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The President's peace proposals indicate that there is at least a closer relationship between the proposals of the President and the actions of the Senate. I do believe that the Mansfield Resolution and other resolutions of similar nature such as the Vietnam Disengagement Act have had influence upon the President and his thinking and today we find a much more flexible position on the part of the Administration. I commend the President for the initiative that he has taken. I do believe there are some vital questions that remain to be answered. For example, which comes first, an agreement between the parties or the fixing of a definite date of withdrawal? The President spoke of a ceasefire. Is this absolute necessity for our withdrawal or is this just part of a total program; and is the issue of mutual withdrawal in Indochina what the President has in mind; and, finally, what sort of mechanism would be established to insure a transition government in South Vietnam or to handle the new elections. The important thing as I see it, however, is to consider the military aspects of the issues in Indochina and Vietnam first. This is why I believe that fixing a date for withdrawal and at the same time or simultaneously, negotiating the release of the prisoners is the way to get at the problem.

It we really want to get the prisoners out of Vietnam and if we believe it is in our national interest to end our involvement in Vietnam and Indochina, there is only one way to do it and that is to set the time for withdrawal, negotiate the release, have international inspection and supervision and end- the whole situation of the whole involvement.

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Well I hope so. I am not at all sure that Hanoi will respond to the President's proposals in an affirmative manner, at least in the early stage. It seems to me that the better way and I am not trying to be a carping critic because I am very pleased that the President has taken the steps that he has outlined to the public. It seems to me that the better way would be to set the time for withdrawal, to take the initiative on our part and ^{of course} at the same time tie in the subject of the release of the prisoners and the MIA's (Missing In Action) and set up the machinery to identify the release or to supervise it. It seems to me that is the way to end the war.

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I might add that the President's proposal did indicate that the Thieu regime on the political side would have to step aside. I believe there was something like five months if I am not mistaken after the agreement or withdrawal and Prisoners of War, and that there would be an interim government for a period of about a month prior to the new elections which would include the National Liberation Front. Now in past proposals of the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front language of this kind has been included in their proposals. I doubt there is going to be any immediate acceptance, in fact I think we can expect and may have already had a rejection on the part of the North Vietnamese. It is my judgment that these proposals are designed:

1. To inform the American public of the kind of secret diplomacy that has taken place and this is the way to hush the critics of the President at home.
2. To involve the Congress, hopefully a little more fully and more importantly ^{3.}To lay the ground work for talks in Peking. I cannot help but believe that the President has surfaced these proposals constructively in good faith in order to prepare the public for discussions that may take place in Peking when the President visits China.

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Well of course the Mansfield Resolution doesn't say that at all. Senator Mansfield's original proposal in the Senate ties in the release of prisoners with withdrawal and withdrawal with the release of prisoners. So I don't believe that we weaken our bargaining chip. Let me point out that I am not seeking an argument with the President. Some people have said that what the President has done is to disarm his critics. If that is the case, it is a small price. What I would like to see him do is to disarm the war. What we really need to do is stop fighting amongst ourselves and get the fighting over in Indochina, and the best way to do that I think is to face up to the difficulties, know that there is no easy answer at all, no pleasant accommodation -- that we just have to, as they put it, bite the bullet, face up to the tough question to recognize that it is in our national interest now to end our involvement in Vietnam. This is a priority importance, there were Presidents that thought it was in our national interest to be there (four of them thought so). I think that it is in our national interest to be out of there. I don't believe there is any way that we are going to solve our problems here at home,

particularly in the economic field until we have put our house in order, until we have resolved this conflict.

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I hope not. There could be some interpretation of that. I guess maybe what I was trying to do more than anything else was to give the President the benefit of the doubt. There is always a temptation on the part of us who are in political life to be critical for the sake of criticism. I would prefer to offer constructive critical analysis on the basis of being helpful. I think the American people are going to be very very wary of any of us that just try to find little things to pick at, but at the same time I want the President to continue to level with the American people and to put at the top of the list the end of our involvement.

Now let us quit trying to find a nice cosmetic way to do it because it is going to be difficult. There are going to be a lot of us that will have to take our bumps so to speak, but we need to do it. The country must find a way to resolve this conflict.

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I don't know but if he has I think it is a small price to pay if you are talking politics. I

think it is much more important to end the fighting in Vietnam than to continue the political fighting at home and I am not going to be particularly worried about the politics of the Democratic party if Mr. Nixon is able to end this war. I hope he can. I think that is what the public wants. And more importantly, I think the public wants of us who are in Congress and in public life to ^{try to} be constructive in our analysis, not to give the President a carte blanche pat on the back, ^{serious} to ask questions that need response and honest answers but when I hear people say "well this may make it more difficult for Democrats," so what! There are plenty of other issues. There are issues of the economy, there are issues that relate to the whole social structure of our country and if we are trying to find a way to continue a political battle at home on the issue of war when we can get peace, if we can get peace, I think it would be looked upon very negatively by the public.

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My only criticism on the President of the war is that I have asked him to hurry up the withdrawal. I believe in accelerated withdrawals, and total withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam and also ending the battle and the struggle in all of the peninsulas of Indochina.

My criticism is not that he isn't doing some things right. It is that I want him to finish it, to hurry it up, to put at the top of the agenda of the public policy the end of the involvement in this war. I believe it has to be done and I believe it is in the interest not only of the country but of the President himself and it surely is in the interest of anybody that has any love of the country and any hope for its future.



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