

# WIRELESS BULLETIN

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JANUARY 28, 1971

LAIRD STATEMENT BEFORE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE (TEXT)

WASHINGTON == FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT BY  
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LAIRD BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE JANUARY 27:

(BEGIN TEXT)

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

IT IS A PLEASURE AND PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO APPEAR BEFORE THE  
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TODAY IN EXECUTIVE SESSION TO GIVE  
YOU A REPORT ON MY TRIP TO PARIS AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, TO REPORT  
ON THE CURRENT SITUATION THERE, AND TO RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS  
YOU MAY HAVE.

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO PREPARE THESE BRIEF  
OPENING REMARKS TO PLACE OUR PAST AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES IN  
INDO-CHINA IN PERSPECTIVE, PARTICULARLY AS THEY RELATE TO THE GOALS  
OF:

- REDUCING AMERICAN CASUALTIES;
- CONTINUING THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICANS FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA;
- ACCELERATING VIETNAMIZATION;
- IMPLEMENTING THE NIXON DOCTRINE;
- MAINTAINING OUR OBLIGATIONS AND INTERESTS IN ASIA AS WE  
SEEK TO MOVE TOWARD A GENERATION OF PEACE.

I KNOW THAT MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE SHARE MY DESIRE AND THAT OF OUR PRESIDENT TO IMPLEMENT THOSE POLICIES THAT HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF LEADING TO A GENERATION OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH PARTNERHIP AND A WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE.

IN THE FORMAL HEARINGS ON OUR FY 1972 BUDGET, I WILL WANT TO DISCUSS WITH YOU HOW THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IS MOVING TO IMPLEMENT THE PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM FOR PEACE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ASSURING ADEQUATE DEFENSES FOR OUR NATIONAL SECURITY AND ADEQUATE CAPABILITIES TO MEET OUR COMMITMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.

WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING TODAY AS WE PRESS FORWARD WITH OUR PROGRAM TO TERMINATE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, IS THE NIXON DOCTRINE AT WORK IN A MOST EFFECTIVE WAY.

WHEN PRESIDENT NIXON ASSUMED OFFICE, MR. CHAIRMAN, WE ESTABLISHED FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA A FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE: TO REVERSE THE PROCESS OF EVER-INCREASING AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND TO BEGIN A RAPID REDUCTION IN 1) AMERICAN CASUALTIES, 2) AMERICAN MILITARY ACTIVITIES, 3) ACTUAL AMERICAN PRESENCE IN ASIA, AND 4) GENERAL AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THAT WAR. WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS IN A WAY THAT CAN LEAD TO LASTING PEACE.

WE HAVE NEVER SWERVED FROM THAT OBJECTIVE.

BY ANY MEASUREMENT OF OUR OVERALL ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SINCE THE START OF VIETNAMIZATION, THE THRUST OF AMERICAN ACTIVITY HAS BEEN DOWNWARD.

AMERICAN CASUALTIES ARE DOWN FROM PEAKS AS HIGH AS FIVE HUNDRED A WEEK TO AVERAGES BELOW FIFTY A WEEK. WE CANNOT AND WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL WE REACH OUR GOAL OF NO AMERICAN CASUALTIES.

BY NEXT MAY, AMERICAN TROOP STRENGTH IN VIETNAM WILL HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO ALMOST HALF THE AUTHORIZED TROOP STRENGTH AT THE TIME I BECAME SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, AND I AM CONFIDENT, AS A RESULT OF MY TRIP WITH CHAIRMAN MOORER, THAT WE CAN BRING HOME ADDITIONAL THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN MILITARY MEN.

AS TO AMERICAN ATTACK SORTIES IN INDOCHINA DURING 1970, THEY WERE DOWN ALMOST 50 PER CENT FROM PEAK 1968 LEVELS, AND EVEN IN CAMBODIA THEY ARE APPROXIMATELY HALF THIS MONTH WHAT THEY WERE SEVEN OR EIGHT MONTHS AGO.

AMERICAN BUDGET COSTS FOR S.E.A. HAVE ALSO BEEN CUT APPROXIMATELY IN HALF FROM PEAK WAR COSTS OF 1968.

IN SHORT, AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT BY ANY MEASURE -- CASUALTIES, OPERATIONS, MANPOWER LEVELS, BUDGET -- IS SIGNIFICANTLY DOWN. AT THE SAME TIME, SECURITY IN VIETNAM IS MARKEDLY UP, AND VIETNAM'S NEIGHBORS ARE MAKING DETERMINED EFFORTS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES. THAT IS WHAT THE NIXON DOCTRINE IS ALL ABOUT.

I AM SURE THAT EVERY MEMBER OF THIS COMMITTEE SUPPORTS OUR EFFORTS TO END U.S. COMBAT INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA AND TO STOP THE LOSS OF AMERICAN LIVES THERE.

I THINK IT IS TIME, MR. CHAIRMAN, FOR US TO SHIFT THE DISCUSSION AND DEBATE OVER SEMANTICS AND STATISTICS TO THE LARGER AND FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES THAT ARE INVOLVED. THESE LARGER ISSUES INCLUDE MOVING AWAY FROM WAR AND TOWARD PEACE; AWAY FROM A WARTIME ECONOMY AND TOWARD A PEACETIME ECONOMY; AWAY FROM LOPSIDED BUDGET PRIORITIES AND TOWARD A BETTER BALANCE IN OUR USE OF NATIONAL RESOURCES; AND AWAY FROM CONFRONTATION AND TOWARD NEGOTIATION AND LASTING PEACE IN ASIA AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

UNDER THE NIXON DOCTRINE AND THE PRESIDENT'S STRATEGY FOR PEACE, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN ALL THESE AREAS.

MY TRIP EARLIER THIS MONTH INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH OUR NEGOTIATORS IN PARIS. I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS VIGOROUSLY IN PARIS. A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WOULD BE THE QUICKEST WAY TO END THE WAR. I WISH I COULD TELL YOU THAT PROSPECTS ARE GOOD FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE WAR, BUT I MUST, UNFORTUNATELY, REPORT THAT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN SIGHT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT MY VISITS TO THAILAND AND VIETNAM AND MY STAFF'S VISIT TO CAMBODIA AND LAOS,

REAFFIRMED WHAT I HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING WITH THIS COMMITTEE AND OTHER COMMITTEES IN CONGRESS FOR THE PAST 18 MONTHS, NAMELY, THAT VIETNAMIZATION, THE FIRST CRUCIAL STEP IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NIXON DOCTRINE, IS PROCEEDING ON SCHEDULE OR AHEAD OF SCHEDULE IN ALL MILITARY RESPECTS.

SOME HAVE MISTAKENLY LABELED PRESIDENT NIXON'S VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM AS MERELY A DISGUISED RETREAT; OTHERS HAVE CALLED IT A "MYTH."

LET ME REITERATE TO MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE THAT WHAT WE ARE DOING TODAY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IS AN INDISPENSABLE BUILDING BLOCK IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S STRATEGY FOR PEACE. IN ESSENCE, AS THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID REPEATEDLY, WE ARE NOT GOING TO RETREAT FROM THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD. IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING OUR PROGRAM FOR PEACE, WE HAVE TRIED TO FACE THE REALITIES OF THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE. OUR VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM AND OUR ACTIVITIES IN INDO-CHINA REFLECT THESE REALITIES WHICH MUST BE FACED IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE THE TWIN OBJECTIVES OF MAINTAINING OUR OBLIGATIONS WHILE ENDING AMERICAN GROUND COMBAT INVOLVEMENT IN ASIA AND ALSO REDUCING FURTHER THE TOTAL AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD.

AS THE PRESIDENT AND I HAVE MADE CLEAR PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY ON MANY OCCASIONS, WHILE WE CONTINUE THE REDUCTION OF AMERICAN GROUND INVOLVEMENT IN INDO-CHINA, WE WILL TAKE WHATEVER ACTIONS ARE NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE -- IN COMPLIANCE, OF COURSE, WITH CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS -- TO HASTEN THE END OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIGHTING WITH A MINIMUM LOSS OF AMERICAN LIVES.

THERE WILL BE SOME WHO WILL CRITICIZE THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE, BUT I WANT TO REPEAT THAT SO LONG AS I AM SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SO LONG AS I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LIVES OF OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM, SO LONG AS I SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR NATION AND ITS INTERESTS, I WILL CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO ACHIEVE OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE COST

IN LIVES AND RESOURCES. I KNOW THAT I CAN CONTINUE TO COUNT ON THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THIS COMMITTEE AND OF THIS CONGRESS IN DOING THE JOB THAT I THINK ALL AMERICANS WANT DONE -- TO CONTINUE OUR STEADY MOVEMENT TOWARD A GENERATION OF PEACE AND AN END TO THE KILLING, THROUGH THE EFFECTIVE POLICY INSTRUMENTS OF PARTNERSHIP, STRENGTH, AND NEGOTIATIONS.

THE CAMBODIANS UNDERSTAND THAT AMERICAN GROUND COMBAT FORCES AND AMERICAN ADVISORS WILL NOT BE INTRODUCED INTO THEIR COUNTRY. OUR OBJECTIVE FOR THE FUTURE IS THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT NEED TO RELY ON ITS OWN MANPOWER TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES IN ASIA, AND TO THWART COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD. UNDER THE NIXON DOCTRINE, WE HAVE, WE WILL MAINTAIN, AND WE WILL USE AS NECESSARY SEA AND AIR RESOURCES TO SUPPLEMENT THE EFFORTS AND THE ARMED FORCES OF OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES WHO ARE DETERMINED TO RESIST AGGRESSION, AS THE CAMBODIANS ARE VALIANTLY TRYING TO DO.

I CAN REPORT TO THIS COMMITTEE, AS I REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT, THAT MOST OF THE LEADERS OF ASIAN NATIONS WITH WHOM I AND MEMBERS OF MY GROUP TALKED, SHARE THIS DETERMINATION. THEY TOLD US THAT WITH U.S. MATERIAL ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS THAT RECENTLY VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY BY CONGRESS FOR CAMBODIA, THEY WANT TO DO THE DEFENSE JOB THEMSELVES TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE. I WAS HEARTENED BY THEIR ENTHUSIASTIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE NIXON DOCTRINE IN ACTION, AND I WOULD SIMPLY SAY AT THIS TIME THAT IT IS THIS SPIRIT AND DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES THAT WILL FORM A CRUCIAL FOUNDATION OF OUR STRATEGY OF REALISTIC DETERRENCE FOR THE 1970'S.

IN THE COMING WEEKS, THE PRESIDENT IN HIS FOREIGN POLICY REPORT, THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN HIS REPORTS AND I IN MY DEFENSE REPORT WILL, OF COURSE ADDRESS THE CONCEPTS AND PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S STRATEGY FOR PEACE. (END TEXT)

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