

Excerpts From Agnew Talk on 'End the War' Plan

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 17—Following are excerpts from a speech today by Vice President Agnew before the convention in Miami of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a copy of which was made available here:

I would like to speak to you today of a rising threat to everything our servicemen have fought to accomplish in Southeast Asia—a threat embodied in the Hatfield-McGovern amendment.

Should this proposed amendment become law, unless America declares war President Nixon would be forced to end any military aid to Laos and to halt all military operations in South Vietnam—20 weeks from today. Every American soldier, sailor, marine and airman would have to be out of Vietnam by June 30 of next year—10 and a half months from today.

Hatfield-McGovern is a blueprint for the first defeat in the history of the United States—and for chaos and Communism for the future of South Vietnam. The Washington Post was generous to call this amendment "reckless." It is worse than that; if adopted by the Senate and passed by the House, this publicized "amendment to end the war" in Vietnam will go down in history as the amendment that lost the war in Vietnam and destroyed the chances for freedom and peace in Southeast Asia for the balance of the century.

Nothing less is at stake. But, if this amendment, and any similarly irresponsible proposal which may be offered, can go down in humiliating defeat for its sponsors in the Senate—then this nation will not go down in humiliating defeat on the battlefields of Southeast Asia—I promise you that.

Support for President?

Today I have a simple question. I am here to ask you, as fellow Americans, and fellow veterans—can the President of the United States count on your support?

The charges I have already made here are among the strongest since I took office as Vice President. But no more dangerous proposal has been presented to the American Congress in those 19 months—or in 19 years for that matter. While I do not question the patriotism of the sponsors of this amendment—I do deeply question their wisdom, their judgment and their logic. They are horribly wrong—and if their grave error is enacted into law, generations of Asians and Americans will suffer for their tragic blunder.

Let us look at the inevita-



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Senators Mark O. Hatfield, Oregon Republican, and George S. McGovern, South Dakota Democrat, whose efforts to end Vietnam war were denounced by Vice President Agnew.

ble consequences should Hatfield-McGovern be enacted.

First, the amendment would be a final lethal blow to the Paris peace talks. Any vestige of hope that the enemy will negotiate with Ambassador Bruce at Paris would disappear overnight—for the last incentives for the enemy to talk seriously would be gone. He would have gotten what he came to Paris to get—a fixed final timetable for all Americans to get out of South Vietnam.

Why should the enemy offer concessions to the United States for something Senators Hatfield and McGovern and their allies will give him free of charge in four months?

Should this amendment become law, and all American military operations in Southeast Asia cease by Dec. 31, the immense burden of this war would fall immediately and totally upon South Vietnam.

Too Big a Burden

The Government and people there would confront, alone and all at once, the completion of the enormous tasks of creating a stable Democratic society, promoting economic and social reform, fighting an internal war against guerrillas and defending their nation from invasion from three frontiers.

Though South Vietnam has

made enormous strides in development in recent years—today she could not carry those burdens alone. No developing nation could.

Hence, the result of a unilateral, precipitous American abandonment of South Vietnam would be the collapse of the Government, chaos in the country—and ultimately the kind of Communism that literally decimated the civilian population of Hue in the Tet offensive.

It is clear from their mention of "provision" for refugees that Senators Hatfield and McGovern have considered that the collapse of South Vietnam will indeed be one consequence of their amendment. But have they considered the consequences of that collapse?

One wonders if they really give a damn.

If South Vietnam collapses, then victory and success go to the hard-liners in Hanoi and Peking who counseled belligerence and war instead of peace and negotiation.

If South Vietnam collapses, then 285,000 Americans will have suffered and 43,000 will have died for nothing. An American Army, undefeated on the field of battle, will come home in humiliation because impatient pacifists in the Senate lost the war.

What will be the reaction then when the American people wake up to learn that

the thousands of lives and billions in taxes over a decade had been spent only to find national humiliation and disaster at the end of the road?

Will they then reward the blind impatient politicians who could not see the war through its final hours—and so snatched for America, military defeat from the jaws of political victory?

Domino Theory Supported

If South Vietnam collapses, then Southeast Asia is gone. Those who do not believe in the domino theory, as the President has put it, have not talked to the dominoes. Already, Cambodia is half-occupied by North Vietnamese and Vietcong. Laos is half-occupied by North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao. Thailand is fighting its own Communist insurgency, aided and encouraged from without. Does any rational man believe these countries—or Malaysia and Singapore at the end of the peninsula—can survive if South as well as North Vietnam should come under the rule of militant Communists?

Have the isolationists in the Senate pondered the full consequences of America's defeat in South Vietnam—and freedom's defeat in Southeast Asia?

Looking down the road to the year 2000, we see most Asian nations on the threshold of technological maturity; we see an Asia that contains 60 per cent of all humanity; we see a world in which there are 10 Asians for every American.

Are the isolationists content to let that Asia go by default to the Communists because they lacked the perseverance to see this through?

Well, we are not, my fellow Americans and my fellow veterans—and the President is not—and together we shall see this war through to an honorable end that will do justice to the sacrifices of all our sons.

Have the isolationists considered the impact of the abandonment of this one ally upon America's other allies around the world? Could any nation put trust in the word and capacity of the United States—if we slink home, defeated, from the battlefield of Southeast Asia?

The lessons for nations like Germany and Japan—even India—would be clear: the inescapable conclusion would be that the United States cannot be counted upon in the crunch and nations must depend upon themselves to survive. The nonproliferation treaty would be forgotten as every state rushed to develop its greatest possible deterrent. If collective security is a failure in Vietnam—who will place confidence in it in Europe or the Middle East?