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

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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 Vietnam 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.