

*General*  
FG6-11-1/BeLieu,  
Kenneth E.  
ND18/CO165

November 1, 1969

Dear Jake:

This brief note is to acknowledge your  
October 31 letter to the President.

I want you to know that because of the impor-  
tance of its contents and the brevity of the  
time involved, I have taken direct action to  
see that it is brought to his immediate atten-  
tion.

With warm regard,

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. BeLieu  
Deputy Assistant to the President

X  
Honorable Jacob K. Javits  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

bcc: w/incoming to Dr. Kissinger - Atten: Al Haig -  
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

KEB:EF:VO:vo

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 31, 1969

Dear Mr. President:

In writing as I am to let you know what I believe should be the main thrust of your November 3 address to the nation on Vietnam, I am well aware that you have doubtless already received a great deal of advice on this subject. Moreover, I am sure you know that I am not one of those who thinks it is simple to disengage the United States from a war effort of this magnitude with its enormous ramifications both at home and abroad. But I feel it my duty to present these ideas privately to you and specifically as you finalize an historic statement.

For, I am deeply convinced that the policy the President presents to the nation on November 3 will be viewed in history as one of the major turning points of your Presidency. I believe the occasion presents you with both the opportunity and the necessity for establishing the leadership in the now irreversible disengagement of the United States from the combat responsibility in Vietnam.

Here are the priorities as I see them:

First, take the American public into your confidence through a resolute statement of your intention to lead the nation out of this war with "all deliberate speed." The diplomatic advantages of understatement are secondary to the urgent need to assure a deeply troubled nation that you are going

to disengage the United States from the combat responsibility in Vietnam. Vietnam is a crisis inherited from your predecessor--that is recognized by all. Less widely understood is that--however unfair it may be--you also inherited a credibility gap on this issue. From this derives the overriding urgency for explicitness with the people in your November 3 address.

Second, to make it clear that this nation has embarked upon a policy of disengagement which is not subject to a veto by the actions or manipulations of Saigon or Hanoi. The steady drawdown of U.S. combat forces is the way to spur the Saigon Government into reforms and self-help measures which alone can make possible the survival of a non-communist government in south Vietnam. It is also the only way, finally to test whether there is the will, the integrity and the resourcefulness in our south Vietnamese ally to enable them to meet the communists on even terms. It is certainly not material assistance which has been lacking over the past decade and a half in which the United States has provided training and equipment to the armed forces and massive assistance and support to the government of south Vietnam.

There is a risk in this course which I believe the nation is fully prepared to take. That risk, of course, is that the south Vietnamese non-communists may prove unequal to the task of organizing and fighting for themselves. I do not believe the nation would begrudge nor stint

support for a doughty effort of self-defense and self-help in south Vietnam. Equally, I believe the nation will consider it a defeat of its own policies if full disengagement from the combat responsibility in Vietnam is not in early prospect.

The very fabric of our own society could become as strained over this issue as it was in 1968.

Third, I have heard it said that orderly U.S. troop withdrawal from combat--facing the north Vietnamese with their brothers in south Vietnam--would be the greatest inducement we could bring to bear upon Hanoi to negotiate in Paris. I agree with this judgment and we all hope that Hanoi can be induced to negotiate. But this objective must be secondary to the irreversible decision to disengage early from combat in Vietnam.

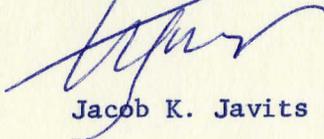
The recent resolution introduced by Senator Dole which had considerable Republican and conservative Democratic co-sponsorship--and which was interpreted by many to reflect White House thinking--appeared to place first priority in Vietnam policy on inducing or compelling Hanoi to negotiate an end to the war on terms defined by us. In effect, this would give Hanoi a veto over a U.S. disengagement policy. It is the approach tried by the Johnson Administration--with such disastrous results.

Fourth, as you may remember, I was the first Senator to advocate--back in 1967--a timetable for the disengagement of U.S. forces from combat in Vietnam. I continue to believe that a timetable for troop withdrawal is desirable psychologically and is needed to convince Saigon, and perhaps members of our Mission there, that the United States indeed is embarked on an irreversible policy of full and early disengagement from combat in Vietnam. This can be done privately and public commitment held more general.

In my judgment, a clear lead from the President is now essential to rally support behind your policy to end the war and to prevent a dangerous exacerbation of strains within our own society. It is my feeling of urgency in this regard which has prompted me respectfully to submit my views to you at this crucial time.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely,



Jacob K. Javits

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.