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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *sf*

**OPENING STATEMENT FOR**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**THURSDAY - MARCH 6, 1975**

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN. *df.*

BEFORE WE START ON QUESTIONS TONIGHT,

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF

ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM.

THERE ARE THREE ISSUES.

THE FIRST ~~IS~~ THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE WHO

LIVE THERE. IT IS A CONCERN THAT IS HUMANITARIAN --

FOOD FOR THOSE WHO HUNGER ~~AND~~ MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR

THE MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO ARE SUFFERING

THE RAVAGES OF WAR.

WE SEEK TO STOP THE BLOODSHED AND END THE  
HORROR AND TRAGEDY THAT WE SEE ON TELEVISION AS ROCKETS  
ARE FIRED WANTONLY INTO PHNOM PENH. I WOULD LIKE  
TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT THE KILLING WOULD CEASE IF WE  
WERE TO STOP OUR AID, BUT THAT IS NOT THE CASE.

THE RECORD SHOWS, IN BOTH VIETNAM  
AND CAMBODIA, THAT COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF AN  
AREA DOES NOT BRING AN END TO VIOLENCE BUT,  
ON THE CONTRARY, SUBJECTS THE INNOCENT TO NEW  
HORRORS.

WE CANNOT MEET HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

UNLESS WE ALSO PROVIDE SOME MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

ONLY THROUGH A COMBINATION OF HUMANITARIAN ENDEAVORS

AND MILITARY AID DO WE HAVE A CHANCE TO STOP THE

FIGHTING IN THAT COUNTRY IN SUCH A WAY AS TO

END THE BLOODSHED.

THE SECOND ISSUE IS WHETHER THE PROBLEMS OF  
INDOCHINA WILL BE SETTLED BY CONQUEST OR BY NEGOTIATION.



BOTH THE GOVERNMENTS OF CAMBODIA AND THE  
UNITED STATES HAVE MADE VIGOROUS AND CONTINUED EFFORTS  
OVER THE YEARS TO BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL  
SETTLEMENT.

THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT DECLARED A  
UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE AND CALLED FOR NEGOTIATIONS IMMEDIATELY  
AFTER THE PEACE ACCORDS OF JANUARY 1973.

IT HAS SINCE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED ITS WILLINGNESS TO BE  
FLEXIBLE IN SEEKING A NEGOTIATED END TO THE CONFLICT.

ITS LEADERS HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO DO  
WHATEVER THEY CAN TO BRING PEACE TO THAT COUNTRY.

THE UNITED STATES HAS BACKED THESE PEACE EFFORTS,  
YESTERDAY, WE MADE PUBLIC AN OUTLINE OF OUR OWN UNCEASING  
EFFORTS OVER THE YEARS, INCLUDING SIX SEPARATE INITIATIVES  
SINCE I BECAME PRESIDENT.

LET ME ASSURE YOU:

WE WILL SUPPORT ANY NEGOTIATIONS AND ACCEPT

ANY OUTCOME THAT THE PARTIES THEMSELVES WILL ACCEPT;

AS FAR AS THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED,  
THE PERSONALITIES INVOLVED WILL NOT, THEMSELVES,  
CONSTITUTE OBSTACLES OF ANY KIND TO A SETTLEMENT.

YET ALL OF OUR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN REBUFFED.

PEACE IN CAMBODIA HAS NOT BEEN PREVENTED BY OUR FAILURE

TO OFFER REASONABLE SOLUTIONS. THE AGGRESSOR BELIEVES

THAT IT CAN WIN ITS OBJECTIVES ON THE BATTLEFIELD. THIS

BELIEF WILL BE ENCOURAGED IF WE CUT OFF ASSISTANCE TO OUR

FRIENDS.

WE WANT AN END TO THE KILLING AND A NEGOTIATED  
SETTLEMENT. BUT THERE IS NO HOPE OF SUCCESS UNLESS  
THE CONGRESS QUICKLY PROVIDES THE NECESSARY MEANS FOR  
CAMBODIA TO SURVIVE.



IF WE ABANDON OUR ALLIES, WE WILL BE SAYING

TO ALL THE WORLD THAT WAR PAYS.

AGGRESSION WILL NOT

STOP;  RATHER IT WILL INCREASE.

IN CAMBODIA, THE

AGGRESSORS WILL HAVE SHOWN THAT IF NEGOTIATIONS ARE

RESISTED, THE UNITED STATES WILL WEARY, ABANDON ITS

FRIENDS, AND FORCE WILL PREVAIL.

THE THIRD ISSUE IS ~~THE~~ RELIABILITY OF THE

UNITED STATES.

IF WE CEASE TO HELP OUR FRIENDS IN

INDOCHINA, WE WILL HAVE VIOLATED THEIR TRUST THAT WE WOULD

HELP THEM WITH ARMS, FOOD AND SUPPLIES SO LONG AS THEY

REMAIN DETERMINED TO FIGHT FOR THEIR OWN FREEDOM.

WE WILL HAVE BEEN FALSE TO OURSELVES, TO OUR WORD, AND  
TO OUR FRIENDS. NO ONE SHOULD THINK FOR A MOMENT  
THAT WE CAN WALK AWAY FROM THAT WITHOUT A DEEP SENSE OF  
SHAME.

THIS IS NOT A QUESTION OF INVOLVEMENT OR

REINVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA.

WE HAVE ENDED OUR

INVOLVEMENT.

ALL AMERICAN FORCES HAVE COME HOME.

THEY WILL NOT GO BACK.

TIME IS SHORT.            THERE ARE TWO THINGS THE  
UNITED STATES CAN DO TO AFFECT THE OUTCOME.            FOR MY PART,  
I WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.            I ASK  
THE CONGRESS TO DO ITS PART BY PROVIDING THE ASSISTANCE  
REQUIRED TO MAKE SUCH A SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE.            TIME IS  
RUNNING OUT.

END OF TEXT

*Dick Howard*

7:30 release.

## Statement of Pres.

Before we start on questions tonight, I would like to make a statement on the subject of assistance to Cambodia and South Vietnam.

There are three issues, ~~of which~~. The first is the future of the people who live there. It is a concern that is humanitarian, ~~and~~ of food for those who hunger and medical supplies for the men, women and children who ~~have~~ <sup>are suffering</sup> the ravages of war. We seek to stop the bloodshed and end the horror and tragedy that we see on television as rockets are fired wantonly into Phnom Penh. I would like to be able to say that the killing would cease if we were to stop our aid, but that is not the case. The record shows, in both Vietnam and Cambodia,

<sup>That a</sup> Communist takeover <sup>of an area</sup> does not bring an end to violence, but on the contrary, <sup>subjects the innocent to new horrors</sup> ~~makes the beginning of a bloodletting~~ (R)

We cannot meet humanitarian needs unless we also provide some military assistance. Only through a combination of humanitarian endeavors and military aid do we have a chance to stop the fighting in that country in such a way as to ~~bring no more~~ <sup>end the</sup> bloodshed.

The second issue ~~is~~ is whether the problems of Indochina will be settled by conquest or by negotiation.

Both the government of Cambodia and the ~~U.S.~~ <sup>United States</sup> have made vigorous and ~~continuous~~ <sup>and</sup> efforts over the years to bring about a ceasefire and political settlement.

The Cambodian Government declared a unilateral ceasefire and called for negotiations immediately after the ~~Paris~~ <sup>Peace</sup> Accords of January 1973. It has since repeatedly expressed its willingness to be flexible in seeking a negotiated end to the conflict. Its ~~leadership has~~ <sup>leaders have</sup> made clear that ~~it is~~ <sup>they are</sup> willing to do whatever ~~it~~ <sup>they</sup> can to bring peace to that country.

The United States has backed these ~~efforts~~ <sup>peace</sup>. Yesterday, we made public an outline of our own unceasing efforts over the years, including six separate initiatives ~~over the past six months~~ <sup>since I became President.</sup>

Let me assure you:

~~✗~~ We will support any negotiations and accept any outcome that

the parties themselves will accept;

~~(S)~~ As far as the United States is concerned, the personalities involved will not, themselves, constitute obstacles of any kind to a settlement.

Yet all of our efforts have been rebuffed. *Peace in Cambodia*  
~~It is not a failure to offer~~  
*has not been prevented by our failure to offer reasonable solutions,*  
~~reasonable solutions that have prevented peace in Cambodia.~~ The aggressor

believes that it can win its objectives on the battlefield. This belief will be encouraged if we cut off assistance to our friends.

We want an end to the killing and ~~seek~~ a negotiated settlement.

But there *]* is no hope of success unless the Congress quickly provides the necessary means for Cambodia to survive.

If we abandon our allies, we will be saying to all the world that war pays. Aggression will not stop; rather it will increase. In Cambodia, the aggressors will have shown that if negotiations are resisted for ~~a long~~  
*United States*  
~~time~~, the ~~US~~ will weary, abandon its friends, and force will prevail.



The third issue is the reliability of the United States, and ~~our own~~

~~interests~~. If we cease to help our friends in Indochina, we will have violated their trust that we would help them with arms, food and supplies so long as they remain determined to fight for their own freedom.

We will have been false to ourselves, to our word, and to our friends.

No one should think for a moment that we can walk away from that without,

~~ourselves~~, a deep sense of shame.

This is not a question of involvement or reinvolvement in Indochina.

We have ended our involvement. All American forces have come home.

They will not go back.

Time is short. There are two things the U. S. can do to affect the outcome. For my part, I ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> continue to seek a negotiated settlement. I ask the Congress to do its part by providing the assistance required to make such a settlement possible.

*Time is running out,*