

Sent to State Dept.  
Nov. 26, 1969

GENERAL

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PR13/ST43

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P. O. Box 50202  
Biggs Field  
Ft. Bliss, Tx. 79918  
November 17, 1969

President Richard M. Nixon  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

We take this opportunity to reply to your recent address and to offer some thoughts on your Viet Nam policy.

In your speech of November 3, you referred to the "silent majority" of Americans who back your conduct of the war in Viet Nam. It is undeniable that a majority of people in this country do back you. But we believe it is also true that they support you because you are our President and not because they fully agree with your war policy. In 1968, you made it perfectly clear that the main reason that the Democratic administration should be voted out was because they had failed to end the war. Americans voted for you in the tens of millions because you promised them a "new team," a team that would be able to bring the boys home. The people of this country still want to bring our fighting men home - and bring them home quickly. In October of this year, the Gallup Poll indicated that 57 percent of the American people favor bringing all troops home from Viet Nam before January 1971. The people support you - not because they want to endorse the continuation of the war - but because you are the President of our country. The majority of people will be behind you, and back you even more strongly, if you act decisively to end our presence in Viet Nam.

As for those of us in the "vocal minority" who have demonstrated for peace, most of us are neither basically anti-American nor even anti-Nixon. Despite the harsh language in your speech, we do not seek to "defeat" or "humiliate" America. We want our country to be strong. And we believe wholeheartedly that the policies we advocate will benefit America by extricating her from a war which is sapping both her international and domestic strength. Furthermore, we support your pledge to change the Johnson administration policies, and we are glad to note your decision to remove 60,000 troops from Viet Nam this year. But 60,000 from 540,000 still leaves 480,000, and a withdrawal at such a rate will take nine years to complete. We don't want our country to "bug out" on her foreign commitments. We wish to affirm American support for free governments and to continue our commitments to aid our allies if they are subject to external aggression. However, we do not see how it is in our national interest to commit U.S. troops for putting down internal rebellions or for supporting corrupt and repressive governments.

No one wants to witness a "blood bath" in Viet Nam. The slaughter which you predict will occur upon our withdrawal is certainly an ugly possibility. But the slaughter in which we are now participating has already cost 40,000 American lives and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese lives. Also, over a million South Vietnamese have been left homeless by the war and presently live in "refugee camps," a polite term for what we call concentration camps when they are set up by our enemies. Perhaps the killing will continue in

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Viet Nam after we leave, but it is time for us to end our participation in that killing. From the kill-ratio figures released by our army, it is plain that it is the United States and not the Viet Cong that are doing most of the killing in Viet Nam today. We urge you to end our part in this massacre.

And, Mr. President, we wish to add that those of us who are demonstrating for peace are not "an effete corps of impudent snobs." Although a good percentage of us are college graduates, many of us have worked as common laborers to help put ourselves through college. We do not advocate "constant carnival." We do believe it is our duty to continue to speak out and demonstrate, not unlike the men who founded our country, until our goal has been achieved.

The government of the Philippines has recently decided that it can no longer allow its men to kill and be killed in Viet Nam, and it is therefore withdrawing all its forces. We urge you to follow this example. The military control of South Viet Nam exercised by the Thieu-Ky regime is not worth one hundred American lives a week. We want to support you; we want to be able to be proud of our country. But we cannot support or be proud of policies which we consider to be disasterous to both America and to the lives of thousands of Americans. Please reconsider. Please end our part of the killing and bring the boys home.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas J. Burke A/Sgt.  
Anthony J. Bonino A/Sgt.  
Roy A. Johnson A/Sgt.

Jean-Marie Howard, PFC  
Lawrence W. Barntstone PFC  
Gilbert J. Sagnell PFC  
Louis L. Ruse, PFC  
Warren H. Block PFC  
Robert D. Burn PFC  
David A. Drake PFC  
Bruce A. Roberts  
Justin F. Gink PFC  
Alan M. Morris A/Cpl  
David J. Burke, PFC  
Roger E. Brownell PFC  
Everett R. Haws PFC  
John W. Borelli Jr. PFC  
Robert T. Park, PFC  
Joseph L. McElroy, PFC  
Phillip E. Johnson, PFC  
Richard H. Norris, PFC  
Francis L. Lenaki (PFC)  
E. Reid Donette, PFC  
James M. West PFC  
Robert W. Hoag PFC  
Daniel M. Loch PFC  
John D. Davenport PFC  
J. J. Mangalies PFC  
Richard L. Pattenau PFC  
Stephen L. Bonars PFC  
Frank A. Lovelock, PFC