

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D C 20301

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Ceasefire Agreement

I have had long and detailed discussions with Ken Rush and Tom Moorer on what must appear to you as a critical dilemma in the current negotiations being conducted by Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. On one hand, the North Vietnamese appear to be stiffening by re-opening issues once considered settled and prompting their forces in South Vietnam to prepare for action that would violate the terms of the proposed agreement. On the other hand, the US has encouraged the US people and the rest of the world to believe that peace is at hand and that our POW's would be home momentarily.

Ken Rush, Tom Moorer, and I believe that the dilemma is more apparent than real. We jointly believe that you have only one viable, realistic choice. That choice is to sign the agreement now. Our reasons are described below.

We believe that you will no longer get the support of Congress for continuation of the war if our POW's are not returned to the US promptly. Congress is fully aware of your generous offer of May 8, 1972. Congress is likewise fully aware that the nine points contained in the current proposed agreement as accepted by the North Vietnamese is a far better agreement for both the US and South Vietnam than your May 8 proposal -- the same proposal used by me before Congress to gain support for our last Supplemental Budget request to cover the increased cost of the war in Southeast Asia. I know from my direct talks with Congressional leaders in the last few days that they do not understand why we are delaying the signing of the agreement -- why we are delaying the return of US POW's. Any further delay, or any action that increases US military involvement like the increased bombing of North Vietnam, will destroy the remaining flicker of support you now have from both the Senate and the House.

The same feelings, I believe, are shared by the American people, particularly the families of our POW's and MIA's, and world leaders, both allied and communist. These world leaders respect you for your many initiatives that have moved the world toward a generation of

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