



... a call to excellence in leadership

The Ripon Society

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STATEMENT OF THE RIPON SOCIETY before

Committee on Resolution of the Republican National Committee
presented by
HOWARD GILLETTE, JR., NATIONAL PRESIDENT
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American foreign policy under the Nixon Administration has taken new life and in the process provided new hope for the President's great goal of "a generation of peace."

This new vision for the 1970's, as summarized in the latest "State of the World" message, prescribes for the United States "a more balanced alliance with four friends and a more creative connection with our adversaries."

Proclaiming the end of postwar bipolarity, the 1972 message cites the Administration's efforts to redirect America's role in helping shape a new world order based on: (1) a greater responsibility for America's allies (Japan and West Europe); (2) a more determined effort to create through negotiation a sense of self-restraint and dedication to stability on the part of ourselves and our adversaries; and (3) a greater tolerance of the differing aspirations and national interests of third-world powers.

In the emerging multi-polar world of the 1970's and 1980's, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. will continue to play a leading role in their respective alliances and will be in political competition in many areas, but the breakup of the Sino-Soviet bloc and the greater "burden-sharing" in the Western alliance will entail greater responsibility for other major powers than in the past. The U.S.-Soviet duopoly is being replaced by a more complex, many-sided relationship involving, most prominently, Peking, Tokyo, New Delhi, Bonn, Paris and London.

In some of its essentials (though by no means all) the envisioned new world order, based on global strategic parity and regional balances, resembles the 19th-century Concert of Europe, in that it assumes a

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willingness on the part of each member of the expanded great-power club to set limits on its own behavior aimed at : (1) avoiding unilateral "policing" actions; (2) jointly discouraging efforts by regional powers to upset balances by means of force or subversion, and (3) sponsoring more realistic channels for the achievement of peaceful change by accomodation. The basic premise is that new balances based on behavioral norms of moderation can be shaped in regions formerly torn by instability and uncertainty only if the two global powers exercise a "broad and mutual self-restraint," refraining from the temptation of taking advantage of detente for the sake of gaining an advantage over the other. The envisioned new order (the by-words of which are "restraint, prudence, tolerance and moderation" and the attendant promise of which is a "generation of peace") thus clearly assumes a kind of self-abnegation of crusading spirit on the part of both Washington and Moscow which will not be easy to achieve. For the United States, the Administration has decreed that henceforth our interests will shape our commitments, rather than our commitments dictating our interests.

The achievement of a unified foreign policy strategy is in itself no mean achievement and one that differs admirably from past ad hoc approaches to foreign issues. We find tremendous promise in this approach particularly in four major areas of agreement between the Ripon Society and the Administration in foreign policy:

(1) transformation of the American role in Europe "from dominance to partnership", a role dramatized in efforts to coordinate allied positions concerning such issues as Berlin, the future of Germany, the proposed European Security Conference, and the related issue of mutual force reductions.

(2) "a more creative connection with our adversaries," in Eastern Europe, in Moscow and most particularly in the People's Republic of China.

(3) Increased reliance on the distribution of foreign aid through multi-national agencies. Here the President is well ahead of the Congress in urging funding through such vehicles as the World Bank.

(4) Limitations of the arms race, most prominently through the SALT agreements and ABM Treaty, but also hopefully through the imminent beginning of the mutual balance force reductions talks as well.

Because the Ripon Society finds so much of the Nixon policy commendable it is with particular anguish that we turn to the

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Administration's apparently open-ended commitment to prosecute the Vietnam war. In our view this policy is the one rotten apple in the barrel, to borrow a metaphor from the Vice President, which threatens to spoil the President's other accomplishments.

Republicans rightfully point to the reduction of American forces in Vietnam by half a million men and the consequent reduction of American casualties as a great step forward.

But we fool only ourselves if we think this war is not now a Republican responsibility or that the American electorate will expect anything less this year than the fulfillment of our candidate's pledge in 1968 to "end the war and win the peace."

A few facts should be sobering to Republicans. According to latest Pentagon figures 53% of all the bombs and explosives that have devastated Indochina have been let loose during the Nixon presidency. 47% of all the soldiers who have died in this war have met that fate since Mr. Nixon took office. 50% of all the U.S. dollars spent in Vietnam have gone into a strategy, initiated by the President, that purports to shift the burden of the war to our Asian allies.

As of July 1, 65 new P.O.W.s had been identified since Mr. Nixon assumed office and another 462 men were reported missing in action. In 1970 the total number of P.O.W.s was 12 and missing in action 86. In the first six months of this year alone, however, 12 men were listed as P.O.W.s and another 121 as missing in action -- clearly a cruel reminder of the costs of "winding down the war."

The Ripon Society has published frequent criticisms of the Johnson-Nixon war strategy, starting with our 1968 book, The Realities of Vietnam. It is not my purpose to repeat those criticisms here or to deprecate any secret efforts to negotiate a settlement. Still, the fact is that the war is very much an issue which this convention must deal with.

Clearly Republicans gathered here cannot compete with the Administration's negotiating team. But we can build on our 1968 platform pledge "to urgently dedicate our efforts towards restoration of peace at home and abroad" by outlining goals for ending the war in this election year.

We ought to encourage American flexibility at the bargaining table, especially on the issue of cease-fire, which has proved a major stumbling block for peace in the past. We should not equate our dedication to self-determination in South Vietnam with uncritical

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support of any single ruling clique in Saigon. We ought to seek an end to all bombing, deactivation of the mines and withdrawal of American forces by election day.

Most particularly, if we are to succeed as the party which ended the war, we ought to dedicate ourselves to healing the wounds left by the longest and most divisive conflict in American history. We should commit ourselves now to aid the millions of civilian casualties on both sides and to restore the land from the terrible ecological effects of war. We should provide at a minimum for assuring the financial security of children whose fathers have been killed in Indochina and an augmentation of veteran's benefits (especially with regard to medical care, job training and educational stipends). We should grant amnesty to the thousands of young people who refused, by conscience, to participate in the Vietnam conflict, a proposal which is detailed in the current Convention Issue of the Ripon Forum.

This is a time, as I said, of great promise in American foreign policy. Let us not only pray for an end of the Vietnam war so that we can pursue the more noble objective of this Administration. Let us all work actively to make 1972 the year the Republican party truly achieved peace.