

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE  
ON THE SENATE FLOOR  
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 1970

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THE CASE AGAINST THE McGOVERN-HATFIELD AMENDMENT

Mr. President, Winston Churchill once said, "Patience and perseverance must never be grudged when the peace of the world is at stake."

These words have particular relevance to this time in our nation's history and to the debate which the Senate is conducting today.

Never before in nearly two centuries of our country's life has national patience and perseverance been tried more severely than by the conflict in Vietnam. But at the same time, never has the future on the cause of peace been more gravely jeopardized.

THE NEW ISOLATIONISTS

A new kind of isolationism has risen in our country in the last few years, perhaps as an outgrowth of war weariness, perhaps because some Americans have become so deeply immersed in the internal problems of our country, and perhaps because some have seen a political opportunity in the understandable desire of our people to achieve an end to this war and the beginning of peace.

This new isolationism is taking a number of directions, none of them in the best interest of our country if we accept the premise that a nation's domestic, internal vitality is related to and fundamentally dependent upon that nation's strength and vigor in the international arena.

This being so, we must strike the balance between spending for internal needs and spending for defense to insure that the United States can survive as a free nation in a world where all nations are not our friends.

This proposition is being largely overlooked or ignored by some segments of our population including, I must admit, some in the Congress of the United States.

One of the forms this neo-isolationism has taken has been a growing unwillingness by some to bear with President Nixon while he brings the war in South Vietnam to a just and honorable conclusion -- a conclusion which will -- because it

must -- maintain America's credibility with all nations and strengthen the American people's faith in themselves.

This means ending the war in such a way that South Vietnam is in a position to defend itself, in such a way that leaves our allies sure of our commitments to them, and in such a way that leaves our present and potential enemies equally sure that we will keep those commitments.

As I said, there are those who are not willing to wait for this kind of peace. They seek an "instant peace" they apparently think can be obtained by phrasemaking and legislative fiat.

The current vehicle for accomplishing their aims is known by three names. The press calls it the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment. The principal sponsors call it "Amendment to End the War". Those of us who support the President and who believe in an honorable peace call it the "Amendment to Lose the Peace".

I do not question the motives of the amendment's supporters, which include many who are rumored to have Presidential aspirations.

But, I do question their judgement. They tell us -- time and again they tell us -- that they do not seek to retreat or surrender, nor do they not seek to thwart the President, because they oppose him. They say they only want to share the burden and the responsibility with him. But what they would share or more aptly, usurp, is the President's sole responsibility as Commander-In-Chief. They would relegate to themselves the authority to order unilateral and precipitate withdrawal. They would legislate themselves the power to impose a one-sided deadline. But they cannot -- nor do they wish to -- assume the responsibility for these actions. The President alone bears that responsibility the Constitution assigns to him, and no legislative pronouncement, Madison Avenur commercial slogan or emotional television appeal can remove that responsibility.

## NO FALSE PEACE

No one disputes the proposition that peace needs to be restored in Southeast Asia. Nor should anyone quarrel with the proposition that peace must be durable and just. Peace, after all, is much more than an absence of war. It also means a system wherein the rights of every nation are respected -- such fundamental right as national independence, self-determination, security and freedom from intimidation.

We must be careful, therefore, that in our understandable desire to end hostilities in Southeast Asia we do not leap into a false peace, a peace that is precarious, impractical or unjust. There are essential building-blocks to be put in place before we can sit back and say that the structure of peace in Southeast Asia is solid enough to withstand the battering of subsequent events.

The element of timing becomes vital at this juncture. This is not the time to establish any arbitrary date or indulge in any other action which would narrow or restrict our efforts to end the war honorably and build peace successfully.

We already are well along the road to ending our combat role in Vietnam, as the President has promised. The number of U.S. combat troops in Vietnam has dropped by 120,000 -- from 550,000 when the President took office to 430,000 by the middle of this year. An additional 150,000 of our combat troops are scheduled to come home by May 1971. This is nearly one-half the number of troops that were in Vietnam when he took office. By that time, according to the President's senior military advisers, the government of Vietnam forces will be able to handle ground combat operations.

Reversing the trend of American military engagement and reducing American casualties, is only one facet of the Vietnamization program.

Another critical factor is the ability of the South Vietnamese to assume for themselves the task of their own defense and nation-building. They have done much in this regard, even in the midst of war. But they need time and assistance to broaden and deepen successes already achieved.



An equally critical factor is Hanoi's intentions.

Let us acknowledge that the enemy is tough and resilient, and should not be underestimated. We can hope that the level of combat can be further reduced; but at the same time we must be prepared for new enemy offensives. To adopt any other stance would be foolhardy. It would jeopardize all the progress we have made in the past 19 months. The President was right and deserves our full support when he said on November 3 last year, and several times since, that if he concludes that increased enemy action endangers our remaining forces in Vietnam, he will not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to protect the members of our armed forces. He could do no less as Commander-In-Chief.

Neither should the element of timing be overlooked in regard to negotiating a settlement of the war in Indochina. We have demonstrated again and again a willingness to negotiate. But that stipulated willingness could be undercut if Hanoi were to conclude that it can wait us out. We can and should continue to demonstrate our resolve here in the United States to gain a just and lasting peace; and we must continue to support the common defense efforts of threatened nations of Asia.

#### THE UNITED STATES AS AN ALLY

There is one particular aspect of the issues raised by the McGovern-Hatfield amendment which in my judgement needs continued emphasis. It involves the role our country is to assume in world affairs as we face the challenges and opportunities of the 1970's.

Our ultimate goal is a world at peace. Sadly, a just and durable peace around the globe is not yet in sight. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to develop creative policies and pursue feasible actions which not only minimize threats to our own security but create confidence among our allies as well as move us down a realistic road to peace.

The President outlined a blueprint to do just that in his report to the Congress last February on "U.S. Foreign Policy for the 70's". In that report, he laid special stress on the fact that we are now dealing with a world of stronger allies. The central thesis which springs from the fact is that the United States no longer will have to bear the great burdens we undertook in defense of the free world 25 years ago. Other nations now have an ability and responsibility to deal with local disputes.

The time has not yet arrived, however, when all of our friends in Asia can stand alone. We still must help in varying degrees where it makes a real difference, and where it is considered in our own interest. We cannot live in isolation. We are a power in the Pacific and, therefore, we remain involved in the Pacific.

A key element in current strategy is partnership. Responsibilities in Asia once borne by the United States at such great cost can now be shared.

The United States has embarked on a policy of encouraging Asian initiative, and the Vice President carefully articulated this policy to major Asian leaders last week. But we and they are only at the beginning stage of that policy. It is as unwise as it is untimely if we now start to draw lines which could constrict Asian initiative and undermine the Nixon Doctrine for U.S. policy.

The McGovern-Hatfield Amendment would be construed as constrictive by our allies throughout the world. Although it deals only with Indochina, it would be read elsewhere as a declaration that the United States was adopting a "sink or swim" approach where the interests of security and peace are concerned.

This is hardly the essence of the partnership role we have proclaimed. We have said we stand ready to meet our commitments. Yet this amendment, if passed, would mean our friends really could not be sure of our staying power. If we are going to rely on them to do more for themselves, they must be able to rely on us to do what we have said we would do. If their belief in our commitments is eroded, they may lose the essential incentive or will to handle their own self-defense. The stamina of our policies is at stake.

There should be no doubt that our stamina is being weighed by our opponents. This simply is not the time to specify by hour, day, week, or even year -- as the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment would -- a limit to our involvement. Even with the most careful planning, there must be some latitude in making certain choices of action.

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The President needs latitude, not constrictions, as he tries to effectuate his strategy for peace.

#### A POTENTIAL BLOODBATH

A picture on the front page of today's Washington POST captioned "Death at the Orphanage" is far more eloquent than the associated story on page 12, but I wish in particular to call it to the attention of the supporters of this amendment.

As we are all aware, one of the considerations the President has felt must be taken into account as he attempts to disengage the United States from South Vietnam is the fate of those who have actively resisted the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese.

Experts on Vietnam, including Douglas Pike and Stephen T. Hosmer, have foreseen the possibility of a wave of terrorism against the South Vietnamese when we leave, and if the North Vietnamese gain control, a bloodbath that could take over a million lives.

Even the supporters of McGovern-Hatfield recognize this possibility by providing that the President can spend money for sanctuaries for those South Vietnamese who may be threatened.

However, the question arises: Who is to tell who the endangered South Vietnamese are or where they may be?

Terrorism, including murder and torture, is practiced as a political weapon by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. One does not have to be an overt opponent to be a victim.

Since 1964, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese terrorism has been responsible for about 50,000 kidnappings and more than 23 thousand murders, not counting the great Tet bloodbath of 1968 where thousands were murdered in the city of Hue alone.

Mr. President, this brings me to today's story. I will insert it in the Record, but first let me read a paragraph or two.  
quote:



"Spokesmen said many of the enemy targets were populated regions that had lived in relative peace for several months. Forty-two civilians were reported killed and 120 wounded, some in attacks against rural voting centers.

"Troops described by survivors as uniformed North Vietnamese rampaged through a Buddhist orphanage and hospital 22 miles southwest of Danang, hurling grenades and dynamite bombs. The 30-minute attack left 12 dead and 45 wounded."

It is obvious that these premeditated attacks were a part of official Communist policy. They are a part of a strategy of terror aimed not at defeating South Vietnam in military combat but at destroying South Vietnamese morale by killing, wounding and pillaging. No matter that the victims are the sick, the wounded, the orphaned.

Visualize what could happen then, Mr. President, if the United States cuts and runs on December 31, 1971, or on February 29, 1972, before the South Vietnamese Army is trained well enough to protect the countryside.

Today's front page picture would be mild by comparison to any record of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong premeditated policies of murder and torture which will sweep through South Vietnam if we abandon our commitments, our principles and our allies, as the sponsors of McGovern-Hatfield wish us to do.

#### CONCLUSION

One of Abraham Lincoln's remarks concerning the trying search for peace during the Civil War is compellingly appropriate to the issues before us today.

He said: "A man watches his pear tree, impatient for the ripening of the fruit.

"Let him attempt to force the progress, and he may spoil fruit and tree."

Let us not in our impatience for peace and an end to war heed a rash, popular or expedient course which would spoil either the fruit of that peace which we seek or the tree of freedom at home or abroad.