Deleted.]

I think that the President's speech and discussions we have had with officials of South Vietnam make it pretty clear that this program of Vietnamization is going to continue and it is going to succeed. We plan to carry it out. I do not think there is any doubt in their minds about that. But I hesitate to say too much on this score because I think we have to keep in mind that if the other side thinks that they are not going to succeed in the present plans and that the President's program is going to work, then there is a possibility they will negotiate a peaceful settlement. So, I hesitate to answer too much about, you know, what happens in the months ahead.

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Senator COOPER. I am trying to get the intent. I am asking at some point—this bears somewhat on what Senator Case asked—if it appears the South Vietnamese forces are able to take care of the war themselves, would we then withdraw? I think so, given what the President has said.

Secretary ROGERS. I think if you read the President's speech he said at one point "all our forces out of Vietnam."

WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN IN VIETNAMIZATION PLAN?

Senator COOPER. He cites the alternatives to withdrawal: "Or we can persist in our search for a just peace through a negotiated settlement if possible, or through continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization if necessary—a plan in which we will withdraw all of our forces from Vietnam on a schedule in accordance with our program, as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom."

That means to me if we can negotiate a settlement, on the principle of self-determination, we can move out.

Secretary ROGERS. It seems to me that is pretty clear.

Senator COOPER. I think it is. It should be emphasized but then that raises the question Senator Case raised. Perhaps at some time some information can be given to us as to what we are actually doing to Vietnamize these forces and what kind of a timetable we have that makes us believe they would be able to defend themselves.

Senator CASE. May I just say this. We have been told for years, years, that the South Vietnamese were coming along just great, and now we learn that until last year almost nothing whatever was done. This is why I think your question, and my point earlier about what the facts are, is almost at the heart of this whole question.

Senator COOPER. The policy has changed. That is the reason I cite this.

Secretary ROGERS. I do think, Senator, we have not as far as I can determine, we have not misled this committee at all.

Senator CASE. I am not suggesting you have.

Senator COOPER. That is what we heard in the past, not from you. I think, though, that it would be good to have it from Mr. Laird or you what steps are being taken to equip and train these troops properly so that at some point you could look forward to their taking over.

Secretary ROGERS. He will be prepared to discuss that tomorrow.

STRENGTH OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE QUESTIONED

Senator COOPER. I see these possibilities and I will ask Secretary Laird about them. On the other hand, as we withdraw troops, I believe you will find pressure in this country not only from those who are now saying we should withdraw immediately, but also from people whose boys, relatives, are in the units that remain. They begin to say if you take X out why can you not take Y out. But do you believe—this is an "iffy" question—if we withdraw, that South Vietnamese determination would disintegrate and they would just fold up even though we are arming and equipping them?

Secretary ROGERS. I do not think you can answer that. So far they have done quite well and I think the only way to find out is to try. Somewhere along the line we have to give them the opportunity and that is what the President's program is going to do.

NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ADVOCATED

Senator COOPER. One other thing. From my viewpoint I would rather see some negotiated settlement if possible. I think we should continue efforts. In talks I have had with others, I have been told that the Soviet Union really has not given us any help. You know the Soviet Union and Chinese are talking to each other a little bit about their troubles. Do you think there would be a possibility, a good time to urge the Soviets to begin to give some help?

Secretary ROGERS. Could I go off the record just a minute on that point?

(Discussion off the record.)

Senator COOPER. One reason I keep pressing for a negotiated settlement is that people are concerned about the continued loss of life, bloodshed, and talk of its immorality. That is why I hope it will be possible to keep on pushing for a negotiated settlement.

Secretary ROGERS. I think we have to keep in mind, when we use the term Vietnamize, that there has been some objection to the term in South Vietnam, South Vietnam has suffered well over 100,000 casualties. When you add the civilians to it they have suffered three times as many casualties as we have. So I can see why they sort of resent the fact when we act as if they have not been involved in the war.

Senator COOPER. I think this outbreak of public opinion is going to continue. If we can sharpen this process in some way, I think it would be helpful and I think it would be reassuring to the American people.

PROCEDURAL MATTER

Senator McGEE. Senator, would you yield for a procedural question? I do not want to get into the discussion but, Mr. Chairman, is it permissible—

Senator SYMINGTON. How long do you want to go?

Senator McGEE. Thirty seconds. I am not asking questions on substance here. I am trying to protect my position. I am at the end of the line. I have to catch a plane to New York.

I have sat through all of this. I wonder whether it would be possible for me to make my speeches in writing and raise my questions and get them in to you the first thing in the morning.

I can do it on the airplane. I had not planned to do it this way. But the Secretary might respond to a couple things. Is that permissible for the record?

The **CHAIRMAN.** Yes, you may submit written questions and they will be included in the record.

Senator McGEE. Yes, along with my comments about them.

The **CHAIRMAN.** Certainly.

Senator McGEE. All right. That is all I need to know. (See p. 50.)

The **CHAIRMAN.** Senator Symington.

Senator SYMINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

VIETNAM POSITION OF NIXON ADMINISTRATION TOO SIMILAR TO
JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Secretary, there is one point I would bring up with you. You did not inherit this situation and I have not criticized the President's actions as of now regarding Vietnam; but I am worried about it, and his speech caused apprehension. So I would like to make a statement, then ask your comments, and then ask a question.

First, the President said in effect that he would deescalate, watching what they did; but the past administration stopped the bombing five times.

Five times, but nothing happened. Then, however, the President did say that even if they did not react to what he suggested, a mutual bilateral reduction, he would turn the situation over to the Vietnamese, and to that extent reduce our ground troops.

From a military standpoint, I want to go on the record with you. I think it is doubtful Vietnamization will work under the Thieu-Ky government over any extended period.

In the fall of 1966 I became convinced in my own mind that militarily the South Vietnamese can do nothing without our fighting with them. Somebody else must have come to that conclusion at that time, because we changed the operation by starting to fight with them in 1965. They turned to guerrilla warfare and as Moshe Dayan, one of the two great guerrilla leaders of our time, wrote that, if they go to guerrilla warfare, you will never beat them. Having heard him say that, I checked, and believe it true, unless you want to just wipe out all the enemy in North Vietnam along with the Vietcong.

We never considered full use of air power in Vietnam and I am not talking of nuclear weapons. Dayan also said no white man is going to sell his choice of village chief to the villagers, in his opinion, and I think that true. I never heard a less persuasive presentation than Mr. Komer gave in Saigon on the pacification program.

I have been listening here this morning. It seems that your position is close to the position taken by other people before this committee prior to the time this administration came into authority. With respect, I have become increasingly skeptical, from a military standpoint about what we have been trying to do out there.

This strange war is hurting us terribly, all over the world. Other countries are beginning to think we are a paper tiger, and if it wasn't for the nuclear picture I am confident they would so believe. This war is also hurting us badly from a political standpoint, and it is also hurting us economically to a point of possible disaster if we are not careful about the degree of our commitment to this particular operation, along with all our other commitments and entanglements.

There is talk about attrition. I have investigated this carefully and it is my considered opinion, especially with the continuing support of the Soviet Union and Red China, that from the standpoint of attrition, the North Vietnamese and Vietcong are better off today than they have been since the war started.

The idea that because we have killed so many—they spend bodies as we spend dollars—is relatively unimportant because each year they have many more than they need in the way of 17-year-olds to fill up the cadres. If they believe they are fighting for their land, which appar-

ently they do—because I have never met anybody out there who does not say they fight better than the South Vietnamese.

As General Van Fleet said before the Senate, back at the time of the Korean effort, never put an American boy in any game you don't want him to win.

WORRY ABOUT MILITARY ASPECT OF VIETNAMIZATION

I think that aspect is having a lot to do with this frustration—I honestly do not see any great difference between your position and the previous position of course with the exception of Vietnamization.

Secretary ROGERS. That is quite an exception, though, Senator.

Senator SYMINGTON. It is a big exception.

Secretary ROGERS. Instead of putting them in we are taking them out. That is quite an exception.

Senator SYMINGTON. Don't misunderstand me. I understand and respect that. I go along with Senator Church in that I like this program much better than the previous one. But you also say we will not continue to take them out unless we get some sign from them.

Secretary ROGERS. No, Senator, I did not.

Senator SYMINGTON. But we will continue to take them out on the theory of it, because we are going to Vietnamize the ground troops we leave there.

I do not pretend to be a diplomatic expert, but have spent a quarter of a century in military matters directly, and much more than that indirectly. You cannot take a really significant number of U.S. ground troops out of Vietnam without giving full air support to what is left. Then you have the logistic backup problem, so it all gets pretty complicated. The matter is going to become of steadily more interest in this country.

I say this with respect, and approve what the President has done to date. I only worry that the military aspect of Vietnamization is being so heavily emphasized because I am doubtful it will work. I have been in Vietnam six times in recent years, and just do not believe the Thieu government represents the people of South Vietnam, and what is more important, people more informed than I am feel the same way.

There is my statement. I would appreciate your comments.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, as I say, I think that apropos of your comments about there not having been much change, I think that there is very dramatic change. Instead of increasing the war we are deescalating the war, so it is a 180° turn.

Senator SYMINGTON. I buy that.

RISKS INVOLVED IN TROOP REPLACEMENT

Secretary ROGERS. Secondly, we recognize there are risks inherent in the program of replacing American troops with South Vietnamese troops. We realize there are risks.

The plans that the President has developed have been developed in full collaboration at least with the military. In other words, they have worked closely with the President and he is going to carry this program out. It does have national risks. We understand it. We are

prepared to take them. We are prepared to take them because we do not have any other alternative.

I think that every time one discusses the war he should ask himself what am I proposing that should be done that is not being done? Most of the things that have been suggested we are doing.

Now, there is some argument about how much we should tell people and when we should tell them, and so forth.

Senator SYMINGTON. I would not argue that. But I want to make the record with you, for whom I have the greatest respect, that I doubt, militarily, under the present Thieu government, Vietnamization will prove out. I am also on the Joint Economic Committee and believe I realize what is happening to the economy of the United States as a result of Vietnam, which is not to be laid at the feet of this administration.

The question I would like to ask is this: [Deleted.]

Secretary ROGERS. [Deleted.]

Senator CASE. Isn't it true that in that connection that there [deleted].

The CHAIRMAN. The Senator from New York.

Senator JAVITS. Mr. Secretary, I think you have made a splendid witness.

OUTSIDE DATE OF WITHDRAWAL PLAN

I certainly am happy that you are the Secretary of State and I hope you continue in this vein.

You have said two things which to me are vital. You haven't said a third, which I would also consider vital, but you have said two. One is that you have begun an irreversible course of withdrawal and I believe it is an irreversible course and I gather you do, too.

The second is that a party to this course of withdrawal has been the military establishment of the United States and that the President did not ask them. He told them. Is that correct?

Secretary ROGERS. Could I just phrase it another way—he worked it out in collaboration with them. The decision he made is his own decision.

Senator JAVITS. So that when the President said, "I have chosen the second course," he has chosen, "continued implementation of our plan for Vietnamization," according to his timetable, arrived at based upon the advice of the military establishment.

Secretary ROGERS. And the advice of all the rest of us in the Government.

Senator JAVITS. Right. So he had a plan.

Secretary ROGERS. Correct.

Senator JAVITS. Now, is there any reason why the American people cannot know the outside date of that plan or if the American people cannot know it, if we cannot know it?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I think he has answered that in his speech. He says he does not think it is wise to make it public.

Senator JAVITS. Do you think we ought to know it?

Secretary ROGERS. I think it is the same—I think the arguments are the same. I think that the President has to make that decision. He has made it.

Senator JAVITS. Now, in making that decision, is he using any of the authority which is contained in the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution or is he using only his authority as Commander-in-Chief?

Secretary ROGERS. I do not know the answer to that.

Senator JAVITS. We have to decide that answer ourselves, right?

STRENGTH OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO DEFEND OWN FREEDOM

Now, I said that there was a third thing, assuming he had a schedule but we cannot keep to it, and assuming he has an outside date but we cannot get it—I am not criticizing. I just want to lay down the guidelines—there is a third thing that is left open according to your testimony and that is the meaning of the words “as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom.”

The question I would like to ask you is a lawyer's question. Does that mean until they in fact become strong enough to defend their own freedom or does it mean until they reasonably should have become strong enough to defend their own freedom, as we lawyers define it?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I think that the language is almost clear enough. I think the language is clearer than most lawyers use.

Senator CASE. The answer is troublesome, then.

Secretary ROGERS. No. Please read it. The rest of it says continued implementation of our plan, a plan in which we will withdraw all of our forces from Vietnam on a schedule in accordance with our program, as the South Vietnamese become strong enough to defend their own freedom.

So he leaves some flexibility in there in terms of their ability to defend. He says it is our program. We are going to withdraw according to our program. I think the last part of the sentence in the President's speech is to give some flexibility.

HANOI'S HOPE FOR EROSION OF U.S. PUBLIC OPINION

Senator JAVITS. Now, you said that one hope of Hanoi is that there will be an erosion of public opinion here. Suppose that erosion continues, Mr. Secretary? Does the President's plan include the provision for acceleration, taking account of the fact that you cannot fight a war without the people, that you cannot really fight a war for long without, what the London Economist calls, a nonignorable minority?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I do not think that he has that in mind. I think he feels that he has been elected President and he has 3 years and 3 months to serve. He has made a decision in the best, most thorough way he knows how. He has done it in the exercise of his constitutional responsibilities. And I think he plans to carry it out.

The country has never failed to support a President if he seems to be taking reasonable steps, and I think the country will continue to support the President because he is going to continue to take reasonable steps to end this war.

Senator JAVITS. So the President bases his plan upon that assumption?

Secretary ROGERS. Correct.

HOW FAR DO WE GO TO INSURE AGAINST DEFEAT OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE
GOVERNMENT?

Senator JAVITS. Is part of the American commitment as we see it now, Mr. Secretary, to insure that the South Vietnamese Government does not fall by nonelective means? In other words, are we insuring the South Vietnamese Government against being defeated by the Vietcong or perhaps even with North Vietnamese help as we follow our plan?

Suppose it appears to us as we go along that we are withdrawing according to our plan and they are going to get licked. As somebody said here, this would get us back to 1965, when President Johnson sent ground troops to prevent an almost certain Communist victory.

Now, is that going to change our withdrawal schedule, are we then going to put troops back in or bomb again or stop our plan? What is the administration's view on that contingency?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I do not want to express a view on that because I do not think it is going to happen. Certainly in terms of renewing the bombing or escalating the war, the President did not indicate in his speech that he had those things in mind. He did indicate at one point that if the enemy increased, escalated the war, he would have to take that into consideration. But I would rather not answer questions that are quite that hypothetical.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that is a very important question. That is exactly what happened in 1965. As soon as it appeared they were losing, we sent in—

Senator JAVITS. We piled in—

Senator GORE. Would the Senator yield?

Senator JAVITS. Of course.

Secretary ROGERS. Let me say we have no present plans.

Senator JAVITS. That is a better answer.

RISKS INVOLVED IN PHASED WITHDRAWAL

Senator GORE. In the spirit of the candor of this discussion, let me say my first question to you when you became Secretary of State went right to this point, Senator Javits. It was my apprehension that a phased withdrawal would lead to this impasse, the point at which the American troops who remained there might be endangered, and if they started another offensive, what would be the situation.

Now, this, I suppose, is a contingency plan that the Secretary of Defense could perhaps enlighten us on, but rightly or wrongly, I have felt that the phased withdrawal would be a long drawn-out prolonged war and that we would ultimately come to this impasse to which the Senator has referred or perhaps a capitulation of the Saigon government which would then create an individual new hazard for our own troops as well as the democratic processes in South Vietnam.

So you are right. That is the crux of the matter, as Senator Fulbright has said.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, let me say this on that. Assuming we cannot negotiate a peaceful settlement, the only alternative is a phased withdrawal. Everybody accepts the fact that it has to be a phased withdrawal, so the risks you are speaking about are inherent in any kind of a phased withdrawal.

The question the Senator is asking me is do we really mean it when we say we are going to have a phased withdrawal or is this sort of a coverup for going back in. And my answer has to be, I think the President's speech is quite clear. He plans to get all the troops out of Vietnam in accordance with his policy.

Senator GORE. It is not only whether you go back in or whether, as the Senator has said, you stop the withdrawal and say we cannot withdraw any further.

Senator JAVITS. Exactly right.

RIGHT TO ALTER WITHDRAWAL PLAN

I am coming to this. In other words, are you telling us, Mr. Secretary, when you say we are "not at the mercy of Hanoi or Saigon in putting the plan into effect"—those are my notes of your words—does that include a stop loss? We are not going to get in any deeper. We are not going to get in any deeper than the point of our withdrawal at which we may slow it up or stop it because we see a grave danger of the South Vietnamese Government losing or the South Vietnamese present interest losing, but that we do reserve the right to modulate or stop wherever our plan is at a given time when we see such an increased jeopardy?

Secretary ROGERS. I think the President made it clear that the plan, depending on what happens, might be altered to take care of that contingency. But he also makes it clear that his plan contemplates removal of all forces from South Vietnam.

Senator JAVITS. He also said, however, that the other side had better be aware of the fact that they cannot take for granted that we would not pile even more in.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I think I referred to that earlier. I think that is correct. Otherwise they would feel that at any particular time we might be at their mercy.

Senator JAVITS. Well, Mr. Secretary, what I am really trying to get at is this—and you do not have to answer this—I am only stating it. I respect you as much for saying you cannot answer. You spoke of risk. One of the risks we are reasonably willing to run in this plan is the fact that we may pull out and South Vietnam may lose the ball game. This is a terrible risk.

Secretary ROGERS. I do not like to answer that because we do not think it involves that risk.

Senator JAVITS. All right. As I say, I want to phrase the question but I am not going to force you to answer.

ADVANTAGE TO HANOI IF VIOLENCE IS INCREASED QUESTIONED

Now, the sentence in the President's November 3 speech, which I had in mind, reads as follows: "Hanoi could make no greater mistake than to assume that an increase in violence will be to its advantage. If I conclude that increased enemy action jeopardizes our remaining forces in Vietnam, I shall not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation."

Now, does that still leave us where we were before, that strong and effective measures may mean moderating or stopping our plan of with-

drawal but it will not mean increasing our troop strength? I am only speaking of the order of magnitude. I am not talking about a hundred rifles or anything like that; piling more materiel or more troops in.

Secretary ROGERS. I really think that under the circumstances I had better not elaborate on that.

Senator JAVITS. OK.

Senator COOPER. If you read the whole context, he starts out the statement by talking about the bombing halt which occurred a year ago, that he thought there was agreement that if we stopped the bombing of North Vietnam, they would stop shelling the cities in South Vietnam. They did speed up the shelling. These four paragraphs are related to protecting American troops and not to—

Senator JAVITS. For the security of troops. Now, could the Secretary say that? Could the Secretary say that these four paragraphs relate not to the fate of Saigon or its government but to the security of the U.S. troops?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, here again I hesitate to interpret the speech, but I think Senator Cooper has made a point, that it seems quite evident. I think Senator Cooper has made an answer that should satisfy you as we lawyers say.

Senator CASE. Would you yield?

I do think this is terribly important because—

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I understand it is important. I just do not want to get on the record with it.

PRESIDENT'S WITHDRAWAL PLAN IS UNCLEAR

Senator CASE. I understand. We are not pressing you. We are just really talking about it. But the more you look at the President's speech, the more it seems utterly oracular. Everything has two or three meanings, and I am not critical about this. In one sense I am not, but what has happened is that this has only increased the uncertainty as to what our program actually is, and that is what the Senator from New York and I and all of us are concerned about here because we do not know whether there is a definite plan to withdraw all troops or not. It is subject to two contingencies or it may not be subject to two contingencies. Maybe the plan is going to be subject to Hanoi's continued tolerance or indulgence of our getting out without taking advantage of it.

That is not a very definite withdrawal plan; nor is Saigon's shaping up, which is also indefinite.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I just do not agree with that. I think most people know and understand the President is in the middle of a war. He cannot spell out everything. I think the general public feels quite good about the speech. I was pleased to see that Pope Paul this morning came out for it. I must say you would never know from reading the newspapers, because it is buried back on page 11. I think the people—certainly people abroad give a certain amount of—

Senator CASE. I talk as one who wants to be a strong believer and supporter, but then I run into all these things that I cannot reconcile with my own intelligence and my own understanding of the meaning of words and especially against the background which we have to put this, of statements that really have turned out not to be reliable and in many cases not to mean what we thought.

Secretary ROGERS. You are talking about past years, not recently.

Senator CASE. This again is not a criticism of this administration except as I make it specific in terms such as the ones used in this speech. And to say we have a plan for withdrawal but then say it depends upon (a) Hanoi, and (b) Saigon, then I say we do not have the kind of plan for withdrawal which I would opt for, or urge upon the administration.

Senator JAVITS. The Secretary is well aware of my views.

Senator CASE. Which I take it are substantially the same.

Senator JAVITS. We are between Scylla and Charybdis. We have to take the risk of the possible defeat of South Vietnam and the question is whether our national interests are paramount, and whether this includes the decision that we take that risk. That is really what I am trying to get to because otherwise you have got a plan that is not a plan.

Now, the last point that I would like to cover with you is this.

By the way, I think it is very useful to ask you these questions even if you do not answer. That is advice and consent. The President or you will be thinking about these things. I know you respect us as we respect you.

Secretary ROGERS. Yes, indeed.

DOES NORTH VIETNAM WANT US OUT?

Senator JAVITS. The last thing I want to ask you, Mr. Secretary, is this. It is the general assumption that North Vietnam and the Vietcong want us out, that they are perfectly willing to take on the South Vietnamese Government alone and have every confidence they can beat them because that is the very essence of what you mean when you say that one hope is that there will be an erosion of public opinion here.

Now, can you tell us whether there is any evaluation of that in the State Department, of whether it may be possible that the North Vietnamese, knowing the South Vietnamese are just as implacable, just as barbaric, just as rough as they are, may think that they are a lot tougher enemy than the nice United States monitored by all the nations in the world, including the International Red Cross and everybody in this country who has a big heart, and so on? In other words, what is the law that says that they are just waiting for us to get out and they are going to take on their brothers and that is going to be an easier war?

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I am not sure that it is. I do not think anybody knows until it happens.

Senator JAVITS. All right. So there are two things we do not know about. One is what Saigon is capable of doing for itself when it is really up against it and the other is whether North Vietnam really wants us out.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, I do not have any doubt about the second point because they say so every time.

Senator JAVITS. Well, that does not mean anything. They say lots of things they do not mean, including the fact they will never ne-

gotiate, which you know is false. The Russians said the same thing in Berlin.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, certainly on the first point I agree. On the second one I think they would like to have us out.

GULF OF TONKIN RESOLUTION

Senator JAVITS. Now, Mr. Secretary, one last legal question: What is the legal place today of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution in the authority of the administration? Now, you know again there are no hidden tricks here. Lyndon Johnson is said to have carried this frayed document in his pocket and always flashed it, you know, talked about the authority of the Congress: "They gave me authority."

Now, is this administration placing any weight in terms of congressional authorization in the Gulf of Tonkin resolution?

Secretary ROGERS. We have not actually analyzed it from a legal status, but more from a practical situation. When we came in office the war was long underway. We were trying to do the best we can to solve it. So I have not given any thought to that.

Senator JAVITS. Well, would you give some thought, Mr. Secretary—perhaps you would like to put a written response in the record—as to what would be the position of the administration if we withdrew it by concurrent resolution.

Secretary ROGERS. I can tell you that right now. I think that would be unwise. I hope we can just quit arguing about these things and all get on the same wavelength. I mean we are there now, and the Gulf of Tonkin is such an emotional issue, and it was fought over so long and so hard and so many people feel so strongly about it. I do not want to—I do not see why it helps to get back in that argument.

Senator JAVITS. Well, except that everybody would then be on their own. The President would be exercising his power as Commander in Chief and the Congress would be exercising whatever authority it had over the war without having surrendered any of it in what has been popularly called a blank check.

Senator CASE. The President could clear it up by making one little statement, saying he was not relying on it.

Senator JAVITS. That is why I suggest they think it over.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to ask a couple of questions, but before I do I will call on the Senator from New Jersey.

MAKING CLEAR TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE THEIR OBLIGATION

Senator CASE. Not a question really. I just want to emphasize the same point that the Senator from New York is urging so well and so strongly, that he really was not asking for an answer, but instead wanted to get his viewpoint firmly across. We have to fix a definite schedule which is inflexible, make it reasonable at the start, and then announce it to Saigon and to the world. This finally will make it clear to them that they have to take this on themselves and that this is the only course of action short of some kind of disaster. I just want to make that clear. That is my strong view. And this is not irresponsible, but I think it is the only thing that will produce a result and the result may be military shaping up. It may be South Vietnam will decide other-

wise, in which case they can make any kind of deal they want to with other people in South Vietnam and and with the north.

I think, though, that we just have to. That is the only reason I am a little unhappy about the use of the term "Vietnamization" of the war, if you use that in the broadest sense. If it means take control of the whole situation, then I am definitely for it.

Secretary ROGERS. Senator, I do not think the impression should be left—

Senator CASE. I want you to clear it up just as much as you can so we can see what the differences are.

Secretary ROGERS. The President has made it clear in his speech and I have made it clear this morning that there is a plan. It is being carried out. It has certain flexibilities because a certain amount of flexibility is required in a war situation. The plan that is going to be carried out, as the President says, involves getting out, getting our Armed Forces out from South Vietnam.

Now, there is no doubt in the mind of the people we are dealing with that there is such a plan. The only thing that—

Senator CASE. Is it a contingency plan? That is what I want to know.

Secretary ROGERS. I do not want to use any characterizations except what the President has said. There is a plan. It is specific. He knows what he is going to do. It has certain built-in flexibility because any war situation has to have certain flexibility. But the end result is not flexible, and he has made it clear to everybody, and, after all, he is the President. He has been elected. He has to make these decisions. Everybody has got some different points of view on this. Everybody has got some little variation on how it should be done. He has thought it through carefully and this is his conclusion, and I think we ought to let that stick for a while and let the public digest that and see if it does not work.

CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO OUR WITHDRAWAL

Senator CASE. But, Mr. Secretary, I cannot accept it until I know more about it. What does flexibility mean? What it means maybe is 10 years or maybe 20 years or maybe 2 or 3 months. And I am not trying to get you to answer this question. All I am saying is that as the President has put it to us, and you have put it to us, there are two conditions which are enormous. We will stop this plan of withdrawal if the North starts to escalate again. We will stop this plan of withdrawal if the South Vietnamese seem not to be shaping up to take the fighting on themselves. That is the way it reads to me.

Is that an unfair reading?

Secretary ROGERS. Yes, sir; I think so.

Senator CASE. I wish you would explain why, to what extent.

Secretary ROGERS. It seems to me you have to read the whole speech.

Senator CASE. I have 10 times, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary ROGERS. Well, as I say, he has made the decision. He is the President. We would hope that you would accept it. We would hope that you would watch. Could you not wait and let him try, wait to see how it works out?

We have not misled you up to this point. We do not intend to. Just see what happens for a while. But you have a feeling that people are

not ready to accept the presidential leadership. But he is President. He cannot tell everything. He has told as much as he thinks he should in the public interest, and I think if you watch developments you will be rather satisfied as things go along.

Senator CASE. This is really the one thing that we cannot do unless we understand what the plan is. I cannot. I do not think the people can, and I think this is the reason.

Secretary ROGERS. I think that is why we have Presidents. I think that is why people elect Presidents, and I think that is why he is in for 4 years.

Senator CASE. I think we understand each other and each other's differences.

SENATE DENIED ITS CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE

The CHAIRMAN. Well, if I could just add to that. Of course, it is true we have Presidents, but under the Constitution, the Senate, which we represent, also has its role to play.

Secretary ROGERS. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. And there seems to be a tendency developing here as I have already stated in the opening that this administration does not welcome the participation of this committee, at least, in these matters.

To illustrate this, for example, certain ambassadors are under instructions not to answer to this committee. As far as I know, this is unprecedented, and I hope will be rectified.

Secretary ROGERS. I think we can rectify it.

The CHAIRMAN. The other is the matter of releasing transcripts. The Senator mentioned before he went out that he understands the transcript of the hearings on Laos, which were completed nearly a month ago, on the 22d of October, have now cleared the State Department and are in the White House and are being held there. Is that true or not?

Secretary ROGERS. Yes. I think—let me just say the reason is [deleted] they want to be sure that the transcript coincides with that understanding. It is just a matter of time. It is going to be worked out just as it was on the Philippines.

Secretary ROGERS. On that question, quite the contrary. We welcome the assistance of the committee. I have testified every time I have been asked. I hope to continue to do that. I do not agree with that at all. Senator Case is telling me how he feels, and I think it is appropriate for me to explain how we feel. We have told you the President has told as much as he thinks he can now. We are trying to be as cooperative and as helpful as we can with the committee. I plan to continue to do that. I do not intend to have any problems with this committee. So it is not fair. We need the committee's help. We need the help of Congress.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. We will come back, then, to this.

Senator JAVITS. Mr. Chairman, may I just say that I really think that in all fairness to the Secretary, he has tried this morning, even when he said he could not answer.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, with regard to this hearing this morning, I would agree with the Senator.

WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS WAR?

Now, I revert again to a point. I do not like to harass the Secretary, but let me mention the little exchange I started out with and the Senator from South Dakota entered into, as to what is the objective of this war. What it was originally was one point. How did we get involved, that is another point. What is it today? What do we expect to obtain by continuation of this war that is sufficiently important to us to justify what I think is involved, what we all believe is involved, which is additional death and not only the expenditures in Vietnam but the continued distortion and dislocation of our domestic economy.

It is a very important thing to the Senator from New York. He knows the problems of his own city which are incurable without a cessation of these things. It is very important to me from a rural State because all of the projects which mean so much to the raising of the standards of my State are being held up in the same way that your urban renewal is.

Daily these requests for the most modest kinds of assistance are being turned down, requests for the basic essentials of life. This will completely destroy our country if it goes on for 5 or 10 more years.

So it is not academic. It is very important. You know I think it is extremely important to identify what we are fighting for.

Senator JAVITS. I agree.

IS THE PRICE WORTH IT?

The CHAIRMAN. And is the price worth it? I think it is the duty of this committee to examine that question. I do not believe the American people believe it is sufficiently important to give to this little country of 15 million the right to even the freest and cleanest election which they have never had, probably have no idea what it is and would not recognize it if they saw it. We use this term "free election" as a kind of a salve for our own conscience. I do not believe it means much to the South Vietnamese. I do not believe they would accept it and believe it is honest and true even if they had one. They would know it was not honest. They would know it was rigged, and many of their people excluded.

I do not believe the people have any confidence in the concept, but regardless of that, is the United States and are all the people of this country, willing to pay this price? I do not think, and I believe the Senator from South Dakota does not believe, that this sort of "self-determination" is anything but an illusion, a self-deception. It is not an accurate statement. I think he believes, as Secretary Rusk did, that we are there to stop the spread of communism.

DUTY OF COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE QUESTION

I think it is the duty of this committee to examine this concept. Are the American people or the members of this committee willing to continue this war in order to prevent the Communists from controlling South Vietnam? They already control North Vietnam. They control China, and so on. I am not forgiving them. I am not for saying, "Yes, you go take it." I do not think, though, on the contrary, that we