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CHICAGO TRIB., 3/21/69, Washington dateline:

Calling the Viet Nam war "a colossal mistake from the beginning," Rep. Paul Findley (R., Ill.) today called on President Nixon to withdraw all American troops from the war.

"The justification for withdrawal is plain," Findley told the House. "The United States made a fundamental mistake in committing troops in the first place; the rational corrective action is to withdraw, rather than to continue to compound the original error."

"If military policies, with or without escalation, inherited from President Johnson are continued much longer, they will become Nixon policies," he continued.

Findley's remarks, also delivered at a workshop of the National Newspaper association, put him on the line as the first Republican congressman to call for withdrawal of troops.

NY TIMES, 3/20/69:

To the Editor:

"A phased withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, the long-range plan being advocated by both the Pentagon and the Saigon regime, avoids the crucial issue: how to reach a political settlement, which is the only means by which the United States will be able to extricate itself from Vietnam.

"Despite the current troop requirements, the Pentagon planners envision a withdrawal of United States troops over a period of several years, leaving a Korea-like force to back up the South Vietnamese forces.

"This is not a formula for peace but of prolonged war and long-term involvement

"If we are to have peace in Vietnam soon, President Nixon must soon decide that American interests and those of the South Vietnamese regime do not necessarily coincide; that we are not committed to holding out for a settlement which will insure continuation of the Thieu-Ky Government; that our repeated offer to withdraw United States forces has a quality of immediacy, leaving the South Vietnamese people free to work out their own system without outside interference.

...
"Our broadest interest, I am convinced, would more surely be served in Vietnam by a neutralist, nationalistic order determined by indigenous people than by any Government of our patronage. A long drawn-out, phased withdrawal would more likely defeat than assure this.

"Our national interest, then, must neither be bound to our ideological preferences, nor equated with the fortunes of the Saigon military government. A political settlement must have first priority."

ALBERT GORE

U.S. Senator from Tennessee
Foreign Relations Committee
Washington, March 19, 1969