

DEMOCRATIC POLICY COUNCIL

# news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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DEMOCRATS CALL FOR TROOP WITHDRAWAL BY END OF 1971,  
DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ARAB STATES  
INDOCHINA

Our most urgent international problem remains the ending of the tragic war in Indochina. During the 1968 campaign, Candidate Nixon pledged that he had a plan to end the war.

Now, in 1971, in his State of the World message, President Nixon admits that his policy of Vietnamizing the war "cannot, except over a long period, end the war altogether." The message states that unless the other side agrees to a settlement, Vietnamization will lead to "perpetuating the war." Since the President has indicated he does not expect a negotiated solution, the Administration's policies offer the prospect of endless war.

Although the Administration claims credit for "winding down" the war, in fact it has been expanded into Cambodia and Laos. It is impossible to tell through the smoke-screen of conflicting Administration statements and battlefield reports just what is happening in Laos, but it is plain that the decisive victory the President sought has not been attained. The invasions of Laos originally described as intended to run until about May 1 were suddenly described by Vice President Agnew on March 19 as already having lasted "longer than we projected they would." At least the Vice President characterized the South Vietnamese movement towards their own border as "orderly retreat" rather than the "mobile maneuvering" which had previously been used to obscure the realities. Whether a retreat during which cannon are blown up and troops cling to the landing skids of helicopters can be described as orderly is an open question. One uncontroverted fact is that the South Vietnamese forces are completely dependent upon American combat air support and on helicopter lift of men and materiel to advance or retreat.

Even though American casualties have declined, South Vietnamese troops are dying in larger numbers and civilian casualties continue to mount. It is callous to assume that only American deaths are important. While American troop strength has been slowly reduced, at the end of nearly two and one-half years of the Nixon Administration less than half our troops will have been withdrawn and there has been no assurance of the withdrawal of all American forces.

Our air power is fully engaged in bombing both Cambodia and Laos. Under the guise of "protective reaction" United States planes have stepped up the bombing of North Vietnam. The President has indicated that he will not accept any limitation upon the use of American power anywhere in Indochina and declined to rule out an invasion of North Vietnam which President Thieu has threatened. Escalation of the war increases the risk of Chinese intervention. The United States should not participate in any manner in an invasion of North Vietnam.

The President continually justifies his expansion of the war as necessary for the protection of American lives and the continuation of his program of slow troop withdrawal. Surely the way to save American lives is to end the fighting and bring our troops home. The overwhelming majority of the American people favor a total American withdrawal in 1971. In recent elections the people of South Vietnam have

themselves indicated they want an end to the war.

There should be a firm, unequivocal declaration by the Government that all American forces will be withdrawn by the end of this year. The Congress should share responsibility for this decision. An announcement of complete withdrawal this year should be used to negotiate the safe withdrawal of our troops and the speedy release of our men who are prisoners of war. Vietnamization of the war offers no prospect for obtaining their freedom. Such an announcement could also result in the beginning of real, substantial negotiations in Paris and an early cease-fire. At the negotiations we should seek an agreement prohibiting future reprisals by either side against supporters of the other side and providing for international supervision. We should also seek agreement on a plan for the rehabilitation and development of all Indochina, once peace is achieved. Having helped to create the devastation, we have an obligation to assist in the restoration. This would also provide an incentive for North Vietnam to adhere to a peace agreement. Other issues should be left to negotiations among the Vietnamese themselves.

The choice does not lie, as the President asserts, between "neo-isolationism" or "bugging out" as the one alternative and Vietnamization of the war as the other. A decision should now be made for responsible withdrawal. This would be welcomed by the great majority of our allies and would strengthen our international position and influence.

We call for the enactment now of legislation such as the proposed Vietnam Disengagement Act of 1971, which will prohibit the use of any funds for American military operations in Indochina after December 31, 1971, with adequate provision to assure the return of our prisoners of war.

In the interim we categorically oppose any expansion of the war by American or South Vietnamese forces in Cambodia, Laos, or North Vietnam or by the bombing of North Vietnam.

In 1965, facing steadily increasing American military escalation, North Vietnam rejected President Johnson's offer to contribute one billion dollars to a Southeast Asia Development Fund from which all countries in the region could benefit. We now renew the call for reconstruction and pledge our support for major U. S. participation in that effort.

#### MIDDLE EAST

We are encouraged that the differences between Egypt and Israel are being clarified and to some extent narrowed. While full support should be continued for Ambassador Jarring's mission, every effort should now be made to bring about direct talks between the parties to reach the compromises necessary for settlement of the highly emotional issues. The four powers should continue their consultations and stand ready to guarantee the settlement which must be negotiated between the parties. The United States should clarify the security assurances upon which it is asking Israel to rely. Our objective remains a lasting peace with secure and agreed upon borders -- a peace that will assure independence and security to Israel and all other nations in the area.

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Adopted by the Democratic Policy Council  
March 24, 1971