

Excerpts From Democrats' Remarks on

Following are excerpts from a Democratic response, broadcast and televised tonight on the American Broadcasting Company network, to President Nixon's April 7 speech on troop withdrawals. The speakers were Senators Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, George S. McGovern of South Dakota, Birch Bayh of Indiana, Henry M. Jackson of Washington, Harold E. Hughes of Iowa and Edmund S. Muskie of Maine.

Humphrey

The President said in his television speech on April 7 that when he left Washington in January of 1961 after eight years as Vice President, there were no American combat forces in Vietnam, and that no Americans had died in Vietnam.

Now, these statements are all true. But the implication—and it is inescapable—is that the major responsibility for involvement in Vietnam is exclusively Democratic. That is to say, John Kennedy began the war, Lyndon Johnson escalated it, and that the Democratic mess was dropped into the Republican lap. We believe that an alternate view carries a larger measure of truth.

The circumstances that led to this war began back in the time of Harry Truman. Our commitments began after the Geneva conference in 1954 during the Administration of Dwight Eisenhower. And Richard Nixon, as Vice President, supported them. Kennedy and Johnson supported them. By passing the Tonkin Resolution, by an almost unanimous bipartisan vote, the Congress supported them. As Vice President, I too supported them.

So the responsibility for our involvement was a national responsibility—not a partisan one. And our disengagement, it seems to me, must also be the task of all of us.

Last month, I went up to New Jersey and spoke to about a thousand students at the State College in Jersey City. I spoke on our substantial domestic problems but the point I emphasized most was the urgent need for withdrawal from Vietnam this year.

I must be honest about this: It is not a speech I could have given three or four years ago. The change in my views has come slowly—with changing circumstances and our understanding of them—and it has come with considerable heartache. But it has come—for me and for millions of other Americans.

After almost two decades of American assistance, I believe our commitments to the South Vietnamese now have been more than fulfilled.

But a decision to withdraw our military forces from Vietnam this year does not mean, as the President has suggested, that the United States is entering a new era of isolationism. To the contrary, we have extensive international responsibilities, and we will honor them. Indeed, the end of our Vietnam obsession will free the United States to assume a far more balanced and productive role in the world community.

Above all, this is no time for recriminations. There will

be risks in withdrawing. But there are greater risks in staying. For too long, this war has divided Americans from each other, distorted our view of humanity, and diverted us, as a nation, from getting on a constructive path of our own.

The question is before us tonight: what must we do—what can we do—to get out?

McGovern

The very soul of this nation now demands that we end our intervention in this destruction in Southeast Asia.

Vietnam

The best course now available to the United States is to terminate all further funding for U.S. military operations in Indochina. That is the formula of the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment. That is the formula which 73 per cent of the American people have endorsed in a Gallup Poll. That is the formula which the other side has said can lead to the release of our prisoners and assurances as to the safety of our forces while they are being withdrawn.

On the other hand, President Nixon's Vietnamization formula does not lead to the release of American prisoners.

It does not end the danger to our forces in South Vietnam.

It does not break the negotiating stalemate in Paris.

And it does not end the destruction of the countryside and the people of Indochina.

It only expresses the hope that by reducing our forces on the ground we can thereby reduce American casualties.

The President's Vietnamization policy virtually guarantees that our prisoners will remain in their cells, that our troops will remain in danger, that the negotiations will be stalled, and the killing will continue.

It is argued by some that the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment has a weakness in that the deadline serves to alert the other side that we are definitely coming out.

But that is precisely what the situation demands if we wish to end this terrible war.

There is no risk-free way to end this terrible war.

But I am willing to be judged in history on the assertion that if we will make a flat commitment to withdrawal of all of our forces by the end of this year, we can break the negotiating stalemate in Paris, we can get discussions started on the release of our prisoners, we can secure assurances as to the safety for our forces while they are being withdrawn.

Bayh

During the 1968 campaign, Richard Nixon told the American people he had a plan for peace in Vietnam. Now, two and a half years later, that terrible war still drags on and on.

Each day the war continues, 5 to 10 Americans die. Another 50 to 80 Americans are wounded, many so seriously that they will spend the rest of their lives in hospitals.

Each day means a further diversion of our enemy, attention and resources from our own pressing needs here at home. Each day means

\$27-million that could otherwise help to provide better health care, better education, better housing, better transportation, and a better environment.

Each day means continuation of the divisions within our own society, divisions that threaten to tear us apart.

And each day that passes without an end to our involvement means one more day in captivity for our prisoners of war. Make no mistake about it, in war, prisoners are not exchanged until the end of the fighting. It is a cruel hoax to create the belief that our prisoners will be returned before we end our involvement in the war. This is the only way our men can be returned to their families.

We should set a specific date for withdrawal of American troops and then actively pursue negotiations for the release of our prisoners.

We are told by the President that he intends to make the war a non-issue by 1972. But why wait? Unless the President hopes to enhance his own re-election prospects there is nothing to be gained by delaying an end to our involvement until 1972. I believe we should rule out domestic politics when considering our course in Vietnam.

The President's desire to insure the survival of the Thieu-Ky regime, unfortunately, seems to have been a major factor in postponing withdrawal. I do not believe we have any commitment to the Thieu Government—or to any particular government in South Vietnam. Nor should we. I believe we have fulfilled whatever commitment we might have had to the people of South Vietnam. We have no commitment to the generals. We have already given them the most precious gift in our possession, 53,000 American lives. We have spent more than \$125-billion in Vietnam already and have trained and equipped a one-million-man army.

Jackson

For too long now the war in Vietnam has absorbed too much of the time and energy and resources of this country. We all want to end the war in Vietnam and withdraw American troops as soon as possible.

Our Government should be making a vigorous diplomatic effort to achieve a mutual cease-fire, a return of American prisoners of war and an end to all the killing in South Vietnam—not simply an end to American involvement in it.

We must insist on a far more affirmative and positive approach to a mutual, internationally supervised, standstill cease-fire—even when the North Vietnamese turn the idea down. Communist Governments have changed their positions when our Government pressed a sensible idea with perseverance and conviction. If the Administration were to pursue a cease-fire in Vietnam with the decisiveness and dedication this proposal merits, there is a chance that the killing could be stopped in the quickest possible way.

I have not favored a public announcement of a date certain for the total withdrawal of our forces from Vietnam. The President, in executing the withdrawal of our troops,

should have certain dates in mind. If I thought that legislating a publicly announced deadline would hasten an end to the conflict or the release of our prisoners I would advocate such a policy. But it is my view that this would weaken the bargaining leverage we should be exerting on the Governments of North and South Vietnam.

Hughes

The President has indicated that he insists on disengagement from Indochina with honor—and we agree.

There is no honor in prolonging this dreadful war another week. There is no honor in sacrificing more American lives, even at a reduced rate. There is no honor in slaughtering tens of thousands more Asians, including untold numbers of innocent civilians—men, women and children. There is no honor in reducing their homelands to a charred and cratered wasteland.

The wise, honorable, and humane course is to announce a date for withdrawal, to end the killing, to instruct our negotiators at Paris to offer plans for the exchange of prisoners, and to join with the nations which met at Geneva in 1954 and 1962 in neutralizing all of Indochina.

The American people are capable of subduing any enemy in a cause in which they believe. But the people have now rejected the intervention in Southeast Asia, as a human body rejects an unsuited alien heart.

It is ironic that the brave men who have fought this war honorably and valiantly must live with the nightmares of Mylai and Bentre, the village that was destroyed so that it might be saved.

There is honor, I believe, in binding the wounds of our domestic society and making America a strong nation again.

There is honor, I believe, in realistically assailing the evils of poverty, racial discrimination, hunger and malnutrition, galling unemployment, and debilitating inflation in our own society.

You don't have to be an isolationist to see the tragedy in allowing our society to deteriorate from within, while we pour our human and economic resources into a civil war involving rival dictatorships 10,000 miles from home.

Muskie

The heart of the matter before all of us tonight is not only a reply to the man who

is now President. It is an appeal. It is an appeal to him . . . to national reason . . . and to the American conscience

This war is wrong. The American people know it is wrong. And we want to end it.

Each of my colleagues has forcefully described different aspects of the tragedy of this war:

—The bloodshed and terrible human suffering;

—The devastation of the lands of Indochina;

—The waste of our resources desperately needed here at home;

—The doubts it has created about the wisdom and word of our Government.

Tonight you have heard compelling reasons for setting a date and bringing all our men home by the end of this year.

We have done as much for the South Vietnamese Government as anyone could reasonably have asked of us. It is not unreasonable now to ask that Government to test its own ability to survive.

Whatever you or I or any of us now think about the war, I believe we all agree on one terrible price it is making us pay. It is the price of division, fear and hatred in America. We must not go on like this.

Some have said that we Democrats want the war as an issue in the 1972 campaign. That is nonsense. Every one of us here tonight wants this war over, before 1972.

We hope not just for a campaign in 1972, but for a country, free at last of the burden and the curse of this conflict. Thus, and only thus, can we, as a people be talking about, and arguing about . . . not the death behind us, but the life before us . . . not the blame for war, but the hope for healing.

Every one of us here wants the next election to be fought on the issues of how America should be led in peace—

—How we can save our cities and rural communities;

—How we can build a healthy economy;

—How we can clean up our air and our water;

—How we can stop the spread of crime and drugs;

—How we can save our children and insure their future in a decent and whole society.

These are the things that will make America strong.