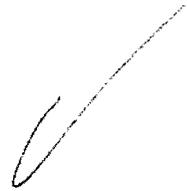


THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 24, 1973



MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROLAND L. ELLIOTT

SUBJECT: Vietnam Peace Agreement

As of noon this date, we have received 850 telegrams. Of these 823 are pro, 5 are con, and 22 are classified as comment.

Accompanying this memo are samples of incoming messages.

Attachments

With regard to the Vietnam peace settlement some of the following points should be borne in mind in preparing talking papers, etc.

- This was a peace with honor which achieved the major goals for which the war was waged.
- We were able to get a settlement that under no stretch of the imagination can possibly be described as a coalition government and one that assures the right of the people of South Vietnam to determine their future without having a Communist government imposed upon them, directly or indirectly.
- The settlement rather than being a bug-out which might have ended the war for us, is one that ends the war for the 50 million people of Indochina. This is fundamental.
- The difference between the Senate and House doves' position of POWs for withdrawal and the peace the Administration finally got is very simply that the POWs for withdrawal proposal would have meant the United States would get out and let the war go ahead. It would have ended the war for us and had the war continue for those that remained with at least 1,000 casualties a week ad infinitum. What we have done by sticking in there was to get a peace which ends the war for the long-suffering people of South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos as well.
- We must be prepared to point out how the settlement has been improved from October and also why it was not possible to settle in December. It is obvious that our critics are already beginning to pick up the line with some assist from Hanoi that we could have had the same settlement we eventually achieved in October or in December when the talks broke down. We all know this is totally untrue but the point must be made simply and directly without too much detail.

- We must flatly indicate, whenever we get the opportunity, that the resolutions passed by the House and Senate caucuses over the years we were negotiating and by the full Senate from time to time prolonged the war, and only by the strong action that we took in December were we able to convince the enemy that the enemy should settle and not take the risk of waiting for the Congress to give them even more than they were willing to settle for with us.
  
- In essence, the simple points must be made that our opponents in the Congress and in the media wanted to end the war in Vietnam with dishonor and what amounted really to an abject surrender and defeat for the United States. We persisted in seeing it through until the war was ended with honor.
  
- Our opponents would have ended the war in a way that would have led at the very least to a Communist coalition government for South Vietnam or a totally Communist government for South Vietnam. We have ended in a way that assures the people of South Vietnam the right to determine their own future in free, internationally supervised elections, which means that there will be no Communist government unless the people want it.
  
- Finally, our opponents with all their talk about peace were only interested in getting peace for America and would have ended our involvement in a way that would have allowed the war to continue indefinitely for the long-suffering people of Indochina. Peace with honor means peace with independence for South Vietnam and peace for the people of Southeast Asia. Peace with surrender and dishonor means peace for us but a Communist government for South Vietnam and continued war for the 50 million people of Indochina.