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vised, I believe, to face frankly the reality that there is more to bringing about an end to our involvement in Indochina than the removal of a substantial part of our expeditious forces from Vietnam—a step which I do not depreciate because every step. The fact is, however, that what we are dealing with is hydra-headed. While the drawdown of U.S. ground forces has helped to reduce casualties in one area, the other entrapments have tightened their hold upon this Nation.

I would hope the Senate, therefore, in the closing days of the expiring Congress, in a time of haste and weariness, will not have acted in a fashion which lends encouragement or support in any way, shape, or form to a deepening of this tragedy which has already done so much to erode the foundations of the Nation's unity and stability.

I would hope, too, that the President in his continuing search for a responsible settlement, might consider directing that a pointed effort be made to seek new ingresses to a peaceful solution elsewhere. It seems to me that the executive branch might try to concentrate its negotiating attention at this point to determine whether the release of all U.S. prisoners of war might not better be secured as a quid pro quo, if we were prepared to set forth a timetable for the progressive withdrawal of the balance of the U.S. forces in Vietnam at this time, both evidence that we are under the umbrella of a ceasefire which would bring, of course, an immediate end to all U.S. casualties. The next line is within the scope of the President's October 7 statement. At the same time, the release of U.S. prisoners is within the scope of peace proposals which were made by North Vietnam on September 17.

This week, at the 95th session of the peace talks in Paris, Madame Nguyen Thi Binh repeated a previous proposal offering an immediate cease-fire in Vietnam in exchange for a declaration of United States and allied troop withdrawal by June 30, 1971. She also stated that U.S. acceptance of this proposal would mean immediate negotiations on the release of captured American prisoners. Madame Binh ignored the U.S. proposal that meetings be held every day to try to bring about the release of all U.S. prisoners by Christmas.

Shortly after that meeting concluded, Xuan Thuy, the chief of the North Vietnamese delegation, noted that Ambassador Bruce has rejected the proposal for a U.S. withdrawal by June 30, 1971, said:

I, therefore, propose that if the United States is not willing to accept June 30, 1971 as the date for final withdrawal of all its troops, then it should suggest another reasonable date. In that case, we can immediately consider the American suggestion.

At the 95th conference, Ambassador Bruce, after calling for "immediate negotiations" to be held immediately, proposed a ceasefire-in-place throughout all of Indochina," repeated the readiness of the United States to negotiate on an agreed timetable for complete troop withdrawal as part of an overall settlement in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia."

Perhaps in this give-and-take at Paris and also in reference to the President's proposals of October 7 and Hanoi's proposals of September 17, the two points to which reference is made—that is, the release of all U.S. prisoners of war, coupled to a timetable for the final withdrawal of U.S. forces—might be explored exclusively. And I emphasize that word "exclusively" because that would mean setting these two issues apart—to see whether or not they may be reconciled at a starting point of a ceasefire to be followed by the negotiation of a complete settlement. It would be my hope, Mr. President, that this approach may light a clear signpost to peace.

May I say that I submit these thoughts with an understanding and appreciation, I think, of the complexities and frustrations which confront the President. I submit them, nevertheless, in concern lest we find ourselves operating under a new false-safe—deeper within this tragic involvement—a new point of no return in Indochina.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. Griffin. Mr. President, would the distinguished Senator from Missouri (Mr. Eagleton) yield briefly to me, without losing any ground on the floor? Mr. EAGLETON. Mr. President, I am willing to yield for a brief period to the Senator from Michigan with the understanding that I do not lose my right to floor. Mr. Griffin. I want to add that I have a gentleman's understanding with the Senator from Nevada (Mr. Bible) that after a not unreasonable period he should be notified so he may come back and proceed on the DOT appropriation conference report.

Mr. Griffin. May I have 10 minutes? Mr. EAGLETON. May I inquire of the Chair how long we have been on matters unrelated to the DOT conference report? The CHAIRMAN. Orders of the Day, fifty-eight minutes.

Mr. FELL. Mr. President, would the Senator yield 8 minutes? Mr. EAGLETON. I would be pleased to yield to any Senator who wants me to yield, but I feel under some moral obligation to the manager of the conference report. Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I think the Senator from Missouri would be doing the manager of the conference report a favor at this time by yielding.

Mr. EAGLETON. Mr. President, with those words of the majority leader, I shall yield first to the Senator from Michigan, then to the Senator from Rhode Island, and then to the Senator from Kansas.

PRISONERS OF WAR AND THE PARIS TALKS

Mr. Griffin. Mr. President, I listened with close attention to the remarks of the distinguished majority leader, and I appreciate the reference to a proposal made earlier this week by the junior Senator from Michigan concerning prisoners of war.

As I reported to the Senate earlier, I had a very interesting experience about a month ago when I met for an hour with Madame Le Duc Van Mai, the Vice President of Indochina, General to France, Mr. Mai Van Bo. At that time I discussed with him some of the same matters which the distinguished majority leader has discussed today.

Unfortunately, in her speech, Madame Le Duc Van Mai indicated that the American suggestion of a revised ceasefire-in-place throughout all of Indochina, the withdrawal as a step which the President is ready to discuss the release of prisoners unless we first announce that all American troops will be out of South Vietnam by a given date.

Mr. MANSFIELD. By June 30.

Mr. Griffin. By June 30. And, as the distinguished majority leader has pointed out very appropriately, President Nixon's proposal or initiative of October 7 indicated that our side is ready to discuss the matter of a withdrawal timetable. This is a matter we are willing to discuss. But to be realistic we must keep in mind that the other side has refused to talk about the subjects. The other side refuses to discuss the release of prisoners on the other side refuses to discuss the matter of a timetable. Madam Binh has taken the position that her side will not even discuss the proposals concerning the release of prisoners of war unless and until after we unilaterally announce that all troops will be out by June 30. Thus, the other side may change its unreasonable position at some point. But, unfortunately, that is their position today. They will not even discuss the matter.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield at that point?

Mr. Griffin. I tried to bring it out in my speech a reference made by Xuan Thuy, the chief of the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris this week, at the 95th session, which goes beyond what Madame Binh has said, because the Senator's thought. Many of the proposals which the North Vietnamese side has put forward are absolutely correct. After that meeting, at which Madame Binh restated the old theme, "Withdrawal by both sides and then we will discuss the prisoners of war," Xuan Thuy, chief of the North Vietnamese delegation, said:

"If it appears to me there is a good deal of flexibility there, which may be tied in with the proposals made by the President on October 7 of this year, because I think the President's proposal had a great deal in the way of substance and a great amount of flexibility.

Mr. Griffin. I certainly would agree with the majority leader's interpretation of the President's proposal. He proposed, for example, that all prisoners of war be released by both sides. His other proposals were not necessarily tied to each other. They could be considered as a whole, or in parts, or in various combinations. But there were no conditions. I hope that perhaps the majority leader's interpretation of Xuan Thuy's words might indicate a greater degree of flexibility than was the case be-
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The administration has indicated its support for President Nixon's proposals.

Furthermore, the distinguished minority leader, the Senator from Michigan, has advocated President Nixon's proposal which likewise has the support of the administration, relative to the release of a certain number of prisoners of war who, he has said, are still there only because of the existence of a difference of $50,000 2 years ago — but also to the contingents of U.S. personnel in Laos and Thailand. We had better look, too, to U.S. military aid and the ground action, whether air bombardments, naval engagements, or whatever, which are still taking place throughout the Indochinese peninsula. We should note, also, the expanding area of military action in which our forces — by the ground, in the air, or on the sea — are engaged. A U.S. serviceman is no less a casualty if he is killed when his helicopter strikes a mountain in Laos or his plane is shot down while flying close support for a Vietnamese battalion in Cambodia than when he is shattered by a boobytrap outside Saigon.

We had better take a look, too, at the degree to which we continue to be concerned, not only by our acts but by our words. U.S. responsibilities for the survival of governments in the capitals of all three Indochinese countries. Finally, it must be stated accurately the distance yet to go in ending this involvement by noting the lack of progress in the meetings in Paris. I regret to have to say it but I must say it most soberly — by any of these other measures there are no indications of massive reduction of American forces, air, sea, and ground.

We may well ask ourselves, for example, what is changed in our relationship with the Saigon government? What is the life expectancy without a continued powerful U.S. military presence, not to speak of a steady flow of massive U.S. aid? What of the Government in Laos? Does it believe itself merely as a neutral or in any other independent way, now that many Americans are engaged there and a war is being conducted against that country? Is there a cutoff of either U.S. casualties or aid in sight? When can the withdrawal of the American contingents be expected? What of the related aid and contingents and friends in the country?

Then there is Cambodia. This year last year there were perhaps 11 Americans in a minuscule diplomatic mission and no aid program of any kind. Hostile forces were present only along the Cambodian-Vietnamese borders. No Americans were involved anywhere in Cambodia. No U.S. casualties of any kind were experienced in that country. To be sure, there was a government in Phnom Penh with only a fingertip grip on neutrality. Some considered that government not friendly to the United States and, indeed, in its public utterances frequently it was not.

Now there is a government which seems more friendly to the United States. However, that government's hold on the country is dubious, even a few miles outside the capital city, Phnom Penh. North Vietnamese forces are not only concentrated in the border sanctuaries but together with Cambodian guerrillas forces, there has been spread, they are now over one-half to three-quarters of Cambodia.

The staff of 11 Americans at the U.S. mission in Phnom Penh a year ago has burgeoned to 60 at present and it is still growing. The executive branch on its sumptuous orders has already furnished $105 million to the new Government of Cambodia. It has asked the Congress not only to underwrite that commitment but to join in committing another $155 million, a step which the Senate on Wednesday last said that it was prepared to take. I would be less than honest if I did not express my concern at that decision although I bow, of course, to the collective wisdom of the Senate.

It should be noted that the request was made under a familiar slogan: "spending dollars is better than spending lives." Of course, it is better to spend dollars; who would disagree with that order of priority? But is the evaluation valid?

Before we travel much further down that road, we had better note that the slogan marks the beginning of U.S. involvement in Vietnam as well as in Laos. Since then, we have scattered over the globe in the hundreds of millions of dollars. It had been the pattern to date.

We may ask ourselves, too, whether our involvement in Indochina is shrinking or growing when we perceive that the air war has long since been extended from Vietnam to all of Laos and appears, now, in full force in all of Cambodia. Moreover, what began as an understandable sympathy for the 1,500,000 people who are believed to be prisoners of Hanoi, has given rise to words and actions, in multiplying indication that the area of our military involvement may well be expanding still further to embrace bombing raids over North Vietnam. It will be recalled that it was the bombing of the North which led originally to the deaths of many Americans and the capture of almost all of the Americans whom we now seek to free from the prison camps of North Vietnam. The raids were curtailed under the previous administration and this was long ago lives was, at least, halted. Are we now about to begin it all over again?

Finally, if we would measure the distance to the end of our involvement, we should take into consideration what is transpiring in the Paris talks. The overwhelming fact, there, is that, until now, there have been little worthwhile talks are back almost to the beginning of a beginning. Two years later, they are as far from bonafide negotiations as they have ever been.

All in all, then, we would be well ad-