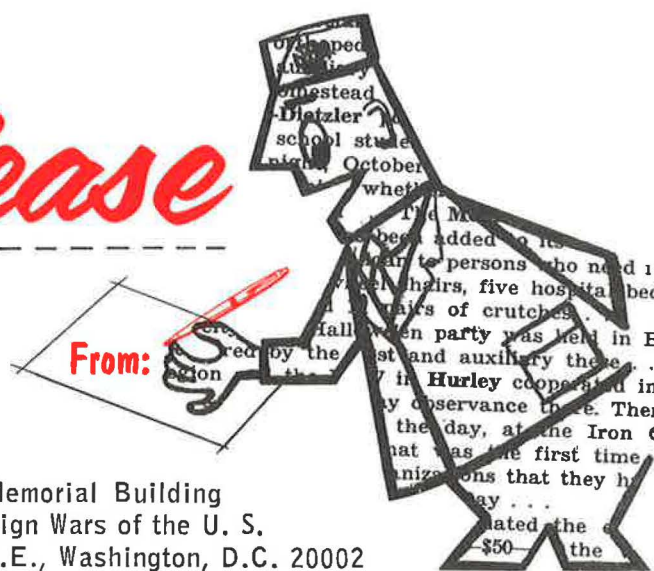




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# NEWS Release



**FOR RELEASE:**

Washington Memorial Building  
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U. S.  
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

STATEMENT BY PATRICK E. CARR

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES  
BEFORE THE  
PLATFORM COMMITTEE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

AUGUST 14, 1972

Fontainbleu Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Patrick E. Carr; and, for the past year, I've served as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. According to our procedures, I shall be named as the next V.F.W. Commander-in-Chief at our convention which is scheduled for the end of this month. Today, it is my honor to represent and to speak for Joseph L. Vicites, of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, who is our current Commander-in-Chief and my boss within the organization. Commander Vicites is meeting a long-standing V.F.W. obligation and has asked me to represent him here today before you. I'm pleased to be able to do so.

A brief word on the organization I'm honored to represent.

For each of the past 20 years, V.F.W. membership has shown a heartening increase. Today our 73-year old "Society of Patriots" has more than 1.7 million members, of whom in excess of 450,000 are Vietnam-era veterans. Considering both our Ladies' Auxiliary and the immediate families of our members, I would estimate the total "V.F.W. Community" in the United States as being well over five million patriotic Americans.

The V.F.W. has earned a reputation for calling our shots as we see them -- "telling it like it is" -- and I intend to do exactly that today.

My remarks will be brief. I will offer some general observations about the state and the trend of our beloved country's national security as we see it, then some recommended positions for your consideration on specific problem areas, and, finally, a few concluding thoughts.

To begin with, and counter to what some people would have you believe, our members hate war with the special sense of people who have been "there". To those who have fought in our country's wars, there are no such things as "good wars" or "bad wars". Apart from the American Revolution, all our wars have brought far more pain and suffering than enduring good. We do not, however, permit our strong preference for peace to blind us to the very real nature of the world in which we must all live.

Peace cannot be merely hoped for -- or demonstrated for. It will come only when the major Communist powers and their disciples understand they will inevitably lose if they seek to coerce America and those allied with us.

In short, we are unapologetically for our beloved country and we urge you ladies and gentlemen to assure that the most prosperous nation in the history of the world remains the most militarily powerful. There is no prize for second place, and we have the most to lose.

Now, for our views on some specific issues.

We support, without any "ifs", "ands", or "buts", the strong initiative for peace in Southeast Asia set forth by President Nixon in his May 8 policy statement. If the enemy wants to negotiate, a generous American position is there. If he prefers to talk and fight, the price of such a cynical tactic has been raised. The May 8 guidelines on mining harbors and aerial interdiction should have been put into effect years ago. In fact, the V.F.W. so recommended in 1965. "No-win" wars compound the horrors of warfare with the certainty that these same horrors will last for an unnecessarily long period of time. But to return to our central point, the President's policy for peace in Southeast Asia deserves the 100-percent support of every American. It has ours.

Related to the wide problem of our policy towards Southeast Asia is the fate of more than 1,750 Americans captured or "missing" in Southeast Asia -- most from four to eight years. Let there be no wavering here. We must:

- never complete the withdrawal of all our forces from Southeast Asia until we get back all those prisoners who are still alive and receive an impartial accounting of those carried as "missing".
- call for an impartial and open inspection of POW facilities by the International Red Cross;
- insist by all open and private channels that sick and wounded prisoners be released now; and,
- demand an impartial verification of the names of all prisoners of war without further delay.

The fate of our prisoners and missing in action is at the top end of our concerns, and the future of those who fled the country to avoid military service is at the bottom. Ladies and gentlemen, I will be brief here. We are unalterably opposed to any form of general "amnesty" -- period.

In my opinion, no citizen of this country should even discuss "amnesty" before the end of the war in Vietnam and the release of every American now held by the enemy. Not too long ago, often with the accompanying applause of a portion of the media, these young whiners informed us that in fleeing America, they were making an informed and mature choice -- I recall being told of something called "premature morality". OK, they made that "informed and mature" choice. Now let those who desire to crawl back here make another "mature" choice; i.e., accept without a whimper or a complaint the full legal consequences of having broken the law of the land. Once again, ladies and gentlemen,

with all the conviction I can bring to bear, don't paint yourselves into a corner on this issue. Those who boastfully broke our laws and let others do their fighting and dying have placed themselves beyond the pale. I'm confident that military deserters will individually receive a full and fair hearing under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. I can see no need for this problem to be addressed by your Committee.

As our concern is very high on the questions of our POWs and "amnesty", I will be especially brief with the remaining specific issues.

As for the U.S. troop commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, our forces should not be unilaterally pulled back across the Atlantic frontier. Any U. S. reduction in strength on the Continent can and should be matched by a comparable Soviet pull back from Eastern Europe. Without military power in place, we can never negotiate with the Soviet Union -- only acquiesce. Surely our entry into World Wars I and II taught us this much.

As you know, the V.F.W. is at the fore-front of organizations in this country which have a long and resolute history of anti-communism. We are not anti-Russian or anti-Chinese. We are, and will always be, anti-communist. But as I said at the beginning of my remarks, we hate war with the special feeling of those who have been "there". It is in this spirit that we support the dramatic initiatives for peace undertaken by President Nixon when he travelled to Peking and to Moscow. We were impressed both by the careful preparation that preceded these journeys and the tough negotiating that took place -- particularly in Moscow. There are, we recognize, risks in both the ABM treaty and the interim agreement on offensive weapons. Clearly, we must arm to the

agreed limits and keep our guard high. If the Soviets either cheat or they attempt political coercion, we should withdraw from the agreement and re-arm rapidly and massively. For the moment, however, we will continue to monitor Soviet compliance with the accords; and, to the extent Soviet compliance permits, we will continue our support of the President's initiatives for peace.

As to Cuba, quarantine and isolation are fine remedies for the meglomaniac who stands astride that unhappy island. Any effort here to seek an accommodation with Castro would distress the great majority of our friends in the Organization of American States and strengthen the forces of subversion in Latin America. We see no reason or advantage in strengthening Castro's hand and recommend that your Committee not support any form of recognition of this petty tyrant.

With respect to U. S. use, occupation, and control of the Panama Canal, we see no need to cave in to the revolutionary Government of Panama on this issue. I urge your Committee to develop a platform plank which would:

- assure that U. S. control and defense of the Canal Zone remain non-negotiable;
- resolve current difficulties relating to the administration of the Canal Zone without disturbing existing treaty arrangements;  
and,
- continue to have U. S. citizens and employees of the Canal Zone meet their responsibilities under U. S. sovereignty.

As a last specific platform recommendation, I urge your Committee to assure that, even in a "zero draft" environment the Selective Service mechanism be kept in a high state of readiness. Frankly, none of us know whether all-volunteer armed forces are going to do the job or not.

Only the passing of time will tell. In any event, the Selective Service mechanism should not be permitted to disappear from the national scene. If it should be needed again, we probably would not have the time to start from scratch.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for inviting me to present to your Committee the views of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. As a politically non-partisan "Society of Patriots", we will follow the ensuing national election with interest and will, as free-born Americans, vote according to our individual consciences and convictions.

Once again in 1972, as during the nearly 200 years of our history, national elections will serve to remind us all of our beloved country's hard-won heritage and precious political liberty.

Thank you.