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AMERICA'S SOUTHEAST ASIAN POLICY IN PERSPECTIVE
THE LEADERSHIP OF SIX PRESIDENTS

Statement follows:

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Political Progress

Even though headlines and public attention continue to focus on the military aspects of the struggle in Indochina, we can take a great deal of pride in the fact that as the military aspects diminish the South Vietnamese have also made remarkable progress in building their society even in the midst of war.

The South Vietnamese have written a constitution and are daily strengthening their constitutional system. In spite of Communist terror they have held a series of national elections, developed a lively multi-party system, a national assembly, province councils and an independent judiciary. They elected a President and their local leaders in over 2,000 of the 2,300 villages in the country. Last August's highly competitive Senate elections were marked by the participation and victory of the Buddhist opposition slate, a group which had boycotted the 1967 elections. But they called the 1970 Senate elections fair and are planning to run candidates in the elections this fall. This fall Vietnam votes again with elections scheduled for the Lower House and the Presidency. In contrast to North Vietnam, South Vietnam's elections will be highly competitive and will fall under the careful scrutiny of South Vietnam's many parties and a large foreign press corps.

Social And Economic Development

In addition to these impressive political developments, there has also been considerable progress in the area of social and economic development. Three million young people are enrolled in South Vietnam's schools today. Additional hundreds of thousands are receiving professional or technical training under the Vietnamization program. Improved medical care and better housing for the people of Vietnam is a reality and continues to receive priority attention. As the war has subsided there has been construction of a record number of schools, hospitals and homes.

Particularly noteworthy is the war in which the tremendous task of resettlement and rehabilitation of veterans and war refugees has continued with very positive results. This does not mean that all former refugees have been completely resettled or rehabilitated. But it does mean that hundreds of thousands of refugees have been resettled and assisted during wartime.

In the area of agriculture in Vietnam -- a land of farmers -- the government's land reform and development programs are transforming the countryside from a battleground to a prosperous community of small land owners. More water pumps, farmer cooperatives and a new agricultural credit program, a doubling of the fish catch -- all are playing their share. "Miracle" rice and improved security means that Vietnam will be close to rice self-sufficiency within the year. The "land-to-the-tiller" land reform program will transfer over one million hectares of farm land to more than half a million new owners. Farmer's unions, their membership doubled in the past two years, are helping to spread new techniques and to foster the farmers lot.

These impressive accomplishments are not earth-shattering in and of themselves until one realizes that each of them is helping the small man in Vietnam -- the fisherman, the farmer -- who make up more than 70 percent of the population. More secure, prosperous and confident, they are working and fighting to build their future and fighting to preserve their country. And they do not stand alone. Together with their peace loving neighbors in Southeast Asia, they also hope to benefit from such regional cooperation as has already begun in planning a dramatic project for the development of the Mekong River Basin. As the war diminishes throughout South Vietnam, these are truly times of new hope and new horizons.

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A Time Of Testing And Hope

I have spoken of America's role in Vietnam and of the notable achievements made and hopes evident in Vietnam today which must give pause to Hanoi's leaders and which can give the Allies confidence in winning a just peace.

In conclusion, let me make a few simple points:

-- We and the South Vietnamese did not start the war.

-- We will end our role -- we are ending our role -- but in a serious, responsible way.

-- We have made progress.

Those who seek a unilateral withdrawal date, the sponsors and advocates of this amendment, must ask themselves very soberly whether they are now -- at the last moment -- jeopardizing the policy which six Presidents have forged, for which 2,500,000 Americans have fought and 45,000 have died in the last decade, and in which very substantial progress is now being made.

An Evasion Of Responsibility

What they are proposing is not to end our involvement in the conflict. We all share that desire. They are proposing to end our involvement in a way which will mock the efforts and sacrifices of the past and will insure the likelihood that aggression having been victorious, will spread and grow to a point at some time in the future when will have to take up arms to oppose it again. This is a proposal laden with enormous consequences; a policy proposal which places a heavy burden of proof on its proponents and upon whom a heavy burden of responsibility would fall if South Vietnam and Southeast Asia were to be lost. In fact, theirs is not a policy but an evasion of policy and responsibility. It seeks to resolve a problem by pretending that South Vietnam and its people, and the whole of Asia do not matter and that we can walk away from there and not care about the consequences.

If Hanoi's leaders can obtain a unilateral U. S. withdrawal date without undertaking their own withdrawals and accepting the principles of international verification, open elections and prisoner releases in Indochina, they will have no incentive whatsoever to negotiate seriously and will be encouraged to continue their aggressive policies. To undercut the chance for a just settlement now and to accept the enemy's unilateral demands, would be to betray the sacrifices made and the progress achieved.

Conclusion

I can assure you that President Nixon will never choose such a course. He has chosen the path of responsibility. He will adhere to that path. And he will succeed in honorably ending our involvement in the Indochina conflict.

I endorse the President's course and his policy as stated in his message to the Congress:

"A negotiated settlement for all Indochina remains our highest priority. But if the Communist side leaves us no choice we will follow the alternate route to peace -- phasing out our involvement while giving the region's friendly countries the time and the means to defend themselves."

Mr. President, I urge the Senate to support the President and to reject the amendment offered by the Senator from South Dakota and the Senator from Oregon.

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FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY

SENATE FLOOR STATEMENT

AMERICA'S SOUTHEAST ASIAN POLICY IN PERSPECTIVE
THE LEADERSHIP OF SIX PRESIDENTS

President Nixon is committed to ending the war in Indochina. But he is also committed to ending it on a responsible basis -- one which will honor the sacrifices made and which will bring about a just and lasting peace for all the people of Southeast Asia.

I want to reply to those who think our commitments in Vietnam and Southeast Asia do not matter or are totally dishonorable or that the enemy there deserves to win. Let me attempt today to set the record straight.

Let us understand at the outset that President Nixon, having inherited American commitments and recognizing America's responsibilities in Asia, will not abandon those commitments nor shirk from those responsibilities as he shapes American policy to the texture of today's world. But let it also be clear that President Nixon understands that while small, distant countries may need our help when challenged from abroad, we cannot and should not do the job for them by ourselves alone. Rather, we must help them to help themselves.

It will pay us to review for a moment, the history of the challenges our nation has faced in that part of the world and the responses undertaken by American Presidents who have been determined to meet our responsibilities to the cause of freedom in Asia. Let us try to close the homework gap, for a clear view of the roots of our involvement will help us to understand the wisdom of President Nixon's path to peace.

Challenge and Response in Southeast Asia

Asia matters. It matters to the future of peace in the world, and it also matters to the security of our nation. We too border on the Pacific, and it is vitally important for the people
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of the United States to have an understanding and compassion for the independent peoples of Asia. Two hundred fifty million of them live in Southeast Asia alone.

In seeking to transform their ancient cultures into modern nations, the peoples of Asia want to share the fruits of a peaceful and progressive world. They have their eye on the star of self-determination and they will not compromise their quest by the imposition of new tyrannies. The United States has welcomed their efforts and has sought to foster their cause. We will continue to be with them.

The record of six Presidents -- Democrat and Republican -- stands as a testament to American responsibility in the Pacific area, and it is a record in which all Americans can take pride.

Let us recall that it was President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who while faced with major problems at home, did not neglect emerging threats and responsibilities abroad. He practiced responsible statesmanship and resisted the short-sighted counsel of those who insisted that America should insulate itself from distant "foreign" problems. "America first" was their slogan. But they forgot that America was not an island and that her hopes and her security, and that of free peoples in both Asia and Europe, depended on American willingness to shoulder her responsibilities abroad.

President Truman did not shrink America's Asian perspectives. He completed the costly task of defeating the Japanese Empire. He fulfilled the pledge of independence to the Philippines. And he supported the push for independence by the peoples of Indonesia, now a nation of 100 million.

And President Truman did not hesitate or equivocate when in 1950 North Korean armies swept south across the 38th parallel. He knew -- though there were those who questioned the significance of such a small and distant country -- that to the people of South Korea and to the neighboring millions in free Asia, there was no more important test for the fabric of their own societies and that of the family of nations than meeting this aggression. And after early setbacks, the United States' forces and those of the other allies achieved their purpose and repelled the invaders from the North.

And at a time when few Americans even knew such a place existed, President Truman also acted on Vietnam. There, in 1946, Ho Chi Minh's Communists had liquidated the non-Communist nationalists in a short-lived "coalition" of 7 parties. To this day, Ho's liquidation policy is remembered with bitterness throughout Vietnam whenever "coalition" is discussed. By 1950, Ho's Lao Dong Party had totally smothered the Vietnamese movements for national independence, and it had become clear to all that Ho intended to replace waning colonial control and gradual steps toward independence in a democratic Indochina, with his own dictatorship.

It was with assessment of these developments in mind that President Truman provided economic and military assistance to the French, and to the Vietnamese nationalists. At the same time he urged them to proceed as rapidly as possible to full independence and a democratic Indochina.

President Eisenhower And The Geneva Accord

And President Eisenhower endorsed President Truman's policies.

It should be noted that with the Geneva Conference marking the end of the indochina war in July 1954, the Eisenhower administration and the nationalist Vietnamese (who were recognized diplomatically by 36 countries) insisted on the principle of reciprocal troop withdrawals, competitive elections and United Nations verification as the best means of preserving the chance for diversity and democracy in Vietnam.

The leaders in Hanoi, however, strongly rejected these principles. They moved instead to consolidate their regime. In flagrant violation of the Geneva Accords they cached arms and left

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over 5,000 armed guerrillas in South Vietnam; they tripled their regular army in the North to 21 divisions; they blocked the southward flow of refugees (although nearly 900,000 escaped); they established a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship in Hanoi which purged all opposition and collectivized the peasants' land at the cost of tens upon tens of thousands of lives and political prisoners in slave labor camps; they suppressed a mass peasant uprising; they prevented the International Control Commission from enforcing the agreements between the two zones of Vietnam and France as provided by the Geneva Accords; and they have to this day refused to hold politically competitive elections in areas under their control.

Record Of Violations

The continuing record of Communist violations is documented in the statements of North Vietnam's Lao Dong Party, in the records of the International Control Commission, and in the minds of the people of Vietnam. It is marked after 1956 by political terrorization and assassination of people who were trying to build their own society in South Vietnam, it is marked by the illegal infiltration, between 1956 and 1964, of 80 - 100,000 cadres taken North for training. By 1960 Hanoi had announced the creation of the "National Liberation Front," the NLF, to be followed in 1962 with the formation of the dominant element in the Front -- the "Peoples' Revolutionary Party." In the winter of 1964-1965 regiments of North Vietnam's regular army, equipped with new Chinese and Soviet weapons, invaded South Vietnam. Hanoi's invasion reached its high point in the 1968 Tet offensive against South Vietnam's population centers. Two hundred thirty thousand Communist troops lost their lives that year, but the South Vietnamese armed forces and people held against the onslaught. More than 5,000 political murders carried out by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in the city of Hue during that offensive permanently ruined the Front's political image in South Vietnam. Finally, Hanoi's record of attack has also been marked by the constant and massive violation, over more than six years, of Laotian and Cambodian territory.

American Response

The American understanding and response concerning events in Vietnam increased only gradually. And, we must be frank to admit, it was not always tailored to the needs of the local situation. But the position of the Eisenhower administration at the time of the Geneva Accords appears in retrospect to have been appropriate. It was perhaps made most clear in the SEATO Treaty Protocol of 1955 and in the limited advisory and aid programs initiated thereafter. President Eisenhower acted in the belief that the South Vietnamese ought to be given a chance. He felt it was far more honorable and important to work for reform and progress there than to turn away and to witness the imposition of Ho Chi Minh's totalitarianism.

President Kennedy Remained Firm

President Kennedy held a similar view. In 1956, while Senator he had risen to challenge the double standard which would accuse South Vietnam, a country under direct military attack from the North, of not meeting political standards while never even mentioning the conditions and practices in North Vietnam. As North Vietnam's aggression mounted, President Kennedy increased the assistance being given to the beleaguered South Vietnamese and raised the number of U.S. advisors to 16,000 from the 685 permitted under the rotation provision of the Geneva Accords.

And contrary to recent attempts to rewrite history, John Kennedy remained true to his responsibility in Southeast Asia. In a television broadcast of September 1963, he said:

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"What I am concerned about is that Americans will get impatient and say, because they don't like events in Southeast Asia or they don't like the Government in Saigon, that we should withdraw. That only makes it easy for the Communists. I think we should stay. We should use our influence in as effective a way as we can, but we should not withdraw."

Continued Commitment To U.S. Goals Under President Johnson

In the summer of 1964, regimental-size units of North Vietnam's regular army were directed by the leaders in Hanoi to move out of their training camps in North Vietnam, southward along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, through neutral Laos and into South Vietnam. These invading forces, following the 100,000 cadre infiltrated since 1957, began to arrive in South Vietnam in December 1964 and January 1965. In February and March of 1965, they launched a series of offensives against provincial and country capitals and installations throughout South Vietnam.

Mr. President, publications and revelations of recent days have made it somewhat difficult to assess the course of American policy in Indochina during the Johnson Administration. Several points, however, are clear:

- The Johnson Administration was committed to the same basic goals of the four previous Administrations.
- Congress, wisely or not, passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on August 7, 1964, stating "The United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed forces, to assist..." SEATO Members and protocol States such as South Vietnam.
- And in reliance upon that Congressional resolution, the United States involvement was significantly expanded.

In February 1965, President Johnson ordered air strikes against North Vietnam, and in June he dispatched the first U.S. combat units to South Vietnam. By the time President Johnson left office in January, 1969, the number of U.S. troops in South Vietnam stood at 543,400; 31,000 had been killed there; all negotiations attempts had been rebuffed by Hanoi; and the war had been brought home to America.

President Nixon's Course

President Nixon inherited the war in Indochina when he took office. He inherited it, but he has reversed its course. And he is committed to ending it on a responsible basis.

Today we hear much about peace from those who have not looked at the record. We hear much about peace from those who press their counsel of abandonment, despair and surrender. But let us be fair and consider the record. What has the United States proposed and done for peace? What have President Nixon and South Vietnam's President Thieu done? And what have Hanoi and the NLF done? Anyone who looks at the record with an open mind and an unbiased eye will have to place the blame for continued war, for continued death and continued suffering, not on Washington, but on Hanoi and the NLF.

Five Points For Peace

President Nixon's five point peace proposal of October 7, 1970 is on the negotiating table in Paris. It is endorsed by President Thieu. It is a far reaching and just proposal for peace in Southeast Asia:

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- It calls for an internationally supervised cease-fire throughout Indochina.
- It proposes the establishment of an Indochina Peace Conference.
- It proposes negotiation of an agreed timetable for the complete withdrawal of all United States forces from South Vietnam on the basis of North Vietnamese reciprocity and international verification.
- It calls for a fair political settlement reflecting the will of the South Vietnamese people and of all the political forces in South Vietnam.
- It calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war by all sides.

President Thieu's Peace Proposal

In addition to this American proposal, endorsed by South Vietnam, the United States has also supported the proposal for a political settlement in Vietnam made by President Thieu in July, 1969. President Thieu has asked the other side to accept the principle of peaceful political competition. His proposal calls for free elections in which all people and parties of South Vietnam, including the National Liberation Front (NLF) can participate peacefully, and for a mixed electoral commission on which all parties, including the NLF, can be represented to work out the verification procedures for such elections. This is a generous offer. It is, perhaps, unprecedented in time of war.

Steps Toward Peace

The record of Allied proposals to negotiate a just peace deserves the Senate's and the Nation's support. And strong as is this record for peace, it is made still stronger by the fact that we have not merely talked about peace. In the absence of the Communists' willingness to reach an agreement, we have also unilaterally acted to take substantial steps toward peace. These steps include:

- The 1968 halt to the bombing of North Vietnam.
- Agreement on the participation of the NLF in the Paris Talks.
- Agreement on the principle of troop withdrawals.
- U.S. troop withdrawals totaling 265,500 by May 1, 1971 to reach 365,500 U.S. troops withdrawn by December 1, 1971. By December this will be a reduction of two-thirds from the number of 549,500 authorized in January, 1969, when President Nixon took office.
- A series of de-escalatory steps substantially cutting back U.S. tactical air activity and B-52 activity in Southeast Asia.
- The appointment of a new senior negotiator in Paris.

The Communist Response

What has the other side done in return to bring closer the day of peace? The answer is nothing. Nothing at all. The answer is absolutely nothing in spite of the fact that many of these steps taken by the United States and South Vietnam were urged by the enemy and by many sincere Americans as constructive contributions to reduce U.S. involvement, and also to open the door to negotiations.

The door to peace has been blocked by Hanoi and the National Liberation Front. They have refused even to consider the Allied proposals. They continue to reject the principles of reciprocity, open elections and international verification. They demand unilateral and total withdrawal of all U.S. troops, war

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materiel and assistance, and they demand the overthrow of the leaders of the Government of Vietnam and the imposition of one of their "coalition" governments established prior to any elections and in the absence of any international verification.

Prisoners Of War

In exchange for such a unilateral and total abandonment by the U.S., Hanoi and the NLF have pledged nothing. They have at best indicated that if everything they demand was done, they might "discuss" -- not release -- the prisoners of war. This is meaningless propaganda, which they have used before, for example, when they indicated a host of results would be discussed and achieved if only the bombing was stopped, if only substantial troop withdrawals were undertaken, if only a senior negotiator was appointed, and so on. We should call on them now not just to talk, but to respond with substantial actions in the cause of peace.

Let me say a special word about our nearly 1,500 men held prisoner and missing in action in Southeast Asia. This Administration has demonstrated by word and deed, perhaps most dramatically in last fall's rescue mission at Son Tay near Hanoi, that it will leave no stone unturned in seeking humane treatment and freedom for them.

In seeking to break the deadlock of POW releases, the United States and the Government of Vietnam have often proposed the early reciprocal release of POW's held by all of the parties to the conflict. Pending the end of hostilities, we have also proposed the reparation of all POWs to a neutral country. At the same time, the South Vietnamese have unilaterally released over 200 North Vietnamese POWs to the North and over a thousand Viet Cong POWs in South Vietnam. And South Vietnam continues to permit inspection of its POW camps by international groups including the Red Cross. Regrettably, Hanoi has shown callous contempt for the accepted standards of international law and humanitarian behavior. Hanoi has made fewer than a dozen releases, tolerates no inspections and even treats as non-persons its own POWs -- the more than 8,000 North Vietnamese POWs held in South Vietnam.

A Withdrawal Date Unwise

The argument has been made that if we would only set a "reasonable" date for our total withdrawal, the North Vietnamese would be willing to cease firing against U.S. troops and to release our POWs. This argument ignores several important points.

First, as long as the cease-fire did not extend to all hostile forces, our men would still be exposed to enemy fire and the risk of capture in connection with their activities in support of South Vietnamese forces. To date, the President's call for a total cease-fire has been categorically rejected by the other side.

Second, the other side has, in all their official statements, including those at the June 10 session of the Paris Talks, limited themselves to a commitment to "discuss" the question of release of our prisoners after the U.S. has set a "reasonable" date for total U.S. withdrawal.

In Paris, both the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong have been sought for some time to give Congressional and other visitors the impression that the prisoner issue can be easily resolved once unilateral United States withdrawal is agreed upon. In conversations they often go quite far in attempting to create this impression, but without at any time changing their position that the subject of prisoners of war is only a matter for discussion after a withdrawal date has been fixed.

Third, the other side has made it clear that they include in the term "U.S. withdrawal" measures which would make it very difficult -- if not impossible -- for the South Vietnamese to continue their resistance against North Vietnamese military aggression.

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The first point of the enemy's Eight Point Peace Program of September 17, 1970, the basis for their negotiating position, states that:

"The U.S. Government must put an end to its war of aggression in Viet-Nam, stop the policy of 'Vietnamization' of the war, totally withdraw from South Viet-Nam troops, military personnel, weapons, and war materials of the United States as well as troops, military personnel, weapons, and war materials of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp, without posing any condition whatsoever, and dismantle all U.S. military bases in South Viet-Nam."

Chief North Vietnamese negotiator Xuan Thuy was asked by WASHINGTON POST reporter Chalmers Roberts on June 8, whether cessation of U.S. economic and military aid to South Vietnam would be a necessary condition for release of U.S. prisoners. In reply he specifically referred his questioner to the Eight Points. In response to Roberts' follow-up questions, Thuy reportedly said that "if the U.S. withdraws all its forces but maintained an advisory mission and continued to give military equipment aid to the Saigon administration," a chain of events would occur which would lead to re-introduction of U.S. troops and thus negate the original withdrawal.

Xuan Thuy called in this interview for a "total U.S. withdrawal and a change from the Thieu-Ky regime." Thus, he repeated earlier North Vietnamese implications that actual release of the POWs, as contrasted with "discussions" on the question, must await conclusion of agreements which would result in the removal of the present constitutionally elected government of that country.

It is the judgment of the Administration that demands of this nature would be advanced by the other side in the "discussions" which they say would follow announcement of a reasonable U.S. withdrawal date. Only when these demands were satisfied would prisoner release be possible. Our experience with North Vietnam in the Paris talks since the November 1, 1968 bombing halt - which was supposed to lead to "prompt, productive, serious, and intensive negotiations" -- shows how adamant they can be in insisting on unreasonable demands in the face of prior promises that matters could be "easily" settled in such discussions.

Thus, it is not felt that setting a deadline of December 31, 1971, for withdrawal of U.S. forces would lead to agreement within 60 days on arrangements for prisoner release by December 31, 1971 without further far-reaching concessions on our part. Furthermore, so precipitate a deadline for withdrawal of U.S. forces could increase the vulnerability of our own forces as they are withdrawn and seriously undermine our efforts to give the South Vietnamese a reasonable chance to defend themselves.

How Many Prisoners?

An additional point is the matter of numbers. As of June 10, 1971, the Department of Defense lists 1,492 American servicemen as captured or missing in North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Of this number 465 are known to be captured, and 1,027 are missing.

What does Hanoi say? They acknowledge only 339 American prisoners of war and disclaim knowledge of any others.

Are we to take their word on the number of men they hold -- just as we relied on their representations in regard to a bombing halt; in regard to the participation of the NLF in the Paris Talks; in regard to the appointment of a new senior negotiator; and in regard to withdrawals of more than a quarter-million troops?

Are we to take them at their word in regard to the fate of nearly 1,500 Americans, some of whom have been held in squalor and filth for upwards of four, five, six or even seven years?

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I say, No, Mr. President. We should not take the North Vietnamese at their word on so vital an issue until they have proven that their word deserves to be relied upon.

Military And Social Progress In Vietnam

The path to a just peace through negotiations remains our first goal. In the face of Communist intransigence at the negotiating table, our second choice is Vietnamization -- the program of reducing U.S. forces and helping to develop South Vietnam's capability for its own self-defense. But, Vietnamization, I can assure you, is a responsible program and one that is working out very well.

Since President Nixon took office in January 1969, the South Vietnamese have greatly strengthened their capabilities in meeting the threat from North Vietnam and in developing their own society. This is a side of the story often neglected by our media and by the critics of our policy -- by those who do not see that the South Vietnamese have great talents and increasing motivation and that the North Vietnamese and the southern Communists are not ten feet tall.

Two Important Successes

Let me give you two important examples of South Vietnamese progress in the military field about which there has been much erroneous discussion. As a result of the 1970 Cambodian operations, as President Nixon accurately forecast, casualties have been greatly reduced, the level of fighting has been substantially reduced, security has been brought to Vietnam's populous Delta region, and the U.S. withdrawal timetable has been safeguarded.

In the recent operations in Laos against the enemy's only remaining supply route, the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the South Vietnamese carried the fight to the enemy's own territory and won a significant victory. For 40 days they disrupted the enemy's flow of supplies and the height of the dry season forced him to consume war materiel and manpower which is normally used for resupply and offensive operations against South Vietnamese and American forces. In massing their own forces to defend their vital Trail, the North Vietnamese paid a very high price in the face of overwhelming Allied firepower and air superiority, including over 600 B-52 strikes. Four of the enemy's best divisions were decimated at a cost of over 13,000 lives, and thousands of wounded rendered thirteen of the enemy's best combat battalions ineffective. Large stocks of enemy war materiel were also lost. The South Vietnamese lost 1,400 killed and 4,600 wounded with 4 of their combat battalions hurt badly, but they came out with their weapons and their pride. Their battalions have been refitted, and they feel they won a victory against the best of the enemy's forces on the enemy's terrain. They can also readily see that one immediate result of the operation has been the fact that since February, the North Vietnamese have managed virtually no ground attacks in South Vietnam's populated areas, being limited to a few engagements near the Lao-tian border. Future quick, commando-style raids by the South Vietnamese against the Trail are expected to keep the enemy off balance in his vital supply and staging areas.

One might point out that these two important operations have been conducted in the context of a 50 percent reduction in U.S. troop strength, a 50 percent reduction in U.S. war costs, substantial reductions in U.S. air activity and substantial increases in the South Vietnamese regional, local and paramilitary defense forces, which give promise of a steadily increasing capability to shoulder the burden of their country's self-defense.

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