The original documents are located in Box D32, folder “Republican Dinner, Montgomery, AL, February 21, 1972” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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To make the truth known—this is what we must do to win the hearts and minds of the American people in this most important election year.

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Certain truths then became immediately evident to all reasonable persons:

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We are not committed to the support of any particular government in Saigon—only to the objective that the people of South Vietnam determine their future.

We have done everything possible to negotiate an end to the Vietnam War short of cooperating with the North Vietnamese to topple the Saigon Government.

The North Vietnamese have been insisting that we collaborate on turning South Vietnam over to them.

Another truth also became clear. Some candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination are not only willing but are urging that we make peace on the enemy's terms. They are, I believe, unwittingly prolonging the war.
I say they are prolonging the war because I believe the North Vietnamese would accept President Nixon’s basic peace plan if they were not encouraged to believe they will do better by holding out. They might very well buy the idea of an election in South Vietnam if some Democratic leaders did not lead them to believe we eventually will simply turn South Vietnam over to them.

Consider what some of the Democratic presidential candidates are saying, in effect. They are saying to the American people and to the world: "The Democratic Party made a mistake in leading the United States into the Vietnam War nine years ago. We have spent over $100 billion in that war and lost more than 50,000 lives. Let’s wipe the slate clean by making peace on the enemy’s terms."

The Vietnam War ultimately is going to end through negotiations. The greater the number of Americans who talk of ending the war through surrender, the farther off the day of settlement will be.

It is ironic that some leading Democrats today point to their party as the party of peace. Democratic Administrations initiated the U.S. combat role in Vietnam and escalated our commitment there to 543,000 men. It is easy to have peace if you are willing to take the enemy’s terms.

It was a great Roman, Cicero, who said: "What then should be the objective of those who are at the helm of government, which they should never lose sight of, toward which they ought to set their course? It is peace with dignity."

It is interesting to note that leaders of the country’s largest POW-family group have praised President Nixon for his latest peace initiative and are demanding that his critics go on record with their own plans for freeing American prisoners of war.

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We could negotiate an end to the war—if the Democrats would unite behind the President.

As for Republicans, we can be proud of our record on Vietnam. We have reason to be proud because we are getting out of Vietnam with honor.

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In fact, the entire Republican record during the three years that Richard Nixon has filled the Presidency is a basis for pride. This, too, is a truth we are going to have to carry to the American people this election year.

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