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Congressional Record - Seven-Point Proposal of NLF (Vietnam)

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, over the past 10 days I have had a chance to study in detail the proposals made by Madame Binh, the chairman of the delegation of the National Liberation Front, which, in any event, has the full support of Xuan Thuy, the chairman of the North Vietnamese delegation. These proposals have been made with the obvious approval of the establishment of Le Duc Tho, a member of the ruling committee in Hanoi who has returned to Paris after a 14-month absence.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the seven-point proposal as outlined in brief in the UPI dispatch dated July 1, 1971, be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The proposal, ordered to be printed in the RECORD, is as follows:

1. Cease-fire between Communist and American forces as soon as the sides reach agreement on the withdrawal of non-Vietnamese forces.

2. A cease-fire between the Communist and South Vietnamese forces as soon as the Vietnamese belligerents in the South agree on a provisional tripartite government in Saigon whose main task would be organizing general elections.

3. The problem of Vietnamese armed forces, clearly meaning the presence in the South of large North Vietnamese forces, will be settled by the Vietnamese themselves.

4. The Viet Cong said that following re-establishment of peace, the country's reunification would be negotiated by the two zones without outside interference, with both South and North refusing to join any alliances with outsiders, or allowing them to set up foreign bases.

5. A pacified South Vietnam, before its reunification with North Vietnam, would set up relations with all countries including the United States.

6. The U.S. would be held liable to pay an indemnification for the losses and the destruction it has caused to the Vietnamese people.

7. According to the document, "the parties will find agreement on the forms of respect and international guarantee of the accords that will be concluded."

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, it appears to me that the seven-point statement, for the first time, contains elements of a breakthrough in the impasse which had marked, previously, the 118 meetings in Paris. The statement calls for a cease-fire and a mutual agreement based on the phased withdrawal of American troops—which, in any event, has been the aim of this Government for the past 2½ years. Why not speed up the withdrawal to full completion if it means, reciprocally, as indicated in the seven-point proposal that Hanoi will be willing to match it with a rapid release of all POW's?

Our primary obligation in this situation is to our own country and to our own people. That has been, is, and will continue to be the basic consideration which has underlain my own position as a Senator from Montana. In this case, the obligation has to do with the fate of the American POW's and the MIA's, as the administration has made clear many times.

There may well be in these proposals of the National Liberation Front some "light at the end of the tunnel" for these men. The proposals may also contain light for a final peace settlement. As I see it, the time to find out is now. And, in conclusion, may I call to the attention of the Senate the latest casualty list under date of June 26, 1971:

Wounded, 300,310 Americans.

Combat dead, 45,321 Americans.

Noncombat dead, 9,622 Americans.

The total casualties in this second most costly of all the wars in which we have been engaged amount to 355,453 Americans as of June 26, 1971. Casualties, dead and wounded, are the price we have paid. It is too much.