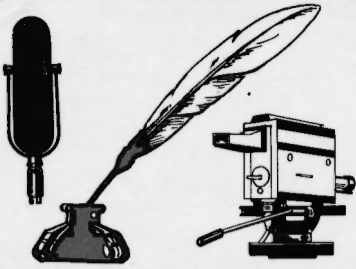


**The original documents are located in Box D34, folder “Rotary Club, Grandville, MI, October 30, 1972” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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CONGRESSMAN  
**GERALD R. FORD**  
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**NEWS  
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE AT 12 NOON MONDAY, OCT. 30, 1972

Remarks by Rep. Gerald R. Ford before the Grandville Rotary Club

The Vietnam peace agreement which is near at hand is based on a proposal made last May 8 by President Nixon, plus an adaptation of the proposal the President offered the North Vietnamese last Jan. 25.

The agreement to agree on peace terms became possible because of a breakthrough which occurred Oct. 8 at Paris. On that date the North Vietnamese for the first time made a proposal which made possible a speedup in the negotiations. In fact, that proposal marked the first time the North Vietnamese had agreed to negotiate on a concrete basis.

What happened was that the North Vietnamese agreed to concentrate on bringing the fighting to an end and also agreed to some general principles for determining the political evolution of South Vietnam. They thus came around to a position the United States had always taken in the negotiations.

What were the specifics of the breakthrough? The North Vietnamese dropped their demand for a coalition government and they dropped their demand that the present Saigon government be scuttled before the political evolution could proceed.

There are those who maintain we could have obtained the same peace terms four years ago. This is sheer fantasy. Those who utter such statements apparently are forgetting that all negotiators Averell Harriman and Cyrus Vance were able to get agreement on in 1968 was the shape of the Paris bargaining table. They are forgetting that the North Vietnamese up to this point have been completely intransigent. What they probably have in mind is that we could have obtained peace through surrender four years ago -- the kind of peace they have been advocating right along.

By contrast with capitulation, what are the peace terms President Nixon has succeeded in negotiating? They call for a ceasefire in place, with a total prohibition against the reinforcement of North Vietnamese troops; a withdrawal of U. S. forces within 60 days of the signing of an agreement; a return of all U. S. prisoners within 60 days after the agreement comes into force; free and democratic elections in South Vietnam under international supervision, with the two sides in Vietnam negotiating the timing of the elections, the nature of the elections, and the offices for which the elections would be held; and the creation of an institution called the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord which would promote the maintenance of the ceasefire and would supervise the elections.

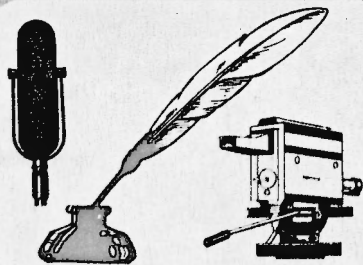
Let me note that the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord somewhat resembles the election commission the United States proposed on Jan. 25.

The proposed peace agreement provides that the disposition of Vietnamese armed forces in the South would be settled through negotiations between the two sides. It also provides for the future unification of Vietnam by negotiations between the two parties, without military pressure or foreign interference and without annexation of territory.

The agreement further provides that foreign countries would withdraw their forces from Laos and Cambodia and that the independence and sovereignty of those two countries would be respected in future.

I think these are the best possible terms we can negotiate, and nothing should be allowed to block a peace settlement on those terms. As negotiator Henry Kissinger has said, peace in Vietnam is within reach "in a matter of weeks or less." We should move toward that goal with all prudent speed.

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