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S T A T E M E N T

by
Rep. GERALD R. FORD, HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

August 2, 1965
FOR RELEASE AT 1 P.M. EDT.

Communist leaders all over the world would be happy to see a bitter, name-calling contest develop between President Johnson and Congressional leaders at this crucial time. Mr. Johnson's remarks made during his Sunday Press Conference in Texas, if he was referring to me, are the possible result of a misunderstanding which I trust the White House will correct.

I refuse to be baited into a verbal donneybrook with the Commander-in-Chief that would play into the hands of Hanoi, Peiping and Moscow.

I support the President's firmness against Communist aggression in Viet Nam. Regrettably, the principle opposition to the President's military decisions come from Democrats in the Congress, particularly in the Senate.

The Nation faces a critical future. The President has the responsibility of making additional important military decisions. For the national interest and our security, I urge that we get on with the awesome tasks ahead without further delay and without splitting the Nation's unity.

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF THE MINORITY LEADER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 5, 1965

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

The enclosed unsolicited letter was received in my office this morning from a mutual friend, Mr. Sam Shaffer. With his approval I am forwarding his letter to you and making it public.

In light of the events of the past week, if you were referring to me, I must respectfully request a conference with you to determine on what basis you were erroneously informed as to my views.

Warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

(s) Gerald R. Ford

Gerald R. Ford. M.C.

GRF:fl

Enclosure



Golden Winds Cottage
Newfound Lake
Bristol,
New Hampshire
August 3, 1965

Rep. Gerald Ford
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C.

Dear Gerry:

I have learned belatedly, here in the distant reaches of New Hampshire, of the President's wholly unfair criticism -- presumably of you -- of an alleged violation of confidence concerning the alleged contents and influence of Sen. Mansfield's statement, read at the White House briefing on Vietnam.

I was one of your guests at the background luncheon. It was I who asked you about the Mansfield statement. I said I had learned that Sen. Mansfield had read a two-page statement critical of Vietnam at the White House meeting and asked you for details. Your only comment, as I recall it, was that the statement seemed to you to be longer than two pages. Beyond this statement and your remark that you noticed Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge sitting silently nearby, you vouchsafed no details of the Mansfield statement.

You said nothing -- I repeat nothing -- to the effect that Sen. Mansfield argued against calling up the reserves or that this had any influence on the President's decision.

I was struck at the luncheon by your great sense of national responsibility when you told us that though you had been advocating a different course in Vietnam from the President's, you were going to support our Commander-in-Chief in the decisions he had made.

The President has been ill-informed -- perhaps by inaccurate or tendentious reporting by some newsmen. Please feel free to make this letter public or to send a copy to the President.

Sincerely,

(s) Sam

Samuel Shaffer

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STATEMENT BY
REP. GERALD R. FORD--August 6, 1965

I am surprised to read some published interpretations of statements which I made recently in Los Angeles relating to the respective responsibilities of Congress and the Executive branch in connection with the conflict in Viet Nam. The statements were prompted particularly by the President's announcement of last week, ".....this is really war."

My statements reflect the concern that the President may be exceeding his constitutional powers and that the Congress may not be exercising its responsibilities.

What I said in Los Angeles I have said many times before--

- that the President should present a frank statement on the situation in Viet Nam to the Congress in a State of the Emergency message
- that the President should ask the Congress for an appropriate action in support of his present policy
- that the Congress should debate fully the course of action which the President is taking and indicate its sentiments

The appropriate Congressional action might be a declaration of national emergency. It might be a declaration of war if the President's policy is in fact war. Since Congress under the Constitution has sole authority to declare war, the President must seek Congressional authorization for a policy of this type.

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File Copy only

Statement by
Rep. Gerald R. Ford
August 10, 1965

Re: White House briefing

It was a routine and helpful briefing for members of the House. The President asked for no commitments and none were given.

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Statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, House Republican Leader

August 19, 1965

I have just read with indignation and resentment a published statement by the White House press secretary alleging that former President Eisenhower is being "used" by someone as a puppet for political purposes.

General Eisenhower and the Nation are entitled to an immediate apology from the White House for this irresponsible insinuation.

National unity is not strengthened by disparaging a beloved and distinguished statesman, General Eisenhower.

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