



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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May 10, 1973

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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Mr. Paul E. Healy, City Clerk
City of Cambridge
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

President Nixon has asked me to reply to your letter enclosing a resolution adopted by the City Council of Cambridge, Massachusetts concerning an offer by the US Government to assist in the reconstruction of North Viet-Nam. We sincerely appreciate knowing the views of these Americans on this matter.

Since reconstruction aid was first offered by President Johnson in 1965 it has been the consistent position of the United States that, following a negotiated peace in Indochina, we would be prepared to assist all four countries of the area, including North Viet-Nam, in their reconstruction efforts. During the course of the private discussions with North Viet-Nam, the United States indicated its readiness to undertake a voluntary reconstruction program for all of Indochina. The President reiterated this offer in his foreign policy report to the Congress in February 1972, and the concept of US participation in post-war rehabilitation was maintained in the subsequent private negotiations with North Viet-Nam, which led to the Peace Agreement of January 27, 1973. Such aid, however, stems from, and can only be consistent with the Agreement. We have left no doubt in the minds of the North Vietnamese that no such assistance will be forthcoming unless they observe fully the terms of the Peace Agreement. In his May 1 message to the Congress concerning foreign aid, President Nixon did not include a request for any assistance to North Viet-Nam. However, the President expressed his belief that if and when all parties adhere fully to the Paris Agreements, American assistance for reconstruction and development of both South and North Viet-Nam would represent a sound investment in confirming the peace. He said, "Once Hanoi abandons its military efforts and the assessment (of economic conditions there) is complete, the question of aid for North Viet-Nam will receive my personal review and will be a subject for Congressional approval."

In Article 21 of the Agreement, both sides express their conviction that these accords will usher in a new period of reconciliation and the United States indicates that it will contribute to healing the wounds of war and to post-war reconstruction of North Viet-Nam and throughout Indochina. During Dr. Kissinger's visit to Hanoi in February, the two sides agreed on the formation of a Joint Economic Commission, charged with the task of developing economic relations between North Viet-Nam and the United States. This Commission has been meeting in Paris. The total cost of such a post-war aid program, the amount of the US contribution and the mechanism for providing this assistance have yet to be determined. We expect to discuss

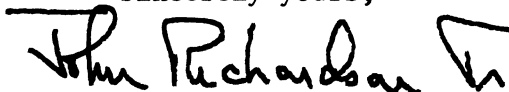
these issues in the near future with all potential recipients and donors. It is our hope and expectation that many other countries and institutions will also contribute to this rehabilitation effort. The Administration has, of course, made no commitments in this regard. Moreover, whatever we propose to do by way of assistance to Indochina, we will do in full consultation with Congress.

We believe that our position with regard to post-war aid was a factor in North Viet-Nam's decision to undertake serious negotiations to end the war. Now that the Peace Agreement has been concluded, the prospect of receiving such assistance should encourage all the countries of Indochina, including North Viet-Nam, to strive to preserve the peace. The leaders of North Viet-Nam have spent almost all of their lives either in prison or conducting guerrilla or international wars. At no time have they had an opportunity to participate in a normal diplomatic relationship or to concentrate on the peaceful evolution of their country and their region. Now they have indicated some interest in at least exploring the possibility of a more constructive relationship with the United States. Therefore, we consider a reconstruction program, not as aid to the enemy, but rather as an attempt to enable the leaders of North Viet-Nam to work together with other countries in a more constructive relationship, and to provide in this manner an incentive toward a more peaceful evolution. Opposition also ran high to our proposal to provide aid for our former enemies, Germany and Japan, but our hope then, as now, was to turn the energies of those people toward peaceful pursuits. Alternatively, if the North Vietnamese, after 25 years of war, continue to believe that their future will only be meaningful if they engage in continuing war, then we will continue to have war in that part of the world.

As President Nixon has pointed out, while the costs of such a rebuilding program will be considerable, they are but a small fraction of the costs of war. Moreover, whatever assistance we may ultimately give will be covered by the existing budgetary levels we have proposed for national security purposes. The money will not be taken from funds intended for domestic programs.

In essence then, we are attempting to give North Viet-Nam a stake in peace. We believe the idea of such a program deserves support, not on economic grounds, and not primarily on humanitarian grounds, but on the grounds of attempting to build peace in Indochina and therefore to contribute to peace in the world. If such a generous policy can help us persuade North Viet-Nam not to renew aggression against its neighbors but to seek instead to better the lives of its own people, we believe the citizens of our own country will have been well served by it.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Richardson Jr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J" and a trailing flourish.

John Richardson, Jr.
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Public Affairs

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Comm. from the City Clerk transmitting
a letter from John Ricardson, Jr., Acting
Asst. Secretary for Public Affairs of the
Dept. of State outlining the views of the
Administration on the expenditure of funds
for the reconstruction of North Vietnam

5/21/73 Placed on File

Filed

In City Council,
May 21, 1973

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