

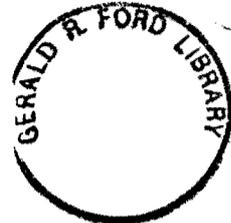
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 12, 1972

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF  
SENATOR HUGH SCOTT  
AND  
CONGRESSMAN GERALD R. FORD  
THE BRIEFING ROOM



10:35 A.M. EST

MR. ZIEGLER: The leadership meeting this morning lasted for about two hours. There was discussion on the situation in South Vietnam, and also discussion about domestic matters.

Senator Scott and Congressman Ford are here to tell you about the meeting. Congressman Ford.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: The major share of the time was taken up with a full and complete briefing on the situation in Vietnam and related matters. There was unanimity among the Republican leaders who were present, and they indicated also from their trips and travels throughout the country that there was a strong support for the President's action as far as Vietnam is concerned.

We discussed at some length the President's action as far as air power and sea power are concerned. I think it was fully supported because one, it permits the continued withdrawal of our forces, as the President has done under Vietnamization, and the continued withdrawal under these circumstances, using air and sea power, proves the effectiveness of the Vietnamization program.

Secondly, the use of air and sea power was supported unanimously, because it does protect the lives of the Americans who are still there.

And thirdly, this air and sea power utilization by the United States prevents a takeover of the Government of South Vietnam by Communist forces from the North.

I was impressed with the effectiveness, and I was also very, very optimistic because of the attitude of the leadership as a whole in supporting these actions for these reasons.

SENATOR SCOTT: I think it is of significance that the reports from General Abrams, Admiral Moorer and others, and those in the field indicate that the South Vietnamese are doing very well in resisting this invasion from the North.

There is no evidence of civilian support, in the South, of the invaders, and it is a massive invasion of South Vietnam by North Vietnam, with support of the most modern styles of weaponry.

MORE

As regards the support in the South, there is already considerable evidence of Buddhist support, neutral groups rallying to the government. The population appears to be overwhelmingly in support of South Vietnam, and it is also true, in my judgment, that the American people are supporting the President's position, the American position, namely, that our negotiating record is good, our track record is good, our readiness to negotiate whenever there is anything to negotiate is good, and we are at all times prepared to negotiate whenever there is something negotiable.



So I think the entire American position is good, the military position likewise is good, and the air and naval support is a matter for the judgment of the President, as Commander-in-Chief, and the exercise of it is, of course, occasioned by the necessity to protect the withdrawal of American forces. That withdrawal schedule is continuing and is even, I believe, slightly ahead of schedule.

Q Senator Scott, on this negotiating position that you mentioned, did the President have any reaction to the French Government's request that the United States now return to the negotiating table in Paris?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, there was no reaction on that specific suggestion. The feeling that I have, and I am sure Gerry Ford has, is that our negotiating track record is good; that we will negotiate whenever there is anything to negotiate; and that the responsibility is on the part of North Vietnam. They have violated the DMZ, contrary to the conditions set down by President Johnson and by Secretary Clifford at the time of the bombing halt.

It is North Vietnam which is at fault. It is North Vietnam which makes it impossible to proceed to the negotiating table. They know what it takes to bring us to the table. They know what it takes to negotiate, and any time they are ready to move, there will be movement.

Q What does it take, Senator Scott? We have been told here at the White House -- that same phrase is used here -- that the other side knows perfectly well what will get the United States to the negotiating table. Why can't we know what will get us there?

SENATOR SCOTT: The other side is well informed of the conditions under which negotiation could proceed, and those conditions have been stated by our representatives, by Ambassador Porter. We will have some further statement to make before long, and at that time there will be some clarification, if you don't already have it. But the details of negotiation are not for us to discuss.

Q Senator, was there any explanation of how you send American ground combat troops out of base camps into territory which is strongly held by the enemy and this does not constitute engaging these troops in ground combat?

SENATOR SCOTT: There was no such discussion, but I can say that you can see yourself the casualty figures, you can see American ground forces are not, in fact, engaged, and you can see that we are continuing with the withdrawal of forces.

Some of the stories in the press would indicate that a great many situations are occurring which our briefings do not support. I can say that.

Q What specifically do you mean there, Senator?

SENATOR SCOTT: Well, I would have to reveal some of the briefings. But there are indications of allegedly desperate situations in certain areas and towns, and the briefing does not indicate that these situations, in point of fact, exist.

Q What are you saying then, Senator, that the press is lying about what is happening in Vietnam?

SENATOR SCOTT: I am saying, as sometimes happens with politicians and press, that they are not always fully informed.

Q Are you saying your briefers are politicians?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, I am saying they are fully informed.

Q Can you inform us on what is happening?

SENATOR SCOTT: I am not free to reveal confidential briefings.

Q The enemy seems to know what is going on. Why can't we know?

SENATOR SCOTT: That is the most ancient question in the books, I guess, that the enemy knows something and the American press should know it. I can't quite go along with that. The enemy's intelligence is devoted to finding out what it can, and so, I take it, is the press intelligence, but we are not free to tell you what we know and the enemy knows, if I knew it, because it would not help the security of U.S. forces. I would not expect you to endanger the security of U.S. forces, and I am sure you won't.

Q Without endangering anybody's security, just how wide is the gap between your briefers' concept of what is happening in certain areas and what the press is saying? Is it very wide?

SENATOR SCOTT: I didn't undertake to use a slide rule on the width of the gap. I am simply saying that there are some statements I have read in the press, when we have asked the briefers, we are informed these conditions do not, in fact, exist. Conditions in the press indicate distress or pressure on certain localities, and the briefing would indicate that that pressure as described by the press is not there.

I am not saying the press is lying. I am saying the press is often unable to get at all the facts; that you speculate as well as you can; and that you use such information as you have, but that the press is perfectly free to discuss the fact that politicians are not always fully informed, and therefore, I think it is equally fair and proper to point out that the press is not always fully informed.



Q Senator, can you say, will this be a White House statement that is coming soon on our negotiating position? Will it come from here or Paris?

SENATOR SCOTT: I think Ambassador Porter will have something to say.

Q Do you know when?

SENATOR SCOTT: I do not. Mr. Ziegler probably knows.

Q Both of you talked about the withdrawal of American forces at a time when ground combat troops or ground troops may be coming out, but there are more airmen and naval forces sent to the area. How do you reconcile that? Does this reflect the feeling that ground forces are a political issue and air and naval forces are not?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, it does not. The assumption is that the United States Government is obliged to do what is necessary, as the President has many times announced, to protect the withdrawal of American forces, and that when you have an open and overt invasion of a country, which does endanger the security of American forces, the United States will use such air and naval forces as may be necessary to protect our own security.

Q Senator, did the President say when he would make his next withdrawal announcement?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, he did not.

Q Did he indicate whether he will, in fact, announce another reduction in U.S. forces in Vietnam?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think he put it in this context: that he is always prepared, prior to the date of the previous withdrawal, to analyze the situation, and sometime before May 1, but there has never been a commitment in previous withdrawals that one would automatically follow. But the commitment to get down to 69,000, in contrast to 544,000 that we had at the time President Nixon took over, is a good track record, and I believe that the use of air and sea power is essential to protect the 69,000 who will be there on May 1.

It is important to make sure, also, that we can get down to 69,000.

Q Are you saying he is not going to make another withdrawal announcement?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: No, I am not. I didn't say that.

Q He will make an announcement, but he won't announce an immediate withdrawal?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: He has made no decision on that on this occasion, as he never did on previous announcements when he did announce a withdrawal.

Q You are saying, though, that we shouldn't assume there will automatically be another withdrawal?



CONGRESSMAN FORD: There never has been in the past, and the situation will be analyzed when we get down to the commitment of 69,000, in contrast to 544,000 under the previous Administration.

Q There has, indeed, been continuous withdrawal on each of the announcements. Each involved another withdrawal. Are you suggesting now that we should not expect that necessarily the announcement before May 1 will contain another withdrawal, as all the previous ones have?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I don't think you can assume anything at this point.

SENATOR SCOTT: The withdrawals are continuing, and to the best of my knowledge, and to the best of my judgment, will continue. Suitable announcements will be made at the President's discretion.

The continuance of the use of air and naval forces for the protection of the security of American troops in the process of withdrawal will continue in such a character as the President, himself, will determine, and has frequently so advised the American people, and it has been made necessary by the violation of the DMZ, contrary to the warnings of President Johnson and Secretary Clifford, the warnings of the President himself. Therefore, I would think and believe that the American people want our forces protected, and that is exactly what the President is doing.

Q Do you foresee the use of air power and naval power into perpetuity to maintain what you call Vietnamization?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I don't think so, because we do hope, through negotiations on the one hand, it will be ended. Secondly, I think it is interesting to point out that at the present time approximately 50 percent of the air sorties are presently being conducted by South Vietnamese. This is in contrast to what it was three or four years ago. Their capability in the months ahead will increase substantially.

What they will do to protect themselves against this invasion and against subsequent invasions by the North Vietnamese will have to be predicated on the circumstances.

Q Senator Scott, both you and Congressman Ford have said that there is a widespread support for this whole increased air and naval campaign in the country, or for the President's actions. On what specific indexes do you base that assessment, Mr. Ford?

SENATOR SCOTT: I go back to what the late Bruce Barton used to say, and that was, "Never overestimate the information of the American people, and never underestimate their intelligence." I think they are able to think for themselves. They read what is written for them to think, they make their own judgments on it as to how they evaluate it, and the evidence of numerous surveys, and every Congressman and Senator is a walking Gallup Poll. We go home and find out what the reaction is. We go to gatherings in Washington, and I would say on the basis of all of these elements, there is overwhelming support for what the President is doing.



There has been for quite a while, and generally the American people rally to the President whenever there is evidence of an overt invasion by an aggressor against forces of the United States in the field, and they do affect the security of our forces, even though we are not actually committed to ground combat.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I would be more specific from my own experience in the last 10 days or so, since the President has been using air and sea power to interfere with the invasion of South Vietnam by North Vietnam.

I have been in California, Colorado and Michigan, and there is support for the President's use of air and sea power to protect American lives, on the one hand, and to continue withdrawals on the other hand. At the meeting this morning, we had 15 or 20 members of the leadership, and the statement was made that there was this support publicly throughout the country; there wasn't the disintegration in 1972 as there was in 1968, and as a result, our position is a far stronger one.

The American people know this kind of military action is essential to give the South Vietnamese an opportunity to defend themselves against the invasion from the North.

Q Who actually briefed you today -- Dr. Kissinger?

SENATOR SCOTT: Dr. Kissinger, and, of course, the President had comments, naturally, and the overwhelming impact of the points made, I think, is, among other things, that withdrawal is continuing and that the President will make such announcements as he feels are in the interest of our own forces and there is no question of the continuance of the withdrawal. I would think any stories that would indicate we are not withdrawing or not continuing withdrawal would be off the mark.

Q Beyond May 1?

Q You say there should be no question of our continuing withdrawal. Are you referring to our continuing withdrawal up to May 1, or beyond that?

SENATOR SCOTT: I thought I made it clear. I tried four times, Now I am going to turn it over to Mr. Ziegler, and you can ask him. If you are not satisfied with him, I will come back.

MR. ZIEGLER: I think the point to make is the one we have made in briefings previously. Senator Scott has said the withdrawal program which was previously announced will be reached. That is 69,000.

Q By May 1.

MR. ZIEGLER: By May 1, yes. We have said the President will have another announcement before May 1 regarding the Vietnamization and withdrawal program. The Senator has pointed out to you that we are doing what is necessary to assist the South Vietnamese to thwart the invasion of the North Vietnamese into the South.



We are taking these steps to protect U.S. forces. We are taking these steps to see that the withdrawal program continues, and in order to do that, we are going to do what is necessary in terms of air power and naval fire power to assist the South Vietnamese.

As you know, as before the previous announcements, we are not going to pre-judge decisions that the President has not made yet. He has not made the decision regarding the next withdrawal announcement. He will make that decision based upon the circumstances that exist at that time.

Now, I know you gentlemen are driven to the question, "What will the announcement be on May 1?" and all I can tell you is the decision is not made yet. It will depend on the circumstances that exist then. But the policy of withdrawal remains as previously stated, and the position that we find ourselves in at this moment regarding the next announcement is the same position we found ourselves in about three or four weeks before the last announcement, when the President made the announcement regarding this particular withdrawal period that we are concluding at this time.

Q You will agree the military situation is a little different now than it was then, so the situation is not exactly the same.

MR. ZIEGLER: There is no question about the fact that the South Vietnamese were not facing an invasion from the North at the time of the last announcement. The point I am making is that we are taking the steps we are taking in terms of air power and sea power to assist the South Vietnamese in thwarting the invasion so that our policy can continue. That is one of the objectives.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think there is another point that ought to be made on that, though. When the President started his withdrawal program as a consequence of the Vietnamization program, casualties, American loss of life, was up around 300 a week. It is now down to 10 or less per week. So the circumstances today are far, far better from the point of view of the United States and our forces there.

The military situation three years ago, with 500,000-some American troops there was far more serious, from our point of view, than it is today.

Q All we are trying to pin down is whether there is a possibility there might be no further troop withdrawals announced before May 1.

SENATOR SCOTT: All that I am able to say, obviously, is that we do not know what the President will say on May 1. We have no way of knowing. We know there is a policy. We know that the policy has been adhered to. We have no way of knowing what the President will say on May 1. Therefore, we cannot help you on that.

Q But there is a possibility that there will be no further troop withdrawals?

SENATOR SCOTT: I cannot say that.

MORE



MR. ZIEGLER: I think the point is, based upon the remarks that we have given to you, and based upon the assessment of the situation as it is now, that it would be incorrect for you to draw conclusions one way or the other as to what the President will do, and I know you are driven to the desire to draw conclusions one way or the other.

Q We don't want to draw false conclusions.

MR. ZIEGLER: I don't want you to draw a false conclusion. That is why I say don't attempt to draw conclusions as to what the President might say on May 1.

Q With every past announcement, we have been assured there would be a withdrawal, and the only question was the size of them, Senator or Congressman, and now I would like to know if that possibility has now widened to the possibility there won't be any announcement.

SENATOR SCOTT: The difficulty of our attempting to answer further is that we enter into a speculation with you on a subject as to which neither of us has any information, and I think it is just not productive. I cannot tell you. I have said as clearly as I can that the policy of withdrawal will continue.

What the President says on the 1st of May is, of course, entirely within his discretion. I doubt very much if he has written that statement out yet. We have no way of knowing whether he has come to that conclusion.

Q Is it correct, then, that there was nothing in this briefing to indicate that the President, indeed, will announce another troop reduction by May 1?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: And there was no comment to the fact that he wouldn't.

Q Is that right?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes. I don't think it would be at all proper to draw either inference from this, because it was not raised in that context. The President will make the statement in due course, and that statement will presumably be in line with his continuing policy, but specifically what he will say I cannot tell you.

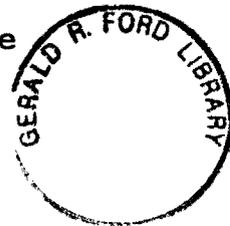
Q Can you say that he is considering the next troop cut situation?

SENATOR SCOTT: I don't see, Helen, how we can say any more. I am concerned that you may think we are in some way evading. The only answer is, we honestly do not know, and I would like somebody to believe me when I say I do not know. I have an awful lot of people on the Hill who are willing to believe that.

Q Can I ask you a question about your China trip that you met with the President about yesterday?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes.

MORE



Q Do you plan to discuss with the leaders over there the three Americans who have been held there for five or six years or more?

SENATOR SCOTT: I think in fairness to me -- Ron has said something to me -- and in fairness to them, I think I ought not to answer that question. We were briefed by the President, Mike Mansfield and myself, for about an hour and a quarter yesterday, and the content of that briefing, of course, is confidential.

Of course, we will convey certain oral expressions of good will to those Chinese leaders whom we see. We will accept such opportunities as they give us to explore any matters of mutual interest. We will not at this time hazard a guess as to what all those subjects would comprise, but we hope to find a means to widen communication and improve relations with the People's Republic of China.

We do look forward to this trip as an opportunity to give some indication that the Shanghai communique is bearing fruit.

Q Did the ITT case come up this morning, Senator?

SENATOR SCOTT: No. That is a no-no.

Q Congressman Ford, to clarify an earlier answer you gave, when you said in your travels you found support for the increased air actions and the President's actions here on this invasion, were you referring to political gatherings, were you referring to polls? What were you referring to?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: My travels and the meetings I attended were primarily nonpolitical, and I read considerable, in those three States, local news accounts, the editorial comments, and the contrast was very vivid, comparing 1972, the present time, with, for example, 1968 when there was a disintegration of American public support for the kind of military actions we were taking.

Today, at least my impression is, out in the hustings, that there is strong support for the President's air and sea power use, because they know it means the continuation of a withdrawal commitment, and they know that the use of air and sea power protects American lives of those who are still there. There is no evidence at all, comparable to 1968, at the present time, of a loss of faith, or a lack of support for the President at the present time.

Q What do you mean by "nonpolitical gatherings" as an example?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Well, I attended a meeting, for example, yesterday of an attempt on the part of many community leaders to expedite and expand our "Bond A Month" U.S. Savings Bond program. I talked with a good many of them out there, and there was no criticism and, in fact, some volunteered strong support.

Another reflection is the mail, and in contrast to 1968, the mail today doesn't condemn what we are doing with air and sea power, because the people know our overall objectives of withdrawal are different from what they were in 1968.



SENATOR SCOTT: I have had opportunities in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and by telephone conversation with Georgia, to pick up reactions in those States, and I will give you an illustration. Last night I attended the Oxford-Cambridge Annual Boat Race Dinner, which is certainly composed of the elite types, generally, around town -- British and American -- a great majority of whom would surely, normally, be critical of the President, and I heard not one word of criticism throughout a four and a half hour evening, in which the general feeling of these extremely bright and overly cultivated ladies and gentlemen was all favorable.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I might add one other comment. Congressman Bill Minshall was at the meeting this morning. He is the ranking Republican on the Defense Appropriations Committee, and he passed to the President, and I saw it on route, his poll, and it showed that with 25,000 people responding, 76 percent supported the way President Nixon was handling the problems and the military difficulties in Vietnam. I think 21 percent opposed. But that is a very high public support.

Q How does that contrast with the period of the Cambodia invasion?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: It is almost 100 percent different. There were many, many criticisms at the time of the invasion of Cambodia, criticisms for the wrong reasons, but nevertheless, criticisms. Today you don't have that. Today the American people know why American air and sea power is being used.

Q Was there concern expressed for Vietnamese lives being lost in the South and North, I mean, in the sense that the war ought to stop and they ought to negotiate?

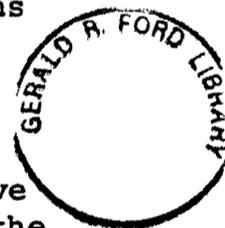
CONGRESSMAN FORD: Well, there was complete unanimity that we want to negotiate. But when you have an invasion of enemy forces, I think it is 11 or 12 divisions from the North into the South, of course tragically civilians are losing their lives, losing their property, losing their livelihood. We don't like that.

SENATOR SCOTT: I think the American people have deplored for many years the casualties on both sides in the Vietnam war, but I see very strong evidence that they know who is to blame, unlike some of the politicians who hassel the hustings abominably and eternally.

The general public reaction is simply that the enemy is invading a country overtly and casualties are resulting. They would like to see it ending. They aren't asking us to surrender to the enemy and they aren't listening to the people advocating that.

Q Are you convinced that Vietnam will not be a major issue in the election campaign this year?

SENATOR SCOTT: I am convinced some people, in my judgment who are ill-advised, will seek to make the wrong issues out of Vietnam, and they will live to regret it. Generally speaking, it will not be the first or major issue.



Q Do you know of any National politicians who are advocating surrender to the enemy?

SENATOR SCOTT: If you don't by now, I suggest you go back to the files of your newspapers.

Q I don't, not by now, so could you refresh my memory?

SENATOR SCOTT: I think I would rather not accommodate you by making a personal charge here against any particular politicians. But I have read -- and if you haven't, I have an excellent optometrist to recommend -- for several years of people who have said, "Why don't we accept Hanoi's terms, get out of the war and withdraw unilaterally?"

Unilateral withdrawal is surrender. I will stand on that.

Q You are leaving it to us to make this personal charge?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes, I am, I am leaving it to you.

Q Why are you reluctant to do so?

SENATOR SCOTT: Because I think the record speaks for itself. There have been ever so many statements published, many of them published in the press, in this area, to the effect that this particular speaker or that one has advocated a unilateral withdrawal or withdrawal forthwith or withdrawal immediately or withdrawal without conditions or withdrawal under any circumstances which will permit withdrawal. Those are all in the area of a surrender to the other side. I stand on the word surrender.



Q Haven't we been withdrawing for three years?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes, but not without conditions and not on the basis that we accept the demand of Hanoi, which is to substitute a government of their choosing for a government of the choosing of the people of South Vietnam.

Q Hasn't our withdrawal been unilateral? Has Hanoi withdrawn its troops as well?

SENATOR SCOTT: Our withdrawal to the extent to which it has continued, has been made in spite of the refusal of Hanoi to withdraw, but we have retained the right to use air and naval forces, and therefore our position is that we will withdraw all forces bilaterally or multilaterally, if you prefer, at any time Hanoi is willing to do so.

Q In this briefing, did you receive any overall assessment you can relay to us on the position of the South Vietnamese forces and a prognosis on how this invasion is going to come out? Is it going to be repulsed or what is the outlook?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I might comment on that. We have had briefings on the Hill from top military leaders and we certainly had the best kind of briefing today.

My general impression from the overall briefings, the ones I have described, is that we are confident, we think the South Vietnamese will be able to meet the challenge of the invasion from the North with the help and assistance of U.S. air and sea power.

Q Senator Scott, Senator Sam Ervin is quoted as saying that he is prepared to filibuster against the Kleindienst nomination if Peter Flanigan does not in fact testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I wonder if that has caused you to reassess the possibility of Mr. Kleindienst being confirmed?

SENATOR SCOTT: I have made no reassessment. I think Senator Ervin is quite capable of speaking for himself, and has done so, and I think we will just leave it where it is and see what happens.

Q Do you have any advice for the White House as to whether or not they should have Mr. Flanigan testify?

SENATOR SCOTT: I am not in the position of offering unsolicited advice. We will see what happens.

THE PRESS: Thank you, gentlemen.

Q Ron, is there anything you can tell us on the Porter announcement?

MR. ZIEGLER: The point I believe the Senator was making is that the Ambassador to the Paris talks would, at some point, be speaking to that subject. I don't have anything more to give you.

Q He said soon, Ron.

MR. ZIEGLER: Well, soon.

Q Is he going to go back and answer the French government's request?

MR. ZIEGLER: Bob, I don't think you should relate what Senator Scott said to the French government's request. I think the proper perspective to put the comments in regarding Ambassador Porter is our Ambassador to the Paris talks will be having something to say on the talks fairly soon.

Now he will be returning to Paris, as we have told you before, relatively soon, perhaps as early as the next day or so. But I don't want to say specifically at this time when the Ambassador will have something to say, but it will be soon, perhaps within the next few days.

Q Ron, I missed the early part of this. Will he be speaking here or in Paris?

MR. ZIEGLER: No, I would assume that any comments that the Ambassador would make would be after he returns to Paris.



Q Was he there today, Ron, per chance?

MR. ZIEGLER: He was not at the Leadership Meeting.

Q He will discuss the resumption of the talks?

MR. ZIEGLER: I don't suggest that to you, nor do I think that Senator Scott was suggesting that to you. I believe the point -- indeed, I know the point -- that Senator Scott was making is that you can expect Ambassador Porter, the Ambassador to the talks, to be conveying the United States' position regarding the Paris peace talks, as we have been doing from here and from the State Department and from this Government, and I believe our position on those talks is very clear.

The position that Senator Scott articulated this morning, and that we have made clear before, is that the appeal is going to the wrong place. The appeal regarding negotiation should go to the North Vietnamese. We have said that before and we feel that.

Q You are saying there will be nothing new in whatever Ambassador Porter says?

MR. ZIEGLER: I am not going to say what Ambassador Porter may say before he says it, but you can expect that he is not going to move away from the United States' policy. I don't believe you would expect that.

Q Have we conveyed that to the French government?

MR. ZIEGLER: We have conveyed nothing to the French government. Our position on the negotiations is clear and I talked about this Saturday in Florida. There is being an effort made by the North Vietnamese and by their propoganda process, to divert attention from the failure on their part to negotiate instead of using military means to accomplish their objectives, and you know full well they are invading the South. You know full well that they built up supplies and they were preparing for this invasion at the very time when they knew full well there was a negotiating solution available to be talked about, and they chose not to accept that.

You know our position. Our position is we are ready for serious negotiations. They apparently aren't.

Q Are we going to have another 11:00 briefing?

MR. ZIEGLER: Jerry will be out in a moment, yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

END

(AT 11:15 A.M. EST.)



4/12/72

NVN -  
military operations over DMZ  
It violations of 1954 accord,  
[2] bombing

No longer a Civil War - an  
invasion of South Vietnam

Equipment - NVN - bigger tanks  
& longer range guns.

Fighting - all ground fighting  
by South Vietnam

Why ATTACK?

① Vietnamization succeeding.

Differences between now & TET.

80% by Americans fall SVN

VC fighting - now NVN.

43% of all air sorties by SVN



DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines

By VBA, NARA, Date 3/23/07

[Photo copied from Ford Scrapbooks,  
Box 14, White House Meeting  
Notes, 1969-72]

THE WHITE HOUSE

(2)

One Issue - will U.S. put  
a Communist Govt in control  
of S.V.

Will we join an enemy  
& abandon a friend.

Only issue - political  
hang-up

Reason for ATTACK

Hope & confidence

(1) Overthrow Saigon  
govt. SUN must succeed.

(2) Turmoil in U.S.  
panic us. We must  
stay strong.

(3) Negotiation.  
We have made repeated  
overtures.



Quote - "understandings"

LBJ - Talks can't continue  
with DMZ violated.

Clifford - DMZ must be recognized

Harroman -

Soviet Union support

Massive Invasion - not a  
guerrilla action

Increased U.S. air & sea power  
to make certain invasion which  
is supported by Soviet Union.

South VN - fighting very well.

Will not negotiate a surrender / Principle  
greater than SUN

THE WHITE HOUSE

(4)

of fact - possibility of Peace greater,  
RN - taking sole responsibility  
credibility of U.S. foreign policy.

Those who got us in WAR are  
sabotaging our efforts to get out.

Blatant Invasion with  
support of Soviet Union <sup>modern</sup> <sub>weapons</sub>

If we dishonor our  
commitments the U.S. will  
have no Credibility.

Calm & determined -

not day to day stories - how  
it all comes out.



Why U.S. dispower / re-power

Negotiating  
Rec'd 6000.  
Ready to negotiate a  
settlement but not a  
surrender / not at all  
Profing this  
& Democrats -

- 1) Continue U.S. withdrawal
- 2) Protect U.S. forces  
69,000
- 3) prevent "take-over"  
by communist forces  
by an enemy invasion.



Nuclear Weapons -  
1) not necessary  
2) "

We will do what is necessary. We  
will not lose.

## NIXON- VIETNAM

BY GAYLORD SHAW

WASHINGTON (AP)-REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS EMERGED FROM A TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NIXON TODAY AND SAID "WE HONESTLY DON'T KNOW" WHETHER NIXON WILL CONTINUE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES FROM VIETNAM AFTER MAY 1.

SENATE GOP LEADER HUGH SCOTT OF PENNSYLVANIA ALSO SAID AMBASSADOR WILLIAM J. PORTER, CHIEF U.S. NEGOTIATOR IN THE SUSPENDED PARIS PEACE TALKS, WOULD HAVE A STATEMENT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS "BEFORE LONG."

WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY RONALD L. ZIEGLER SAID PORTER "IS NOT GOING TO MOVE AWAY FROM UNITED STATES POLICY." HE AGAIN RECUSED THE COMMUNISTS OF FAILING TO SHOW AN INTEREST IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS.

NIXON HAS SAID HE WILL MAKE ANOTHER ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING WITHDRAWALS BY MAY 1. ACCORDING TO HIS TIMETABLE, U.S. TROOP STRENGTH IN VIETNAM WILL BE AT 69,000 MEN ON THAT DATE.

HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER GERALD FORD, OF MICHIGAN, ONE OF 20 CONGRESS MEMBERS ATTENDING THE MEETING IN THE CABINET ROOM, REPORTED THAT NIXON HAS MADE NO DECISION ON WHETHER WITHDRAWALS WOULD CONTINUE AFTER MAY 1. "THE SITUATION WILL BE ANALYZED WHEN WE GET DOWN TO THE COMMITMENT OF 69,000," FORD SAID.

FORD SAID THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A COMMITMENT THAT WITHDRAWALS WOULD CONTINUE. "I DON'T THINK YOU CAN ASSUME ANYTHING AT THIS POINT."

CZ1210FES 4/12



HOUSE ACTION, PERIOD MARCH 28, 1972 THROUGH APRIL 11, 1972

Tuesday, March 28, 1972

EASTER RECESS

The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 571, providing for an adjournment of the House from March 29 until April 10.

WATER POLLUTION

The House continued consideration of H.R. 11896, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

By a record teller vote of 140 ayes to 249 noes, the House rejected an amendment by Mr. Reuss that sought to require industry to use by 1981 the best available waste treatment technology.

By a record teller vote of 125 ayes to 267 noes, the House rejected an amendment by Mrs. Abzug that sought to empower the Environmental Protection Agency to review and veto individual discharge permits issued by the States.

By a record teller vote of 66 ayes to 337 noes, the House rejected an amendment by Mr. McDonald that sought to require private firms which discharge into municipal treatment systems to pay users charges from their share of the capital costs of any federally funded municipal treatment facility.

By a record teller vote of 154 ayes to 251 noes, the House rejected an amendment by Mr. Reuss that sought to provide permits to control the discharge of wastes into the Nation's waterways.

By a division vote of 34 yeas to 86 nays, the House rejected an amendment by Mr. Aspin that would include liquid wastes injected into the earth through oil waste injection wells in the definition of "pollutant" and include groundwater pollution within the regulatory authority of the bill.

Wednesday, March 29, 1972

TOBACCO

By a voice vote, the House passed H.R. 13361, to amend section 316(c) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended.

EASTER RECESS

The House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to H. Con. Res. 571, providing for an adjournment of the House from March 29 until April 10.

(MORE)



Wednesday, March 29, 1972 (continued)

NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM

The House agreed to the amendments of the Senate to the amendment of the House to S. 2601, to provide for increases in appropriation ceilings and boundary changes in certain units of the national park system, clearing the measure for the President.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE--FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The House received a message from the President outlining the re-organization of the executive branch of the Federal Government. Referred to the Committee on Government Operations.

WATER POLLUTION

RULE

By a voice vote, on Monday, March 27, 1972, the House adopted H. Res. 913, providing for four hours of open debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 380 yeas to 14 nays, the House passed H.R. 11896, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

Subsequently, this passage was vacated and a similar Senate-passed bill, S. 2770, was passed in lieu, after being amended to contain the language of the House bill as passed.

Prior to final passage, the House agreed to the following amendments to the committee amendment:

By a voice vote, an amendment by Mr. Harsha that increases the amount for fiscal year 1972 from \$6 million to \$11 million.

By a record teller vote of 274 ayes to 118 noes, an amendment by Mr. William D. Ford that provides public hearings to be held for employees who lose their employment in the case of an industry moving to meet the alleged results from any effluent limitation or order issued under this act.

By a record teller vote of 250 ayes to 130 noes, an amendment by Mr. Vander Jagt that directs EPA to encourage regional resource management that utilizes spray irrigation and recycling of wastes.

By a record teller vote of 210 ayes to 173 noes, an amendment by Mr. William D. Ford that would preserve the rights of States to control discharges from vessels.



(MORE)

Wednesday, March 29, 1972 (continued)

WATER POLLUTION (continued)

Prior to final passage, by a record teller vote of 161 ayes to 232 noes, the House rejected an amendment by Mr. Mahon that sought to strike the contract authority provision for \$18 billion for waste treatment grants and to substitute authorization for "no-year" appropriations but on a 1-year advance basis.

Monday, April 10, 1972

DISTRICT DAY (NO BILLS)

NO LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

MEMBER SWORN

Mrs. George Andrews of Alabama presented herself in the Well of the House and was administered the oath of office by the Speaker.



Tuesday, April 11, 1972

MEMBER SWORN

Cliffard D. Carlson, of Illinois, presented himself in the Well of the House and was administered the oath of office by the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS

The House disagreed to the amendments of the Senate to H.R. 13955, making appropriations for the legislative branch of the fiscal year 1973, and agreed to a conference asked by the Senate. Appointed as conferees: Representatives Casey of Texas, Evans of Colorado, Hathaway, Roush, Bevill, Mahon, Bow, Cederberg, Rhodes, and Wyatt.

COMMITTEE FUNDS

By a voice vote, the House agreed to H. Res. 910, to provide funds for the Select Committee on Crime.

MANPOWER TRAINING CONTRACTS

By a voice vote, the House agreed to the conference report on S. 3054, to amend the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, clearing the measure for the President.

(MORE)

Tuesday, April 11, 1972 (continued)

CRUISE VESSELS

RULE

By a voice vote, the House adopted H. Res. 914, providing one hour of open debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 374 yeas, the House passed H.R. 9552, to amend the cruise legislation of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936.

MARITIME AUTHORIZATION

RULE

By a voice vote, the House adopted H. Res. 916, providing one hour of open debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 364 yeas to 13 nays, the House passed H.R. 13324, to authorize appropriations for the fiscal year 1973 for certain maritime programs of the Department of Commerce.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATIONS

RULE

By a voice vote, the House adopted H. Res. 915, providing one hour of open debate.

PASSAGE

By a record vote of 373 yeas to 1 nay, the House passed H.R. 13188, to authorize appropriations for the procurement of vessels and aircraft and construction of shore and offshore establishments, and to authorize the annual active duty personnel strength for the Coast Guard.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE--D.C. BUDGET

The House received and read a message from the President transmitting the D.C. Budget for the fiscal year 1973--referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

PROGRAM AHEAD

Wednesday, April 12, 1972 and Balance of Week

H.R. 13336 - Arms Control and Disarmament Act Amendments  
(OPEN RULE - ONE HOUR OF DEBATE)

THURSDAY IS PAN AMERICAN DAY

