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A Plan for Peace in Vietnam.

The 4-Stage Proposal of Nelson A. Rockefeller

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The tragedy of Vietnam has divided us more than any conflict in our modern history.

Twenty-five thousand brave Americans have died there. The war has been conducted without a coherent program for peace. It has been manned by a draft that holds millions in needless doubt of their future. It has been financed by a headlong inflation that imperils our whole economic life.

The slow pace of the preliminary peace talks has been frustrating to the American people. Six weeks were spent in selecting a site. Two months have been spent, so far, discussing an end to the bombing. Other preliminary details may take more months.

We know the cost of such slow progress from the Korean War. In that war, we suffered more casualties *after* peace talks began than before.

The Obstacles to Peace

I believe that there are 2 serious obstacles to progress in Paris.

One is the hope, in Hanoi, that our November Presidential election may somehow improve their bargaining position. And the second is a lack of mutual trust about ultimate aims.

These obstacles can be reduced if America affirms now a concrete plan for peace.

I want to remove any doubts in Hanoi's mind about America's unity on objectives. I want to speed negotiations and save lives.

The present administration has avowed, again and again, that we are ready to withdraw our forces from South Vietnam if Hanoi is ready to do the same. The Saigon government has agreed. Yet we have been given no specifics.

I am, therefore, now setting forth a detailed, 4-stage plan for Peace.

Stage I

We begin a mutual pull-back. North Vietnamese regulars move back toward the frontier, while U. S. and Allied forces move back to the populated areas.

An international force of neutral—and largely Asian—forces enters Vietnam, to act as a buffer between opposing sides. This is the beginning of a cease-fire.

As soon as the North Vietnamese begin to move back toward the frontier, we withdraw 75,000 troops as a sure sign of good faith.

Stage II

North Vietnamese regulars and infiltrators withdraw from South Vietnam, and we withdraw the bulk of our forces. The small U. S. force left is confined to fixed bases so long as North Vietnam carries out its commitments.

An expanded international force moves into the populated areas to supervise withdrawal and arrange local cease-fires.

As the National Liberation Front renounces force, it is guaranteed participation in the political life of the country.

Stage III

Free elections, supervised by observers from the international force, are held.

The U.S. withdraws its small remaining force.

The international force remains.

Stage IV

By direct negotiation, the 2 parts of Vietnam decide whether to unite or remain separate.

The international force is then withdrawn.

What We Should Do Now

This 4-stage plan makes concrete our often-stated goal for the people of Vietnam—Self Determination.

What if Hanoi refuses? We can move toward peace, improve our negotiating position, and save American lives by taking certain steps in South Vietnam *now*—whatever Hanoi decides.

We should deploy American forces to protect the populated areas, sharply reducing the far-flung "search and destroy" operations that cause most American casualties.

We should speed the re-equipment of the South Vietnamese army—still largely armed with World War II weapons. We should give this army major responsibility for anti-guerrilla warfare.

As South Vietnam's army grows in strength, we should be able to withdraw American troops for a one-year period at a rate on the order of 10,000 a month, provided the North Vietnamese rate of infiltration does not increase.

We should cut by as much as one-half our swollen civilian staff in Vietnam that today discourages the Vietnamese people's assumption of responsibility.

My Pledges

I pledge that, as President, I will carry forward this plan and these actions.

I also pledge that we will not again find ourselves with a commitment looking for justification.

I pledge that we will support our allies, but not substitute for them.

I pledge that we will face any future challenge by trusting our people. We will tell them the whole truth and the whole risk.

I pledge, finally, that I will work with all my strength for peace and justice, not only in Vietnam, but for all nations and peoples of the world.

Nelson A. Rockefeller

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER

For the full text of Governor Rockefeller's Proposal, write to: Rockefeller for President, 50 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y., 10036. J. Irwin Miller, R. Douglass. Paid for by Rockefeller, 50 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.