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Congressional Record S. 10268 - Vietnam Cease-Fire and Stand Down

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September 9, 1969

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

S10269

matched by a similar announcement on our part. Following this prelude, an initiative on our part would be possible which would propose an unlimited cease-fire and stand-down applicable to both sides. If press reports are correct, moreover, it is anticipated that President Nixon probably will announce plans for the next withdrawal of troops from Viet Nam within the first week of his return to Washington on Monday. That announcement might then be tied in with the offer of an unlimited cease-fire and stand-down. This sequence would present the possibility of a further diminution in the fighting and, consequently, a further reduction in costs, damage, and, most important, casualties.

An unlimited cease-fire and stand-down may or may not be accepted either officially or unofficially. In my opinion, it is worth a try as a step towards resolution of the Vietnamese war. Such a step would not in any way prevent our forces from acting in self-defense, but it may offer a means of breaking through the present impasse. It may offer an alternative to a continuation of the *status quo*, with casualties accumulating at the present rate. It may offer an alternative to a step-up of the war which is a course that seems to me inadvisable in any event. The present course means continuing casualties and costs whereas a cease-fire and stand-down—if it can be achieved at this time—in view of the circumstances surrounding the question of succession to Ho Chi Minh—might offer a possibility for peace. There is everything to be gained by taking a chance for peace at this time.

[From the Washington Star, Sept. 5, 1969]

DISCLOSURE NEAR ON NEW PULLOUT

(By Orr Kelly)

President Nixon probably will announce plans for the next withdrawal of troops from Vietnam within the first week of his return to Washington Monday night, Defense officials said today.

The announcement had originally been expected by Aug. 15, but it was delayed after the beginning of what appeared to be an enemy offensive on Aug. 11 and 12. Enemy-initiated attacks fell off after that time, however.

Defense officials declined to say how many men would be involved in the next withdrawal because that decision has not yet been made by the President. But they left little doubt that a sizable withdrawal would begin in the near future.

Assurance within the administration that a withdrawal can be carried out safely was reinforced this week after Army Secretary Stanley R. Resor returned from a two-week trip to the Pacific with an encouraging report on improvements in the South Vietnamese Army.

In talking to reporters while in Vietnam, Resor stressed the improvements that must still be made, especially in leadership and training. But defense officials were heartened by his report on his return about the progress that has been made.

Final Defense Department recommendations on the rate and numbers involved in withdrawal plans are being made personally by Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird.

The first increment of the withdrawal announced by Nixon June 8, of 25,000 men, was essentially completed last week.

VIETNAM: CEASE-FIRE AND
STANDDOWN

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, may I say that I fully endorse the action of President Nixon in putting into operation on his initiative an unofficial 3-day cease-fire and holding open the possibility of a continuance if the other side acts accordingly.

I ask unanimous consent that a statement which I issued on Vietnam on Saturday, September 6, and also a news story by Orr Kelly carried in the Washington Star for September 5, 1969, both be printed at this point in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the statement and news story were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VIETNAM: CEASE-FIRE AND STANDDOWN

(Statement by Senator MANSFIELD)

The announcement by the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese that they would put into effect a cease-fire for three days, beginning Monday next, should, in my opinion, be