The original documents are located in Box C21, folder "Presidential Handwriting, 5/13/1975 (1)" of the Presidential Handwriting File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

May 13, 1975

Dear Al:

I am deeply grateful for your April 9 rebuttal of a WOTV editorial.

Your views are especially meaningful because of your many experiences in South Vietnam. I thank you most sincerely.

Warmest personal regards.

January Tour

Alfred B. Swanson, M.D. 2945 Bonnell, S.E. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

GRF: Downton

32 rebuttal of editorial

THE WHITE HOUSE

NOTE

The President dictated this response in lieu of using the letter in my signature since Dr. Swanson is a very close personal friend of his.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Stripping Desk then to Special File

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 12, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DOROTHY DOWNTON

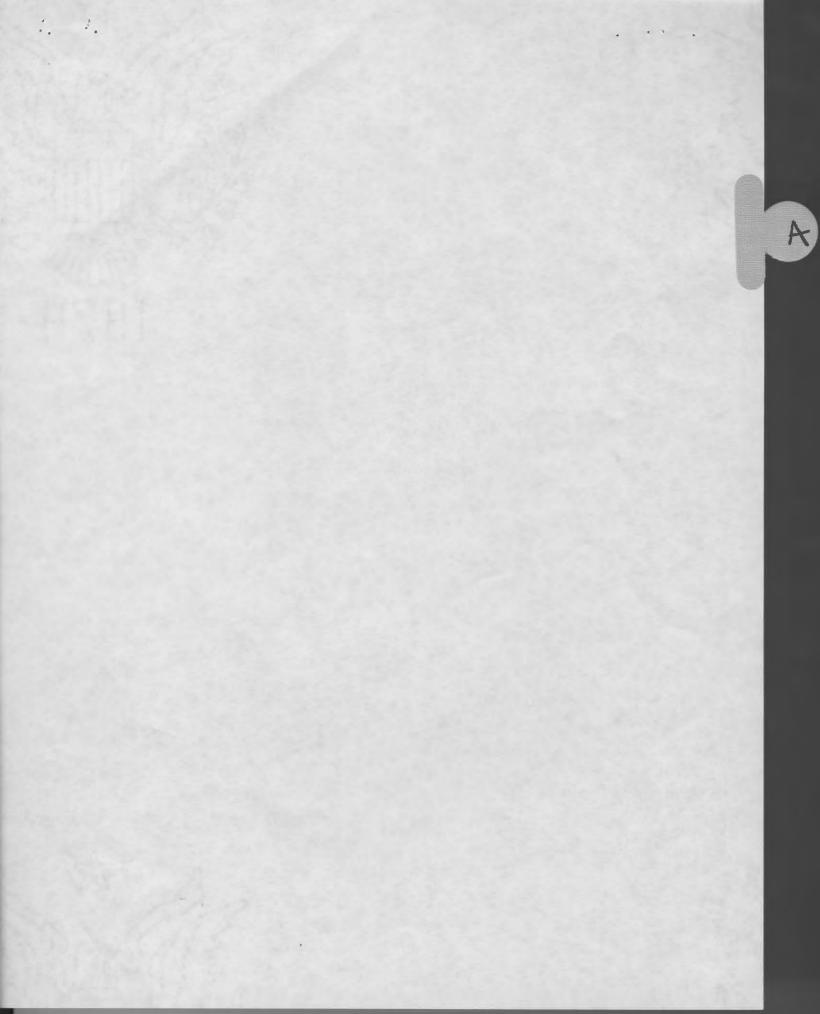
FROM:

BRENT SCOWCROFT (

SUBJECT:

Statement by Dr. Alfred B. Swanson

At Tab A is a suggested reply for you to send to Dr. Alfred Swanson on behalf of the President complimenting him on his T.V. editorial on April 9 (Tab B).



SUGGESTED REPLY

Dear Dr. Swanson:

The President has asked me to convey to you his personal appreciation for your April 9 rebuttal of a WOTV television editorial.

The President thanks you for making this effort and agrees with many of the points that you made.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Downton



Quick staffing

THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

May 5, 1975

General Scowcroft:

This letter was in my private outbox this morning along with a note from the President as follows:

"This is a T.V. rebuttal by Dr. Al Swanson in G.R. Good friend. Write--thanks and congratulations."

Is this something you want to handle in view of the subject matter, or would you prefer that I write the response?

Thank you for your advice.

Dorothy Downton Personal Secretary to the President THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

refutted by Por al American D/This is m G.R. Mod frend Worth -7





WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 1975

The following, by Dr. Alfred B. Swanson, is a rebuttal to our editorial of April 1, 1975.

I think historians will record America's efforts in South Vietnam as most noble but clumsy. We did give our sons and riches unselfishly, but we never really gave our heart. Routing out the guerrillas by the peasants required a willingness to die for a cause they could not rationalize. They could see little to die for. The much needed humanitarian and social aid for the South Vietnamese was of the lowest Government priority. Our leaders thought our military build-up alone would insure victory against the enemy, nothing could be further from the truth. We needed both.

It is said that the horrors of war are best realized in the surgeon's tent. I have had small children die in my arms of the long neglected wounds from a Communist mortar attack on their village in the Delta. I have seen young mothers die of wounds from Red guerrilla terror squads as I tried to care for them in the unbelievable squalor of the only province hospital in Quang Ngai. Those of us who volunteered medical care to that country on repeated occasions, came back to tell the story of the fantastic medical and social indigency to the Administration and Congressional Committees and anyone we could stop, but we were always met with a deaf ear or a pass of the buck to another department. I remember the South Vietnamese as brave, lovely and gracious people. It is easy to mourn for them.

I think that there will be many wet eyes at the open grave of South Vietnam, but we should also weep with a greater sadness for ourselves when we realize that we did not fight the right kind of battle for them. We had the opportunity to demonstrate what a healthy democracy could do for a suffering friend. For a fraction of the cost of the military effort, we could have also shown to the Vietnamese and to the watching world that America was also truly concerned with the total welfare of that struggling nation.

We now attempt to atone for our guilt by importing beautiful orphaned children whom we helped create. We must likewise be concerned for aiding

the millions of refugees and for protecting our South Vietnamese friends who will die in a blood bath if Saigon falls to the Communists.

We should at this point in history begin the greatest internal evaluation of our foreign policy and methods so that this nation can continue to be an influence for liberty and democracy in the world. We should not involute and run from our responsibilities to our fellow man because of the terrible experience of Vietnam. Rather, we should conceive and develop a new American Revolution which will be to anticipate and solve the overwhelming problems that man faces from his environment as he heads into the twenty-first century. This time it must be a total commitment of active concern or nature will surely destroy us.

Thank you.