POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE PHILIPPINES

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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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(III)
POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND THE PHILIPPINES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 1974

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2 p.m. in room H-218, the Capitol, Hon. Robert N. C. Nix (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. Nix. The subcommittee will come to order.

Today, we have reached a point in our hearings in which we will hear about our continuing commitment in South Vietnam in connection with the broader picture of our commitments in Asia.

The question for the future, in my view, is whether or not we intend to continue our military and economic involvement on the mainland of Asia.

At the very beginning of the Nixon administration, the President proclaimed the United States a Pacific power. We were to begin a withdrawal from direct involvement in the mainland in a way that was supposed to have come from speedy termination. That we have not witnessed.

This withdrawal was to be based on the numerical strength of our Asian allies which would not require the use of American troops on the Asian mainland. Yet today we have at least 33,000 airmen in Thailand and 36,000 soldiers in South Korea. What is more, airmen in Thailand are at bomber bases which are for the protection of Vietnam.

Can we say that our present effort in South Vietnam is a model for our future foreign policy in Asia? If it is, it means increasing our AID program by billions, building more airbases like those we have in Thailand, and the sending of an army of advisers to every country in Asia.

Since we already have been down this unsuccessful path, we cannot say that it will deter rivals in Asia.

The question becomes one of ending a commitment, and this subcommittee is determined to pursue these hearings and to urge the end of these commitments until our demands are met.

Our first witness today is a distinguished Member of the House of Representatives who has been deeply interested in this field and who has made innumerable contributions to what the ends sought by this subcommittee are. I am very pleased to welcome the Honorable Bella S. Abzug.
STATEMENT OF HON. BELLA S. ABZUG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Ms. Abzug. Thank you, very much.

I am very pleased that this committee is continuing its study of our defense commitments in Asia. I had the occasion, if you recall, to be before this committee on September 13, 1973, after I returned from South Vietnam and testified at that time to the serious problems that we had in continuing our aid to Vietnam while thousands of political prisoners are being held, while the Thieu government represses the capacity of the people in South Vietnam to see that the ideals and purposes of the peace agreement are carried out.

I appreciate this opportunity to share with you my apprehensions about those commitments. I believe they are artificial and counterproductive. Artificial, in the sense that they are commitments to small elite segments of the populations we supposedly help; the people of these countries reap nothing but death and grief from the bombs we have plowed into their fields. Counterproductive, in the sense that our so-called commitments perpetuate war and the conditions of war rather than forcing the adversaries to come to a political settlement. In addition, we run the constant risk of direct new involvement by the United States; the Pentagon has already indicated that this is a possibility.

I am convinced that we must do three things: We must drastically reduce the number of troops we support in the Pacific area; we must refuse any further aid to dictatorships; and we must make it our congressional responsibility to free the political prisoners still being held by President Thieu, with our complicity.

At the end of my brief statement, I shall make a proposal regarding those prisoners. But first I would like to review our troop commitments in this region. I am indebted to the Center for Defense Information and Rear Adm. Gene R. LaRoe (retired) for a concise summary of the situation.

Other witnesses, especially Mr. Fraser, have dealt at length with the extremely important problem of our commitment to Japan. I will confine my remarks to those peripheral areas in which our troops, planes, and ships keep dictatorships in power, or are poised to assist dictatorships.

South Korea has been under martial law since October 1972. Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff members who visited there in November reported:

The Assembly has been dissolved, an action not provided for in the constitution, and there were tanks (provided by the United States under the military assistance program) in front of the National Assembly Building, Government ministries, newspaper offices, and universities.

President Park has been given greater powers, and there is no limit to the number of 6-year terms to which he can be reelected. The United States has spent $36.9 billion in South Korea from 1946-72 for war costs, economic and military assistance, and to maintain forces there. Currently, there are 42,000 U.S. troops at over 40 facilities in Korea. Korea is the headquarters for the 8th Army, the U.N. Command/ Joint U.S. Forces, and Army I Corps, with 1,345 military personnel assigned to these headquarters.
In Thailand, there are 39,000 U.S. troops: The 13th Air Force with 30 B-52 bombers, 19 KC-135 fuel tankers, and 230 combat aircraft. The United States has six bases in Thailand; three are major bases. The U.S. bases in Thailand provide logistics support to Laos and Cambodia. Their primary purpose is the resumption of bombing in South Vietnam, if a new offensive occurs—although the Congress has specifically prohibited such bombing without prior congressional approval.

Also in Thailand are the U.S. Support Activities Group (which replaced the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam), a U.S. Special Forces battalion, the U.S. Military Assistance Command, and 2,300 U.S. military internal security personnel. It is proposed that 27,000 troops be left in Thailand after agreed-upon reductions. I see no reason for leaving 27,000 troops there.

There are 8,000 U.S. officers and men on Taiwan, and 54 aircraft at three major bases. Taiwan is also the headquarters for Air Asia, subsidiary to the CIA-owned Air America airline, which carried out overflights of China and Tibet, and was involved in the CIA’s secret war in Laos.

The U.S. commitment to the defense of Taiwan and the Pescadores Island is lessening since Congress withdrew the prior authority previously given to the President. It is doubtful if Taiwan contributes in any way to the defense of the United States.

Once again part of Japan, Okinawa has a total of 77 U.S. bases, properties, and facilities, and 37,000 U.S. military personnel. The 1st Marine Airwing is based there, with 92 aircraft, Air Force high-flying, long-range electronic intelligence aircraft rotate through Kadena, Okinawa. The first Special Forces Group (the Green Berets) is based on Okinawa. U.S. installations on Okinawa are to be reduced over the next 3 years to 70; and of those, 13 will be reduced in size. There is also no planned reduction in numbers of military personnel.

In the Philippines, President Marcos instituted martial law in September 1972. A new constitution gave Marcos the powers of both President and Prime Minister for as long as he likes. Arrest and suppression of rebels continues, particularly in the southern Philippines, locale of Muslim insurrection. Special Forces from the 1st Special Forces groups based in Okinawa were deployed to the southern Philippines in the later part of 1973. In addition, there were 14,000 U.S. military personnel at six bases. The U.S. Naval Base at Subic Bay is the largest naval base in a foreign country in the Pacific. It is frequently used by Navy ships for repair and overhauls, and one submarine is permanently based there.

Clark Air Force Base is home for a large number of USAF aircraft and personnel.

Even Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger agrees that a sizable reduction can be made in U.S. forces in Asia. This is already beginning; for example, some 4,000 troops were removed from Thailand recently. But the pace is far too slow. Every day we remain in these areas is costly and threatening to our real security. As Chairman Nix has said:

Some of our troops are stationed in foreign countries for political rather than military purposes. **The requirements of 1974 differ from those of 1945.** **Guerrilla warfare requires domestic reforms and Asian versions of democracy**
to meet internal subversions. ** Extensive overseas bases with large garrisons do not deter either guerrilla wars or intercontinental attack. These bases are obsolete.

Now please permit me to return to our commitment in South Vietnam. Our continued support of the Thieu regime poses one of the greatest moral crises of our time.

On April 5, the House decisively rejected any increased military assistance to Vietnam. A part of that rejection was soon outdone by Pentagon maneuvering in which they found half of the needed funds. With inflation and possible recession at home, the Members reflected their constituents' desire to waste no more money in support of a regime that is a disgrace to our country. With sublime indifference to this expression of public opinion, President Nixon comes back with a request for $1.45 billion for fiscal year 1975 military and/or, I think, economic aid to Southeast Asia forces. He calls it reconstruction, but it is really destruction.

The postwar war continues unabated. Vietnamese casualties since the cease-fire number 60,000 dead, and the steady stream of refugees continues. Recently I learned that 300 imprisoned Buddhist monks are on a hunger strike to protest jail conditions.

Neither side has fully observed the Paris peace agreements, but in South Vietnam it is illegal even to print or distribute the peace agreements. This tells us a great deal.

I will leave to other witnesses today the documentation of these violations. My chief concern—as it has been for several years—is not only the conclusion of the war in Vietnam but the fate of those thousands of South Vietnamese of all walks of life and all political opinions, who are being held in jail solely because they—or their friends or relatives—do not agree with President Thieu.

Group after group of Americans visiting South Vietnam over the last few years have reported on these prisoners, bringing back documents and photographs. The highly respected organization, Amnesty International, confirmed the accounts in a recent report.

In the New York Times, March 19, James P. Harrison of Amnesty International asks why, if there are only some 35,000 prisoners in all of South Vietnam as President Thieu claims, the United States is asked to budget some $20 million a year for Saigon's police system—four times the amount we give to hospitals in South Vietnam. "And why," he continues, "are there some 120,000 security personnel and over 600 detention centers in a country the size of an average U.S. State?"

Feeling the pressure from these reports, the Nixon administration and the Thieu administration have combined forces to mount a campaign against those who protest the detention and inhumane treatment of Thieu's prisoners. A hawkish team from the promilitary American Security Council visited the area and issued a whitewash. Like the three monkeys they saw nothing, heard nothing and told nothing. Apparently, they talked with no one except President Thieu and the people he selected—including the Saigon police chief who had refused interviews with journalists and other prominent Americans.

The council in fact produces no hard evidence for any of its claims. Their bland statements on prisoners, for example, must be contrasted with literally hundreds of pictures of victims and interviews widely reported here and abroad.
Even the U.S. Ambassador to Saigon has jumped into a verbal battle with those opposing administration policy. He has stated that the total prison population of South Vietnam does not exceed 35,000; and that if there were any political prisoners, it could only be a handful. He impugns the motives and the patriotism of those who question this assertion, implying that they are tools of Hanoi.

This amazes me, because of my own experience in Saigon during the August recess. At that time I met with Ambassador Martin and found him a gracious host as well as a strong-minded defender of the Thieu regime. He, however, kindly used his good offices to help secure the release of a prisoner whose existence no one could deny—Madame Ngo Ba Thanh, the internationally known attorney and women's leader.

Now I read that the Ambassador will be in this country next week to carry on his crusade for funding Thieu's government. Therefore, I have cabled to the Embassy the following open letter:

DEAR AMBASSADOR MARTIN: I am writing this open letter to you, in the hope that all who read it will join with me in urging you and Secretary Kissinger to ensure that outside observers be permitted to visit South Vietnamese civilian detention centers.

I take this step because I believe that only through such visits can the truth about what is happening in GVN prisons be finally determined, once and for all.

I need not repeat here the various charges and countercharges that have been made. Suffice it to say that I'm sure you'll agree with me that if mass torture, arrest and incarceration without trial is occurring in South Vietnam right now, we as Americans whose taxes support those practices have a moral duty to do anything we can to stop them.

And I need not also stress that it is already 15 months since the signing of the ceasefire, 12 months since President Thieu announced that “anyone” could visit the prisons—and yet visits have been regularly denied to groups like the Senate Refugee Subcommittee staff, individuals like Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, representatives of the international press and Buddhist monks and Catholic priests within South Vietnam.

I am sure that you will agree with me also that given the extremely serious nature of the charges made about the treatment of political prisoners, the truth can only be determined through visits by outside observers into South Vietnam's prisons.

The time for talk has passed. I urge you to consider the following actions:

1. Please let me know if you have any objections to my personally visiting several prisons in South Vietnam. I am prepared to go to Saigon if this seems appropriate.

2. Please join with me in urging that the Thieu government allow visits by various representative American groups into South Vietnamese prisons—visits from a variety of humanitarian and political groups from different places on the political or religious spectrum. If the Thieu government does not agree, I would ask that you join with me in urging that aid to the GVN be suspended until such time as the issue of allowing outside observers into the prisons can be resolved once and for all. I am introducing a Resolution to this effect.

3. Please advise me also as to your willingness to support prison visits by other congressmen, delegations by delegations representing church or humanitarian organizations; by private delegations representing various political shades of opinion, in the realization that those regarded as “neutral” and “objective” by all sides are often difficult to find.

I should amplify this only by stressing that of course such visits would be carried out in accordance with the three minimal conditions established by the International Red Cross for visits to detention centers; visitors are to be allowed to bring their own interpreters (acceptable, of course, to all concerned); visitors are to be permitted free access throughout the prison; visitors are to be permitted to interview in private prisoners whom the visitors themselves select for interviewing.

From the American point of view, this action would help quiet the fears of so many of our people that terrible things are occurring in South Vietnam—inhumane tortures for which we are paying; it could, if such abuses are occurring, help correct them; it would help clear the air.
President Thieu has told a nationwide TV audience in April 1978 that "anyone" was free to visit his prisons. This, together with similar more recent statements, would seem to indicate that the GVN would not regard such visits as an infringement of national sovereignty.

Given these factors, of course, any reluctance on either your or the GVN's part to allow such visits could only be considered a cause for serious alarm.

Finally, I should tell you that my sense of urgency about the need for such visits has been increased by your recent intemperate attacks on those who sincerely seek reconciliation.

Senator Kennedy, the New York Times and the peace groups continue to share the concern that brought me to Saigon last summer. We must continue to ask questions until we receive satisfactory answers.

I know that you are aware of the fact, for example, that during my visit to Saigon last summer I gathered my information about political prisoners firsthand from Vietnamese and foreigners living in Saigon, none of whom are agents of Hanh—to the best of my knowledge. You know, for example, that I talked with people like Chan Tin, a Catholic priest, whom you yourself say in your study of political prisoners is not a "witting communist" and "views people's plights in a human way."

You also know that the information spurring world-wide concern about political prisoners comes directly from Saigon and other parts of GVN zones, not Hanh. You know that dozens of western correspondents have filed stories based on interviews with former political prisoners, relatives of political prisoners, prison officials, etc., and that substantial testimony and documentation has been massed by Americans who have investigated the situation firsthand in South Vietnam, ranging from people like Jane and David Berton—who worked in the Quang Ngai hospital for years treating political prisoners who had been tortured—to Mike and Diane Jones of the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), to former Air Force doctor John Champlin, to Bishop Gumbleton of Detroit to Fred Brandman of the Indochina Resource Center.

You know that the British TV company, Granada, has made a moving film called "A Question of Torture," made in Saigon and showing former political prisoners crawling about like crabs after what they claim was years of shackling, prisoners who described water shocks and electric shocks in a way that is not easily forgotten.

And, finally, you know that hundreds of pages of material authored by Vietnamese living in GVN zones has flooded out of South Vietnam since the cease-fire; tearful pleas signed by mothers who have not seen sons or daughters for years; statements signed by dozens of distinguished Vietnamese Senators and Deputies, religious and labor leaders, professors, lawyers and judges. That you would twist and distort this basic fact that the great bulk of the information about political prisoners has come from non-communists—Buddhists, Catholics—living in Saigon and other GVN controlled areas has convinced me that the time for action has come.

I appreciate your writing to me of your reactions to the recent visit of the group headed by the Rev. Dr. George W. Webber, President of New York Theological Seminary—in my district. But I must assure you that I stand firmly with Dr. Webber when he replied that "you and our Government have massive and decisive influence where it counts most." I hope you will use this influence and accept my recommendations.

Cordially,

BELLA S. ABBZUG,
Member of Congress.
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS REGARDING SOUTH VIETNAM
SUBMITTED BY HON. BELLA S. ABZUG


116. Open letter to all groups and individuals concerned about the problem of political prisoners in South Vietnam from students and intellectuals now being held as political prisoners in South Vietnam, August 8, 1973.


LETTER FROM THE VIETNAMESE BUDDHIST PEACE DELEGATION, 
DATED MARCH 15, 1974.

DEAR FRIENDS, On the morning of March 1, 1974, 300 Buddhist monks detained at Chi Hoa Detention Center in Saigon began fasting and praying in silence to demand their release. In a letter sent to Thich Phap Lan, Chairman of the Buddhist Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners, written on March 5, 1974, the monk Thich Minh Hoang, Representative of the 300 fasting monks, said that 20 of them had fainted on that day and 5 had been carried to the Prison Medical Center. He said that the monks are only living on prayer and water, and have decided to go on with the fasting and silent praying, indefinitely until their demand is met. He said on that day a team of opposition senators came to the prison, but the fasting monks were not allowed to talk to them.

On March 12, Thich Phap Lan, Thich Nhat Thanh, and 20 other Buddhist leaders came to the Chi Hoa prison to visit the fasting monks. Several newsmen came with them. They were not allowed to enter the prison. Films and tapes of CBS and NBC newsmen were confiscated. When the Buddhist delegation left, 15 newsmen were detained by the police. The delegation returned to the prison later and tried to push through the gate but were chased off by police who fired shots into the air. Efforts by the Buddhist delegation to get sugar and lemon to the fasting prisoners also failed. The guards of the prison refused to take these items. On the same day, the Associated Press reported that 142 more monks were arrested in Con Gia, 12 miles south of Saigon.

We enclose the translation of the letter of prisoner Thich Minh Hoang to Thich Phap Lan and a photocopy of the original. We urge you to take whatever action you can to support the fasting prisoners. We will be very grateful for your support.

THICH NHAT HANH.

THE CENTRAL DETENTION CENTER, 
March 5, 1974.

HOMAGE TO OUR LORD AND TEACHER THE ENLIGHTENED SAKYA MUNI 
(Translated from the Vietnamese, photocopy of original attached)

Our Dear Venerable, In the name of 300 monks who started last week fasting and praying in silence in this Detention Center in Saigon, imprisoned on charges of civil disobedience and insubordination, we request you to raise your voice so that the public within and without the country will be aware of what is going on here.

Venerable, all of us declared that we would begin on the 27th of February 1974 fasting and praying in complete silence to transmit our request to the government, asking the government to free us so we can go back to our monasteries, pagodas, and institutes to continue our religious study and practice. On that day the lieutenant colonel chief of the Detention Center asked us to postpone our action for 3 days, so that he could intervene with the Ministry of the Interior. He said that if the result was negative, he would not prevent us from the action.

We complied with his request, and the result was that we started the fast and silent prayer on the morning of March 1, 1974. Today, after 5 days living exclusively on prayer and water, most of us feel physically exhausted. More than 20 have fainted and 5 among them have just been carried to the Medical Center of this Detention House.

Today, we notice that the administration of the Detention Center is trying to hide our action from the public. At 9:30 this morning when a delegation of Senators came to investigate the aspiration of the prisoners, the Administration prevented us to meet with the delegation. It is our intention to pursue our action of fasting and praying in complete silence—not for 7 days as we decided at the bureau of the lieutenant colonel chief of the Detention Center on the 4th of March 1974, but indefinitely until our aspiration is met.

For the sake of the lives of 300 of us, we respectfully request you, Venerable, to present this case to the Central Executive Council of the unified Buddhist Church, and ask the Council to intervene with the government to save us from slowly dying in this prison.

Also, we request that you and the Central Executive Council of the Unified Buddhist Church present our case widely to the public. We shall be grateful to you for your whole life, and we pray that our Lord and Teacher will bring you peace and the full accomplishment of your task.

Respectfully,

THICH MINH HOANG,
Prison No. 5848 QPTA,
For the Representative Committee of the fasting 300.
Mr. NIX. Now, the bells have sounded. Necessarily, we must recess the meeting for the purpose of performing our function. Would you care to ask questions now, or shall we wait until after the recess?

Mr. RYAN. I would rather wait until we get back.

Mr. NIX. The subcommittee will be in recess.

[A brief recess was taken.]

Mr. NIX. The subcommittee will be in order.

I wish to welcome a gentleman from the State of California, my highly respected and admired colleague. It is my pleasure to present Congressman Dellums.

STATEMENT OF HON. RONALD V. DELLLUMS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. DELLUMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your kind words.

Second, thank you for asking me to testify before you this afternoon. I believe these issues are among the most important facing this Congress. If we can agree that (1) domestic programs today get only those residual funds left over after the military and its friends get through with the budget, and (2) that troop commitments comprise the heart of defense policy, then it becomes apparent how critical the actions that you take will become.

First, though, I would like to comment on what I see as the saddest factor of current administration foreign policy—this Nation's still-continuing, illegal, immoral and insane adventurism in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Chairman, this Nation is a signatory to the Paris agreements, and yet we are in serious violation of that truce. Our client, General Thiou, has made a mockery of the Paris agreements; there is probably not an article that Mr. Thiou has not flagrantly violated.

Nevertheless, American taxpayers are virtually the sole financial support for Mr. Thiou. Estimates indicate that our tax dollars account for 85 percent of Thiou's national budget, and I would like to call attention once again to the figures noted by our colleague from New York, Mr. Pike, in the floor debate on the supplemental aid to Vietnam, when he pointed out that the South Vietnamese defense budget dropped from $1.3 billion in 1971 to only $474 million budgeted for this year.

American dollars allow Thiou to continue a war that took approximately 60,000 lives last year; American dollars pay for a police state in which thousands of Vietnamese are held political prisoners without benefit of trial; American dollars pay for the security of a petty dictator who refuses to allow distribution of the Paris agreement in his areas, who hold illegal elections, forbids neutralism and employs systematic torture.

Mr. Chairman, it is a sham to say there is peace in Vietnam, and a lie to claim there is "honor" in American policy toward that tragic nation. What honor for us can there be when Thiou's biggest friend also happens to be the American Ambassador? I do not think this is the forum to deal with all of Ambassador Martin's follies, but I would like to bring to your attention that Martin himself has admitted that
he is permitting outright American violation of the Paris agreement. Despite legislative mandate and terms of the Paris agreement, in a memo printed in the April 4, 1974, Congressional Record on page E2117, Ambassador Martin notes that—and I quote—"A certain number of people in the defense attaché office were retained, engaged solely on logistics assistance to the military forces of South Vietnam."

To me, that appears to be a flagrant violation of both congressional intent and the Paris agreement.

What I am suggesting here is that we are in violation in part of article 4 that the United States shall not continue military involvement in Southeast Asia, and I urge you and the committee to question the Ambassador about it.

Before I move on to the question of overall troop levels, let me indicate what I see occurring if huge flows of Americans military assistance continue to Thieu—as the general and the administration desire. As long as America picks up the tab for his military operations and for his repeated violations of the Paris agreement, Thieu will continue the war. I do not think the Provisional Revolutionary Government will allow that to happen for any prolonged period—and up to now, the PRG has concentrated on achieving a political settlement based upon the Paris agreements and has undertaken only limited military operations.

But I do not think it realistic for us to assume that the PRG and its allies would remain so passive, if it becomes apparent that Thieu will never agree to any of the political components of the Paris accords and that America will continuously fund Thieu's aggression. Whenever that point is reached, I think that massive fighting will break out again, and we will be back to the situation of a decade ago.

Given that chance, it is conceivable that, based upon the implicit commitment Secretary Kissinger has made, large-scale American forces could be reintroduced in Vietnam.

Have we not learned from the past decade in Vietnam? How long is this tragedy to continue? I have introduced legislation this year, H.R. 12136, that would prevent any U.S. military assistance to Thieu unless he abides by the Paris agreement. That bill is before this subcommittee, and I urge you to give it serious consideration.

Turning now to overall troop levels, my past year of study and work in this area leads me to conclude that this question is one that Congress has seriously neglected for a long time—with the inevitable result that the key policy determinants have become bureaucratic inertia and special interest needs. For years, Congress has approved manpower levels—including overseas manpower levels—without even questioning basic rationale for overall levels or various specific commitments upon which they are based.

Events of the past few years show us that this neglect cannot continue. Our military presence is no longer a tool of foreign policy—instead, foreign policy is more and more determined by the needs of our military presence. My basic point here is that our troop commitments were not arrived at by constitutional processes of congressional control; in fact, they represent abdication of control by the U.S. Congress—over not only to the executive, but to foreign countries as well.

First of all, there are no specific treaty obligations that force Congress to approve any level of troop commitment. Exact figures for
each country are the result of executive agreements, and are not submitted to Congress for approval. Furthermore, such figures are the result of political foreign policy calculations—and are not based on military matters to which we may legitimately defer to military experts.

Mr. Chairman, last year, using appropriate public law, I asked the Pentagon 68 questions—and as I understand, ones which have never been asked previously by the Congress—with respect to what dictates our formal deployment of troops around the world. I spent hours reading classified documentation from the Pentagon. I would suggest if the Congress would assume its appropriate role that we would begin to seriously challenge and question the calculations upon which we determine when and where and how many troops are stationed around the world.

This last point is crucial. There is only one factor from which we are forced to rely on assurances of the Pentagon: Whether a force level in a certain country is necessary to sufficiently repel the threat that is responsible for its presence overseas in the first place. Yet in almost no case is the Pentagon able to give us this assurance.

Either our forces are unnecessary or they are not sufficient. Let me give an example of each. The South Koreans have one of the most battle-hardened armies in the world. It has well over 600,000 persons under arms, and many of these have had combat experience in Vietnam. The North Koreans have an army of less than a half million who have done nothing beyond border sniping since 1953. We assume the South Koreans will have the advantage of a defensive posture.

In other words, if any nation is relatively secure, it certainly is South Korea. Yet we have a top-heavy military establishment there of 40,000 troops which add a mere 7,000 fighting men in the combat division we stationed there to provide ground combat support to the South Korean forces—although we must pay for all 40,000 men, when we could supply and command troops. If the Nixon doctrine can be applied anywhere, it is in Korea. Given any sense of logic, there is no justification for the presence of these men, and we should bring them home.

Korea is a case where our troops are not necessary; central Europe is a case where they are not sufficient. No military analyst seriously claims that U.S. troops stationed there could repel any large-scale Soviet conventional attack. In this connection, I would like to quote General Lemnitzer, commander of SHAPE, who told the full committee in 1970 that:

One of the greatest problems that would confront NATO today would be a large conventional attack. Then we would be faced with a decision to use nuclear weapons or be defeated.

This, in my estimation, Mr. Chairman, is an astonishing admission. If these troops cannot prevent nuclear war, they are of no use to us or to Europe and cannot provide any so-called flexible response. Or, if only the threat of nuclear weapons keeps the Soviet Union from grabbing Western Europe, then the troops are not necessary. We may be able to reassure ourselves that in the event of war we might keep the use of tactical nuclear weapons to an acceptable minimum, but such an acceptable minimum in this case would mean the complete destruction of Europe.
This military uselessness of our troops in Europe is an open secret. The Pentagon seeks to fill the absence of military justification by pointing to political considerations such as demonstrating commitment. But first of all, such political judgments should and must be made by Congress, not by negotiations between our military bureaucracy and the military of other nations.

The officials in the Pentagon are professionally trained to make military judgments, not political ones, and their political opinions should be given no more weight than the opinion of any other well-informed participant with a vital personal stake in the matter.

Another political factor cited by those opposing troop reductions anywhere is the mutual balance force reduction talks now going on in Europe. We are told that any unilateral move anywhere will undercut our negotiators. Although most impartial observers agree that after almost a year of talk, all that has been accomplished is the clarification of how diametrically opposed are the positions of the two superpowers, we in Congress are given the line that great progress is being made, that significant troop cuts can be expected shortly.

What exactly can we rationally expect from this very complicated multilateral conference where most of the parties concerned are actively opposed to troop reductions? When considering this question, we should remember that the Soviet Union has no interest in expediting the negotiations, since the longer they wait, the more intolerable will be our irrational commitment in domestic terms, and the more damaging to European unity will be unilateral cuts when they come.

It is the presence of the troops that will cause an acceleration of the unraveling process, not a cut based on perception of the realities. Furthermore, the Soviets are glad for an excuse to keep their occupation troops in Eastern Europe under the guise of defense.

I serve on the Armed Services Committee, but I have always tried to keep in mind that this question is properly under the jurisdiction of the committee before which I am now testifying, the Foreign Affairs Committee. The perspective of America's overall role in the world should determine our decision to maintain a military presence in foreign, independent countries. I believe that a responsible understanding of our great power status will lead us to rely more on our domestic strength and less on intrusive and useless troop commitments—in Asia and throughout the world.

This, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, concludes my formal testimony before this committee. Again, I thank you for the opportunity of being able to express my views on this very important set of issues.

Mr. Nix. Thank you, Congressman Dellums.

Mr. Dellums. Thank you, very much.

Mr. Nix. We have had a number of allegedly responsible people testify before this committee from the State Department. We have sought to elicit from them the reasons underlying the decisions to deploy troops in various parts of the world. I have repeatedly asked the question, whether benefits will accrue to the United States of America as a result of our troops strengthening throughout Asia or any particular place?

Now, I ask the question because to me it is a realistic question, because I realize the Nation is acting primarily in order to be bene-
fited by the action that they take. Can you, after your consideration of the entire matter, arrive at any benefit that would accrue to the people of the United States of America because of the actions and the troops strengthening and money strengthening in Asia?

Mr. Dellem's. Mr. Chairman, my answer to that is very simple and easy. No; I see no benefits. You probably received no greater luck than I did. I sat in a classified room going over classified information page after page and hour after hour. In both classified as well as unclassified documentation, I think I can say in general terms, I saw no appropriate justification and no statement that led to any conclusive position that there was any benefit to this Nation, whatsoever.

I think what we have found is bureaucratic inertia and self-interest on the part of the Pentagon. We are now faced with a ninety-some odd billion dollar military budget of which 55 percent is manpower. I believe now that our troop commitments dictate our purchase of weapons systems and that our purchase of weapons systems dictates our military policy which in turn dictates our foreign policies. Yet, in my opinion, that should be turned around 180 degrees.

I think it is time for us—for Congress and the people—to begin to exercise some very important decisionmaking; because as long as the Pentagon continues deployment of troops, we are always going to have a bloated overseas force.

I have talked to both former and progressive members of the military who point out that the large number of overseas commitments give the Pentagon an opportunity to justify a much larger military budget because you can always tell the American people the reason why there are troops scattered all over the world is because of some nebulous menace that never quite gets defined.

In the past 4, perhaps even 5, years, when the Pentagon has sent its defense budget over to the Armed Services Committee, under the heading "Justification for the Military Budget," there is a paragraph or two entitled "Soviet Threat." And up until, I think, this year, they had not changed one word, one sentence, one period, one comma, one line, one paragraph of the notation of "Soviet Threat," even though Mr. Nixon got on the plane, went to the Soviet Republic, shook hands with Brezhnev and all the other important people, and went to Mainland China.

We are now talking about normalizing relationships. Yet the Pentagon has made no change under the label of "Soviet Threat." I think it is time for Congress to assume the policy consideration. I think the day is over when military people make political decisions. We are either making or not making policy. If we are not, we shouldn't be here in this charade called Congress.

If we are going to be involved, it seems to me we ought to establish policy and only rely on the military to make what they are capable—hopefully—of making; that is, military decisions. But the deployment of troops around the world is policy deployment. And certainly, I see no useful purpose for the 173,000 troops scattered all over Asia.

Mr. Nix. Thank you, Congressman Dellem. Congressman Ryan, do you have any questions?

Mr. Ryan. I have no questions.

Mr. Nix. Thank you, very much. I am very grateful you took the time to come here today.
Mr. DELLUMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. NIX. Our next witnesses are Mr. Fred Branfman and Mr. Gareth Porter. You may be seated at your pleasure, gentlemen.

STATEMENT OF FRED BRANFMAN, CODIRECTOR, INDOCHINA RESOURCE CENTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. BRANFMAN. Mr. Chairman, my name is Fred Branfman. With me is Gareth Porter. We are both codirectors. We both prepared rather lengthy written statements which we would like to submit for the record and at this time go into sort of oral summary of what are some of the highlights.

Mr. NIX. Without objection, it will be made a part of the record.

Mr. BRANFMAN. Thank you very much.

I would like to begin by focusing on the administration’s money requests this year for an expenditure of $3.7 billion in Indochina. You can see in table 1 of my statement how that is broken down. I won’t go into it at this point. That is on page 28.

We want to begin by noting that Congress, during the last several years, has begun moving in what we would regard as a very positive and important direction. After so many years of protest in the streets, after so many people having their voices heard, so many people having their votes at the ballot box go in the direction of reducing our commitments in East Asia in general, and in Indochina in particular, Congress in the last several years has begun powerfully to move in the direction of reducing our global commitment abroad, reducing our role as a global policeman. It has begun following what is a very clear public mandate, I think, to allow people in the Third World to settle their own destinies and turn some of our attention and resources to meeting our needs at home.

Recently, we have seen the strong congressional reaction to the bombing of Hanoi leading in part to the forcing of the administration to sign the Paris agreement. We have seen the ending of police and prison aid in South Vietnam. We have seen the ending of the bombing of Cambodia last year and rejection of $474 million supplementary military aid to South Vietnam.

To us, the significance of this goes beyond South Vietnam. What Congress is saying now is that foreign policy in this country will not be made by a small group of people in the executive branch, that Congress will become a partner in making this foreign policy, and that Congress will listen to the voice of the people.

Unfortunately, however, what we have seen since the signing of the Paris agreement, which is the event that most symbolizes the change, is that the administration has not really changed its policy for Indochina and East Asia. All it has done is soften the rhetoric, talking of reconstruction instead of winning wars, rehabilitation instead of defeating our enemies.

In practice, it still remains committed to putting down local insurgencies throughout the world and Southeast Asia. I introduce a large number of statistics in my statement to illustrate that. But the ones that I might mention here, I think would strike me the most are seven military dictatorships in East Asia and the Pacific, that is, South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and South Korea.
These countries receive more aid than the rest of the world put together, more than 97 other countries combined. One illustration, which I think particularly demonstrates this counterinsurgency emphasis, is the fact I have read figures of up to 25 million people going hungry in Sahelion Africa. I know the chairman of the committee has expressed his concern about this. I have read that tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people, have died for lack of food.

Yet the administration had come up with only about $150 million as of February 1974 for Sahel. By contrast, in Indochina, it had taken $300 million from the Food for Peace money that was available to go anywhere in the world and transferred it to Indochina, going from an original request of $208 million for Food for Peace in Indochina to a $508 million allocation.

Personally, I experienced what was for me a chilling example of how much the administration still remains committed to counterinsurgency. Last year, when I went out to Thailand after the cease-fire, I interviewed a large group of officials in Thailand. I went up to the northwest to talk to U.S. officials, that is a member of the Peace Corps. I found out to my horror that the administration, 6 months after the cease-fire in Vietnam, had instituted a large, wide-scale counterinsurgency program in northeast Thailand, probably designed, as far as I can tell, not so much to fight militarily, but to assassinate civilian infrastructure or the model of the Phoenix programs in South Vietnam.

I found that administration officials in Thailand agree with most Americans that we did lose in Vietnam. That peace with honor is a farce. But they don’t see the same reasons for it as most Americans. They say the reason was we didn’t get in soon enough. We waited too long. This in turn has led, as I say, to a commitment not only in Thailand but in the Philippines, in South Korea, if necessary to Indonesia, to put down local insurgencies. Well, one could go on about this. But I did want to focus our attention for a moment, if you would, on Indochina, because I think Indochina has emerged as the very symbol as to whether or not this country is going to spend the rest of the 1970’s, 1980’s, and 1990’s on combating local insurgencies throughout the world, or whether it will follow the public mandate and allow people of the Third World to follow their own destinies.

I would like now to talk about Indochina in terms of what it is costing us and them. In terms of what it is costing us, I would like to draw your attention—this is only one example—to page 11 of my statement, where I enumerated programs that were cut in fiscal year 1974 by the Nixon administration programs which I would estimate affected in one way or another at least half the population of this country, if not more.

These programs were either reduced or terminated. The total savings as reported by the administration for fiscal year 1974 was to be $2.6 billion. This was precisely the amount of aid that we extended to the military regimes of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam in fiscal year 1974. This is only one dramatic example, I think, of what this involvement in Indochina, if we continue to intervene, is costing the American people financially.

I would argue, however, that even more, it is costing us spiritually and morally.

The chairman may remember that 9 months ago I came before this committee and described the kind of brutality I found in South Viet-
nament among our officials there who have instituted programs to keep track of 10 million Vietnamese in South Vietnam through bio-dossiers, mass incarceration, assassination, and imprisonment without trial of which we have not only funded, but in many cases initiated and implemented.

I mentioned that the people who instituted those programs in South Vietnam are now in control of the highest executive agencies in this country. I asked us all to reflect on what that means for us as Americans, that we have leaders who would do this in South Vietnam, and, increasingly, at home—as we now know from Watergate and other related matters.

In other words, this is only one aspect. It is a generalized attitude which sees human beings as objects to be manipulated, as objects to be used for whatever ends our leaders desire. For whatever reasons, I think fateful momentum toward 1984 is clear. Nothing demonstrates this to me more than the nature of the administration’s activities in Indochina over the past year, and particularly President Nixon’s new fiscal year 1975 budget.

Let me sum up what seems to be some of the most important aspects of 1 year ago today just by chance, May 1, 1973. President Nixon sent his fiscal year 1974 budget request for foreign aid moneys to Congress. At that time, he said:

Mr. Chairman, all I can say is that in the past year, we at Indochina Resource Center have followed the situation in Indochina on a daily basis, and we have not seen one sign of reconstruction and rehabilitation. We have seen nothing but war. Last year alone, over 50,000 people, by official statistics, were killed, 75,000 were wounded, and well over 1 million people approaching 1.3 million for South Vietnam and Cambodia were made refugees.

What I think is more important is that: (a) This was foreseeable when President Nixon presented his request; and (b) we are largely responsible for this mass carnage. When the President talked of reconstruction and rehabilitation, in fact only 4 percent of his aid budget was for reconstruction and rehabilitation. Only 4 percent was humanitarian, meaning only 8 percent fell into those categories. Ninety-two percent was defined either for direct military aid or economic aid designed to meet very short-term, war-related needs.

What is even more striking, however, is that over the last year, these original allocations changed. It is a very, very long story. But the figures are available in my statement in the tables at the end of my statement: if you add in the money we spent in incremental costs in Thailand or Indochina, you look at the increase in the Food for Peace money which we meant to generate dollars for war, the result is that only 3 percent went to humanitarian and reconstruction and rehabilitation needs.

Beyond this, a second factor that I would like to stress about these fiscal year 1974 figures was that the Congress last year showed it clearly intended to cut back on this aid. You remember the administration asked for $632 million in Indochina postwar administration. This was cut back by Congress to $450 million. If you add in $208 million
for Food for Peace and the administration-requested $150 million for a development loan, we discover roughly a little under $700 million was passed by Congress as of last summer for Indochina. There was a clear intent to cut back on the administration’s economic aid request.

If the chairman looks at table 1, the chairman will discover at this point, the administration not only restores these cuts that Congress had made, but went way over them. It has wound up with $1.1 billion in economic aid to the Governments of South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

On the aspect which I think is important to note at this point, when we get to fiscal year 1975, after 1 year of fighting the administration has come up with a request of $3.7 billion total for Indochina. In other words, $500 million more than last year.

As we sit here now looking for this fiscal year 1975 request which is coming up, I think it is appropriate to look back and say what have we accomplished? We put in $3.2 billion in Indochina last year. What did it accomplish?

Well, the war in Indochina has raged on since its cease-fire. The killing has continued. I have enumerated my reasons in my statement in all three countries, basically in Cambodia and South Vietnam. There is no more reason to believe, if Congress passes the aid that the administration is requesting this year, that it will be any different. I think what is far more important to note is that we are responsible for this deterioration in Indochina in our aid, the money we gave and the way we gave it is in fact responsible for what has gone on, particularly in South Vietnam.

We prepared a book on the violations of the cease-fire. I think my colleague, D. Gareth Porter, will respond more fully to it.

If you look at the New York Times even today, we find the Thieu regime shutting off the PRG delegation in South Vietnam, refusing to open telephone lines, refusing to let prisoners out of the compounds and refusing press conferences. This is only one example of the Thieu government refusing to allow the other side to compete politically.

The Thieu government has done this since we have been supporting it unconditionally, and have given it no reason whatsoever to sue for peace. This means even if we are incorrect; that is, even if our side isn’t ordinarily responsible for violating the cease-fire, everyone must still agree that unless something is done, there will be no cease-fire. That is to say, whoever is responsible, the fact in Indochina today is that there is no peace, the war is continuing and unless something is done, it will just continue indefinitely at increase cost to ourselves and themselves.

To close, I would just like to mention what I think is the heart of this issue for many Americans. I think if one thinks back over the last decade to what really motivated so much of the antiwar protests, one realizes that it was the question of the suffering of the people of Indochina; the question of whether we have any right to continue to inflict this suffering. When all the legal, political, and economic arguments are done, this moral question does remain at the heart of this issue.

I would like to close by noting that last week, President Nixon, in asking for this fiscal year 1975 request of $3.7 billion, stated that, “The investment I am now seeking is an investment to sustain the peace, to overcome the human suffering as a result from the war.”
Now, I don't know quite what to say about that statement, except to say that there is not a word in it which is true. There is not a word in it which is correct. The investment which the President is seeking in Congress this year will not sustain the peace, nor overcome suffering.

First of all, over 90 percent of this request is for war expenses. It will not overcome the human suffering. In fact, it will contribute to it. To put this more clearly, if Congress vassed this fiscal year 1975 request, or simply reduces it just a little bit, the major result to my mind would be the following: 1. People all over the world, people in India, Pakistan and Sahel, and people in Nicaragua will be deprived of funds that could be used to keep them from starving, to really meet their humanitarian needs. 2. The people of this country will be deprived of money that is sorely needed at home for a wide variety of needs, and 3. Which is really most important to us, at least 50,000 Vietnamese who are now alive as we sit here will be dead.

That means that tens of thousands of people who are now being tortured will continue to be tortured over the past year. That means that 1 year from today, if I am invited back, I will be sitting here saying the exact same thing I am saying today. The Congress will be asked for more money next year, because of a deterioration in a war which will continue to rage.

I have now sketched out what I see in the problem. We would now like to turn to the solution: Implementation of the Paris agreement. For that, I would like to yield the floor to my colleague.

[Mr. Branfman's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRED BRANFMAN, CODIRECTOR, INDOCHINA RESOURCE CENTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

KEY POINTS

1. The Administration has quietly violated congressional intent to cut economic aid to Indochina in FY 1974. The original Administration request was for $827.8 million. Congress cut this back to under $700 million. By the end of FY 74, however, the Administration has wound up allocating $1.1 Billion in economic aid to Indochina.

2. The Administration allocated a total of $3.2 billion in FY 74 for Indochina, almost as much money as was allocated for specific countries in the rest of the Third World combined. This figure, for example, is 6 times what went to Africa and Latin America combined for economic aid. This was part of the Administration's continuing commitment to combating local insurgeries, despite a clear public and congressional mandate for non-interventionism in such insurgencies.

3. This Administration commitment to counter-insurgency is inflicting unacceptable costs on the people of Indochina—more war victims in 1975 than the rest of the world put together; and it is a disturbing sign of the lack of Administration concern for its own citizens, as well as others in serious need. Food. For Peace shipments to Indochina were increased by $200 million in FY 74, for example, while hundreds of thousands starved in Sahel.

4. Congress must "Pause for Peace" by suspending aid pending progress towards political solutions, or at least substantially reduce what are greatly increased Administration requests for FY 1975. Military and "Indochina Postwar Reconstruction" requests have jumped 45% (p. 10). FY 74 total spending saw only 3% actually going toward "humanitarian", "reconstruction", or "development" projects. (p. 18). The FY 74 budget, therefore, was a war budget—caused by the structural unviability of the GVN and Lon Nol regimes. Administration claims that U.S. aid will allow them to "stand on their own" are myths.

I. Introduction—Congress and the lessons of Vietnam

As Congress considers this year's giant $3.7 billion Administration request for U.S. expenditures in Indochina, (see table 1), it will be deciding far more than
simply the nature of our Indochina involvement. During the 1960s, millions
of Americans turned against the war—in the streets, at the ballot box, in
the army. Congress, however belatedly, finally responded to this mandate for peace
from the American people.

Powerful congressional opposition to the B52 carpet bombings of urban centers
in Christmas 1972 helped force the Administration to sign the Paris Agreement.
Congress halted the bombing of Cambodia in August 15, 1973, and passed legisla-
tion aimed at ending U.S. support for South Vietnamese police and prisons on
December 19, 1973. And, last month, it took the historic step of rejecting an
Administration proposal for $474 million in supplemental military aid for
Indochina.

These congressional actions have saved countless Vietnamese, Cambodian and
Laotian lives; made billions of dollars available for urgent domestic and humani-
tarian international needs; reversed what seemed like lock-step progress towards
Presidential Dictatorship; and, in a subtle and not yet fully understood way, these
congressional actions have begun to restore the spiritual health of a nation torn
apart by our Indochina involvement.

By so doing, Congress clearly embarked on a new path, away from Global
Policemanship, away from silent and willing partnership in a Presidential Dicta-
torship, away from war and towards peace. If this process is to be continued
during the 1970s, Congress cannot continue to assent this FY 1975 to the same
kind of covert Executive involvement that got us involved in Indochina in the
first place.

The Nixon Administration has in the past year, however, quietly been subvert-
ing this public and congressional mandate for peace in Indochina. Intervening
covertly, as in the early 1960s, the Administration has initiated a spiral which
will bring ever-increasing U.S. escalation unless Congress acts.

During FY 1974, the Administration expended $2.58 billion in Indochina,
only 7% of which was designated for “humanitarian”, or “reconstruction”
development programs. The remaining 93% went to prop up military regimes
which are unwilling to bring peace to their countries. The Thieu government in
South Vietnam, for example, has refused all offers by the other side to negotiate
a standstill ceasefire, allow democratic liberties, and form a National Council
of National Reconciliation and Concord to help plan elections. As a result, over
74,000 were killed in Indochina last year, 125,000 were wounded, and 1 million
made homeless—more war victims than in the rest of the world put together,
including the Middle East. (see table 2).

The Administration’s FY 1975 program, moreover, offers even more of the
same. Its proposed FY ’75 military and economic aid requests, total $3.28 bil-
lion—or 27% more than what was allocated last year.

Once more, over 90% of this aid is destined neither for reconstruction nor
humanitarian needs, but for the maintenance of the war machines in Cambodia
and South Vietnam.

And, the Administration’s FY 75 program offers even more disturbing visions
for FY 76 and beyond. If General Thieu continues to refuse to allow his opponents
to participate in the political process outlined by the Paris Agreement, for ex-
ample there is every reason to believe that they will feel no choice but to launch
an offensive. And what then? Are we to give even more billions to Mr. Thieu
in an attempt to repel such an offensive? Is the 200th anniversary of this country
to find us convulsed in a national debate over a Presidential attempt to renew
U.S. bombing to save Thieu? And even if U.S. bombing is renewed, what reason
is there to believe that it will “succeed” next time?

Clearly, this fiscal year 1975 provides Congress with a historic opportunity
to ensure that our aid is no longer used for war in Indochina, that the hesitating
progress made toward halting our global interventionism be continued.

Congress can achieve these goals by only appropriating aid for Indochina in
the letter and spirit of the Paris Agreement. Two means offer progress toward
these goals:

(1) A pause for Peace.—Congress could suspend all non-humanitarian and
non-developmental aid to either side in Indochina until governing bodies emerge
which reflect the political realities of the situation. In South Vietnam, this would
mean waiting until the political machinery outlined by the Paris Agreement
was set in motion, and a newly-formed National Council of National Recon-
ciliation and Concord had gotten off the ground. In Cambodia, this would mean
withdrawing from what overwhelming evidence indicates is now a war only
among Cambodians, and allowing the Cambodian parties to evolve whatever
form of government they will. In Laos, it means absolutely halting all U.S.
economic and military inputs which are not approved by all of the parties which have just entered a fragile coalition.

This alternative, we believe, would lead to a major change for peace on the part of all parties concerned within a matter of weeks and would, in the end, result in far less suffering and disruption than any other alternative.

(2) A substantial reduction in non-humanitarian aid.—Although less likely to bring peace quickly to Indochina, this alternative would also reduce the level of violence and generate pressures on all sides for peace.

It has been contended that such a suspension in aid—or even the more moderate step of a substantial reduction—would deliver South Vietnam “bound hand and foot to the Communists”.

It is our contention, however, that present Administration policies can do nothing to prevent such an outcome—and indeed, are quite likely to produce victory for the guerrillas in any event. All that present Administration programs mean is that there will be millions more war victims, billions more dollars denied to people in need, before Indochinese guerrillas eventually seize power militarily because they were outlawed from competing politically.

A suspension or substantial reduction in American aid, such as we are proposing, offers the only hope of moving the conflict away from the military and toward the political arena. The present GVN administration—or a successor—should have no trouble competing politically, if it enjoy the popular support its advocates claim. Nor would it necessarily be precluded from picking up the gun once again, if it turned out that its opponents were not willing to compete politically. Under the Paris Agreement, moreover, Third Force elements would be accorded an important “balancing” role in the political play of forces between right and left.

Under the circumstances, then, Congressional aid designed in accordance with the Paris Agreement offers far less chance of a complete PRG takeover than present Administration policy. And, in Cambodia, a serious American attempt to move the conflict into the political arena offers the only possibility that moderate elements in the Lon Nol cabinet can avoid the complete eclipse an all-out Khmer Rouge military victory could bring.

Congress clearly has a public mandate for such policies. The Administration can point to no substantial group of Americans which supports an admitted expenditure of $3.7 billion and hidden expenditures totalling many billions more—
to continue our futile attempts to impose unpopular military regimes on the people of Indochina. Millions of Americans, however, support the notion that the people of Indochina, should be allowed to determine their own affairs; the Paris Agreement provides just such a vehicle for this occurring.

This year could be remembered as the year that Congress finally regained its rightful say in making foreign policy; a year which future Americans would remember as the one in which the Presidential Dictatorship over our country’s destinies was significantly altered; in which this country began the slow, painful, and long process of turning to peace and healing throughout the world.

If 1976 is to be a year of rebirth, however, Congress must re-examine U.S. aid requests in Indochina into a form that will bring peace. It can happen . . . this year. It is up to Congress to act.

II. U.S. Involvement in Indochina—The Geopolitical Context

Before turning to the specifics of U.S. expenditures for Indochina this fiscal year, it is important to remember the overall context in which Administration is presenting them.

The key issue which Vietnam has symbolized for many is whether the U.S. should intervene to put down wars of national liberation in the Third World. Most Americans have by now decided we should not—for moral or practical reasons, or a combination of both.

The Administration, however, has reached just the opposite conclusion. It is as committed to U.S. intervention to put down local insurgents as was the U.S. presidential branch 30 years ago, and particularly in the East Asia and Pacific region that we are discussing today.

This is why the Administration has stationed more U.S. troops in the East Asia and Pacific region today than in 1964. We have today 178,000 troops stationed from Guam to Thailand, compared to 168,000 in 1964. (Another 33,000 naval troops are afloat in the Pacific.)

This is why 7 disguised and admitted military dictatorships in the East Asia and Pacific regions receive more Administration aid than the rest of the world put together. In its original FY 1974 budget presentation to Congress, for example, the Administration specifically allocated $8.8 billion for South Vietnam;
Laos, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and South Korea. By contrast $2.13 billion was specifically allocated for military and economic aid to 97 other countries in the Third World. Put another way, two-thirds of the Administration's aid world-wide was destined to 7 nations having a population comprising but 10% of the Third World's population.

And this is why the Administration has in FY 1974 allocated so much money to South Vietnam and Cambodia's military regimes, while millions went hungry around the globe:

In FY 1974, for example, the Thieu government received $875 million in economic inputs. (see table 2). This money that went into the tiny land of South Vietnam, a nation of 18 million, was 60% more than what the U.S. gave to all of Africa and Latin America combined, two continents with 534 million people ($560 million).

Also in FY 1974, tens of millions starved and many died of hunger, in the Sahel and Ethiopia. AID contributed some $150 million in food and non-food emergency assistance, as of February 4, 1974. The Administration, however, has targeted nearly 30 times as much money for Indochina, money which is designed to fight a counter-insurgency.

Particularly reprehensible was an extra $300 million in Food for Peace money which the Administration added to its original requests for Cambodia and South Vietnam—to compensate for cuts made in economic aid by Congress. The Administration clearly had a choice between using that $300 million worth of food to shore up military dictatorships in Indochina or to feed starving millions in the Sahel. It chose the former.

This commitment to Global Policing, finally, is why the Administration transferred economic aid money from nations all over the world to Indochina, where such money is designed to help in the counter-insurgent effort. A recent chart supplied to Congress by AID administrator Parker, for example, shows the differences between AID original proposals for economic aid for FY 1974, and their final allocations, in 18 selected countries plus the continent of Africa. The Administration has reduced aid to nations where millions go hungry precipitously—aid to Bangladesh was down 41%, to India down 56%, to Pakistan down 40%, to Africa down 6%. Aid to Vietnam was listed as increasing 10% (our estimate is 34%, see Table 1), however, aid to Cambodia was listed as increasing 273% and aid to Thailand was up 16%. (Source: Hearings Before House Approp. Comm., Part II, on Second Supplemental Appropriation Bill, 1974, pp. 877-880)

It has been argued that detente has made such counter-insurgency efforts obsolete. There is little evidence to support this point of view, however. The only Third World "success" the Administration has been able to point to as a result of detente has been its ability to carpet-bomb Hanoi and blockade Haiphong Harbor without the Soviet Union or China intervening in response. Besides noting that not initiating World War III due to saturation bombing of a tiny far-off land is a curious measure of success, we should point out that there is no reason to believe that things would have worked out any differently without detente.

More to the point, however, the importance of support from the Soviet Union or China during the early stages of insurgency has always been highly exaggerated. As the Pentagon Papers make clear, such support was almost nonexistent in the very beginning in South Vietnam. And even at the height of the war, only 3% of the military expenditures by all three powers, in Indochina were those of the Soviet bloc and the Chinese (see Table 8). Furthermore, of course, there have been no signs whatsoever that the Soviet Union and China have decided to eliminate the relatively minor aid they give local insurgencies—or why they should or would.

The Administration's massive and continuing commitment to counter-insurgency in the 1970's was particularly brought home to me during a visit to Thailand in the spring and summer of last year.

While in Thailand, I interviewed a large number of American officials, including a member of the U.S. counter-insurgency board; a member of the U.S. counter insurgent think-tanks.

I discovered that these officials also feel that Vietnam was a "mistake", that to a man they deride publicly the President's notion that we have extricated ourselves through "Peace with Honor".

But I also discovered, to my dismay, that our failure in Vietnam has not led them to draw the conclusions drawn by most Americans: that we should get out. The only lesson they seem to have drawn is quite the opposite: that we should have gotten in sooner. Time and again I was told that while our cause was just
in Vietnam, our means appropriate, we had intervened too late. It was absolutely essential to "get them before they build up", I was told.

Which is precisely what the Nixon Administration is trying to do in Thailand. Unknown to most Senators and Representatives, not to mention the American people, the U.S. Mission in Thailand has recently embarked on an ambitious new counter-insurgency program in Thailand. I was told by an official in the "Pol-Mil" section that it would be modeled after the "Regional Forces" and "Popular Forces" concept in South Vietnam, and involved deploying district and provincial-level "reaction" forces throughout Northeast Thailand. It would be much smaller than in South Vietnam, this official told me, involving only several million dollars and several thousand men. Other Americans told me, however, that this program was not at all modeled after the RF-RP program, but rather the infamous Phoenix program. Assassination of civilians thought to be working for the other side, selective terror programs for issuing ID cards to all adults linked to computerized bio-dossiers, and mass arrests based on quotas—had already been tried out on an experimental basis, I was told.

At this point, I have no way of knowing which source was correct, i.e. whether U.S. officials in Thailand have launched new counter-insurgency programs modeled after the RF-RP Phoenix programs.

I do not know, however, that they are committed to such counter-insurgency efforts—that is, to changing their counterparts from Indonesian to Indochina to the Philippines.

What we are seeing today in the East Asia and Pacific region is an Orwellian vision come true, as the leaders of our Executive branch engage in the deadly serious business of mass assassination, mass incarceration, and mass labelling of human beings in a Pacific basin region inhabited by several hundred million people.

There is no more reason to believe it will succeed than did similar visions of totalitarian control held by American leaders in Vietnam during the early 1960's.

And I know that, just as in the 1960's, Administration commitment to counter-insurgency in the East Asia and Pacific region is inflicting unacceptable costs on Americans and Asians alike.

III. Costs to the Indochinese

At the end of his request for Indochina funds, during his Foreign Aid message last week, the President of the United States said that, "the investment I am now seeking (is) an investment to sustain the peace, to overcome the human suffering resulting from the war.

This statement is beyond comprehension.

We have already pointed that official figures reveal that more than 1.6 million war victims were created this past year.

To this number of newly killed, newly wounded and newly refugeeed last year, moreover, must be added:

Several million refugees living in marginal, undeveloped areas to whom the GVN has denied the right to return to the villages of their birth.

Tens of thousands of political prisoners, who remain in prison despite the Paris Agreement, and the thousands more who have been arrested, tortured, imprisoned without trial since the ceasefire was signed.

Thousands of people, who are suffering and dying from lack of medicine or an adequate diet—in the cities, in the refugee camps, in the villages.

If Congress does not substantially alter the Administration's aid request, one can assume that casualty figures will be at least as high one year from today as during the past year.

That is, Congressional acquiescence to the President's aid request will guarantee at least 50,000 corpses among people who are now alive, in the coming year. At least twice as many will be wounded. And hundreds of thousands—in Cambodia, in South Vietnam—will lose their homes.

For President Nixon to claim that his aid bill is designed to "overcome human suffering" goes beyond mere duplicity, and enters into a realm of Orwellian doublespeak beyond my understanding.

I know that to accept this statement, however, is to acquiesce in a monstrous lie; one which continues to threaten the lives of all Vietnamese and Cambodians, not merely the war victims enumerated above.

IV. Costs for the American People

The costs to the American people of continuing Executive involvement in Indochina are no less real, though perhaps less evident.
I need not tell U.S. Representatives what $3.7 billion could do this fiscal year for millions of the ill, aged, infirm, young and deprived of hospital workers around the country, earning woefully inadequate salaries...

The chairman of this committee, for example, has noted the distressing plight of hospital workers around the country, earning woefully inadequate salaries during periods of temporary unemployment. In FY 1974, approximately $1.25 billion was allocated to this allows tens of thousands of Americans to engage in useful constructive work like it. May,...

Another serious example is "Public Service Employment," a program which allows tens of thousands of Americans to engage in useful constructive work during periods of temporary unemployment. In FY 1974, approximately $1.25 billion was allocated to these programs. This year, however, while the Nixon Administration is proposing spending $5.7 billion in Indochina, it has reduced its FY 1975 Public Service Employment Program by $1 billion to a mere $250 million.

And, although the Nixon Administration sent well over a million men off to fight in Vietnam, it has not yet been able to provide them with adequate living benefits on their return. Recently, the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs proposed raising GI benefits from $220 a month to $270 a month, a move which would affect the lives of over 1.3 million veterans in the first year alone. The Nixon Administration is opposing this program. Its cost? In FY 1975, it would come to $354 million, about the cost of 1½ months fighting in Indochina. The total cost of the program, even a five year period, comes to about $2.272 billion—about 60% of what the Administration proposes spending in the next year alone in Indochina.

And, we may remember the dismemberment of programs reaching tens of millions of Americans carried out by the Nixon Administration on January 29, 1973 when it unveiled its FY 1974 budget. Proposed savings by abolishing the Office of Economic Opportunity—an agency which had helped millions of poor people in its decade of existence—were $62 million in FY 1973; $825 million in FY 1974, and $590 million in FY 1975. In other words, in order to save $730 million over a three year period, the Administration chose to abolish OEO. Meanwhile, however, it spent four times that sum last year alone for war in Indochina.

Finally, indeed, we may note the fact that virtually all of the programs abolished by the Administration in the fields of social welfare, job opportunities, health and education, resulted in a saving of $2.6 billion than the $2.7 billion proposed by the Administration for this year's FY 1975 budget. For example, last year's $3.2 billion of Indochina funding was $800 million more than the $2.4 billion the Administration expected to save in FY 1974 by terminating OEO ($328 million), reducing child feeding programs ($65 million), phasing out the Economic Development Administration ($35 million), eliminating soil and water programs ($258 million), terminating rural water systems and waste disposal grants ($100 million), suspending new housing programs ($305 million), phasing down the Emergency Employment Assistance Program ($670 million), cutting back Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance ($810 million); manpower training programs ($554 million), federal student loans ($264 million) and student subsidies ($119 million).

I bring up these examples not because I think that foreign policy objectives can always be weighed against domestic needs so directly. There are indeed cases where it may make more sense to send money abroad, than to use it to help our own citizens at home. This year, for example, when there are millions starving in the Sahel and India, food and storm victims from Pakistan to Nicaragua, a cogent case can be made, that such cases deserve urgent priority. And there is also, to be sure, a very strong case for reconstitution and rehabilitation in Indochina.

I bring up these examples of what our Indochina experience is costing the American people, however, because the Administration is doing none of these things. Not only is it not aiding the starving and sick of the earth anything like it might; not only is it not meeting humanitarian and development needs
in Indochina; but it even denies its own citizens badly-needed billions, only to take this money for use in killing, maiming and torturing abroad.

I have already testified before this committee attempted to describe the kind of mentality, shared by the highest Executive leaders in this land, which I saw in Indochina: a mentality which reduced human beings to numbers, numbers to be tracked, jailed and broken if deemed necessary.

My testimony today reveals the other side of the coin. Not only has this mentality created one of the most sophisticated police-states in the world today abroad, but to achieve this the Administration has begun the process of reducing its own citizens to mere objects, to be manipulated and deprived as well.

I do not think it is necessary for me here to elaborate on the indecency, inhumanity and wretchedness of the present occupants of the Executive branch in following such a policy.

But I feel I must stress again that this question of U.S. aid to Indochina goes beyond mere outrage or shock. It is an issue which directly threatens every man, woman and child in this country, an issue that will in the end determine whether this is a country to be ruled by its people, and, however imperfect, their representatives in Congress; or whether policy will continue to be made by a tiny group of war-makers who turn ever more to deception, as their foreign policy runs ever more counter to American ideals and values.

The cost of our continuing involvement in Indochina to the people of this country, in a word, is not to be measured merely in financial terms. What is at stake is no more or less than the spiritual and moral health of this nation.

To understand this point, we may now turn to a consideration in detail of the Administration's FY 1975 aid request.

For only through a microscope look at this gigantic demand can we see how duplicitous, how indifferent to human needs, and how war-like our Executive branch has become.

I daresay there is no other administration in the world today which would dare to present a budget over 90% of which is designed for war, and call it a budget for "reconstruction". I know there has never been a time in the history of this country when the American Executive has been so contemptuous of its people and Congress; unilaterally allotting money in direct violation of congressional intent, advancing the crudest sort of propaganda to support its position. The Administration has resorted to the most transparent subterfuge simply to mulct their FY 1975 appropriation out of Congress.

"A nation divided among itself cannot stand," said the President during America's first civil war. The cost to Americans of our continued involvement in Indochina will be continued division during this present, rather quiescent phase, of what has become our second civil war.

V. The Administration's Program for Unending War, Presented as a Plan for Peace

Realizing public and congressional sentiment for peace and against U.S. involvement, the Administration has sought to present its program to Congress as one designed to heal, rebuild, and bring peace. In fact, however, U.S. aid programs are doing precisely the opposite.

What is more important, moreover, is that there is no end in sight. Henry Kissinger implicitly admitted this recently, when he wrote to Senator Kennedy on March 25, 1974, that "we believe it is important that we continue our support as long as it is needed."

This shockingly open-ended commitment to involvement in Indochina, one year after Mr. Kissinger had negotiated an agreement committing the U.S. to ending its involvement, is sufficient cause for alarm.

When it is realized however, that there is no possibility that pro-U.S. military regimes will ever be able to stand alone, Mr. Kissinger's statement is revealed as nothing less than a commitment to American involvement for decades to come—with the cost of this involvement, moreover, steadily rising.

1. The FY 1974 presentation: War presented as "rehabilitation" and "reconstruction"

One year ago, today, for example, the President of the United States went before Congress to present his FY 1974 foreign aid proposals, and stated:

"The signing of the ceasefire agreements ..., will permit us to turn our attention to the considerable, post-war needs of Southeast Asia ... The legislation I am presenting today ..., would provide a sound beginning of the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation there."
In fact, however, only 4% of the Indochina Aid that President Nixon proposed for FY 1974 was actually designated for “reconstruction and rehabilitation” or “development” ($121.4 million out of $2.9 billion—See Table 3). And only another 4% was even termed “humanitarian” ($197.4 million out of $2.9 billion).

Ninety-two percent of the Administration-requested funds for FY 1974 were meant to continue the war—both military funds, which were 72% of the total, and “economic” and “Food for Peace” funds, which were indirectly war-related.

Even more importantly, the Administration’s aid programs went to feed our narrow-based war machines in South Vietnam and Cambodia, which offered no hopes of peace.

In South Vietnam, President Nixon had announced on January 23, 1973—even before he had signed the Agreement—that his Administration would continue to recognize the Thieu Administration as the “sole” and “legitimate” of the Republic of Vietnam. In elaborating on this, Henry Kissinger explained that the U.S. would continue to recognize the GVN “with its constitutional structure intact”.

This not only directly violates the Paris Agreement, which establishes that there are “two parties” exercising sovereignty only over their respective zones of control, and that neither held sovereignty over the Republic of Vietnam until both—together with a “third segment”—met together in a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord to hold elections.

But the Nixon-Kissinger announcement of their recognition of the GVN as the “sole, legitimate” government of the Republic of Vietnam, also ruled out any serious chance for peace. For the Thieu government’s constitution, left structurally “intact”, outlaws the PRG from peaceful political competition. By committing itself solely to the Thieu regime, the Administration also ensured no hope for a political settlement because of the nature of that regime. The GVN would hardly favor allowing the refugees to return to PRG-controlled villages, emptying its prisons of its tens of thousands of political prisoners, or allowing popular Third Force leaders to have the freedoms guaranteed them by the Paris Agreement, as long as it could count on an Administration invisibly supplying aid with no conditions.

And the situation in Cambodia is even less amenable to a political solution. In throwing its weight behind the Lon Nol regime, the Administration has managed to produce of the most unpopular, ineffective, corrupt, and comic-operaish regimes in modern history.

Visiting Cambodia last year after the ceasefire, I not only failed to find any Cambodians supporting the Lon Nol regime, I was also told by high-ranking officials in the American embassy in Phnom Penh that Lon Nol had lost even the support of the few groups—students and intellectuals—who had supported him at the time of the 1970 takeover.

More moderate elements within the Phnom Penh regime have made no secret of their distaste for Lon Nol—and he in turn has systematically excluded them from power. The latest casualty was Premier In Tahn, who had spoken vaguely of negotiations.

The result is that the Administration has found itself in a no-win situation in Cambodia, spending hundreds of millions annually to prosecute a war which cannot be won.

2. FY 1974 implementation: Administration covertly increases economic aid 34%

Last year, Congress clearly showed its desire to reduce our involvement in Indochina by cutting the Administration’s request for Indochina Postwar Reconstruction from $382 million to $240 million.

Through a variety of subterfuges, however, the Administration succeeded not only in restoring the cuts, but in actually spending nearly twice as much for economic aid to Indochina as the Congress had originally intended.

The most obvious the Administration used for this subversion of Congress was taking money from worldwide Food for Peace allocations and chanelling it into Indochina. Since Congress has until now only set world-wide levels, such Administration subterfuge was possible.

Food for Peace for South Vietnam shot up from an original request of $178.4 million to $300 million, and for Cambodia from $30.9 million to $104.2 million.

In addition, the Administration slashed two "loans" to South Vietnam, $110 million, and "supplemental" economic aid of $49 million.

The result is that the Administration proposed a total of $820.8 million in economic aid to Indochina as of the spring of 1975; Congress reduced this figure