

Toward Peace With Honor

**We do not ask either
unilateral withdrawal
or surrender.**

The issue is simple.

1. Do we intend to go to the American people offering them only more of the same—four more years like the last three.

That is a virtual guarantee of political defeat.

2. Or will we offer a sound and moderate program of change—one that is designed to move toward peace with honor—one that has been endorsed by leading Democrats for years and by many of our most brilliant military leaders.

We have always won because we were the party of change and progress. It is not any candidate—but that heritage which is at stake in this vote.

The Vietnam Platform Debate -- What is it about?

Those who have asked for a change in our Vietnam policy have sometimes been called unpatriotic or weak. Some of the same kind of undignified slander has been used in some of the material distributed at this Convention. Yet the views of the minority report are close to those of General Ridgway, our Commander in Korea; General Shoup who was President Kennedy's Marine Corps Commandant and who holds the Congressional Medal of Honor; General Gavin and of many distinguished members of the Democratic Party including the late Robert Kennedy and William Fulbright. These men are not "soft" on communism. They are not fearful, nor would they wish to sacrifice unnecessarily the lives of American soldiers. They simply think our policy in Vietnam must be changed. That we must move toward peace. After all, it was General MacArthur who said that the United States must never get involved in a land war in Asia. And it was President Eisenhower, in 1954, who refused to intervene when part of Vietnam fell to the communists.

So anyone who slanders this proposal must slander these men.

The minority proposal is for an honorable peace. It is not for unilateral withdrawal or surrender.

The minority proposal was put together by thirty-five members of the platform committee. It does not represent the views of any single man. It is a compromise among many ideas. It contains some of the ideas of the late Robert Kennedy and of William Fulbright. It is drawn from the testimony of Senator McGovern before the platform committee and from the proposals of Senator McCarthy. It has taken from the recent speech of Senator Edward Kennedy. In fact the first paragraph was taken almost directly from that speech. It is, therefore, a moderate proposal and a sound proposal for peace. It contains no direct

criticism of the Administration and refuses to make judgments about the past. It only looks to the future.

The majority position, on the other hand, was drawn up without any consultation or any effort to compromise. It was given to the committee late on the last day without any discussion. It is purely a restatement of our present policy and there has been no compromise whatsoever with those who seek a different policy.

What are the differences:

1. The Minority Plank—It begins by halting the bombing of North Vietnam. This does not keep us from using bombs to support our troops in the South or bombing the infiltration trails in Laos. **This bombing of the North does not protect American lives.** Secretary MacNamara himself said so in his Senate testimony and almost every military expert not involved—like General Ridgway—agrees. **It is absolutely clear—and has been for two years—that we cannot negotiate peace unless we halt the bombing. If it does not save our lives—and if a bombing halt might bring peace—then we should be big enough as a nation to give it a try.** That has been the position of almost everyone named above. The only alternative is to give up the hope of a negotiated peace and keep up the war indefinitely.

The rest of the platform plank is relatively simple. It says we should agree with the North Vietnamese that we will withdraw our forces and they will withdraw theirs. It will then be up to the South Vietnamese to settle their own affairs— hopefully through a peaceful political reconciliation and, if not they will have to solve it themselves in other ways.

In order to lower casualties, we also propose to de-escalate some of our offensive operations in the countryside—which have had very little effect—so that we might be able to withdraw some of our troops.

That is it. A simple, straightforward, moderate proposal designed to bring peace with honor.

2. The Majority plank. This plan is drastically different. It is simply a restatement of our present policy.

It says the bombing can only halt when Hanoi does something also. This is exactly the position that is holding up the Paris peace talks.

After all, the North Vietnamese feel we are bombing their country and they are not bombing ours. We already stopped the bombing twice unilaterally for long periods—without asking for anything but negotiations, in order to keep it stopped. Now when we can get negotiations we ask for more. **It is clear there can be no peace unless we halt the bombing.** The world's greatest power can afford such a gesture.

As for the rest of the majority position, it contains none of the combined position of those urging a different course. **There is no de-escalation at all. There is no cutting back of troop levels. There is no commitment that we will not continue to escalate. There is no desire that the government in Saigon and the National Liberation Front get together. There is no mutual withdrawal of foreign forces** although there is a cleverly worded proposal—which sounds like this—which really calls for an enemy surrender.

The choices before the Convention are clear.

1. We are asked to go before the American people--as candidates at every level--offering them four more years of the same policies they have had for the past few years. We all know what that has meant in terms of deepening divisions and a growing drain on the money we badly need for our own problems.

We are not for America first. But we can no longer be for America last.

2. We are asked to accept a position which has already proved to be politically disastrous and **disruptive** of our own goals.

The American people will not vote for such a policy.

3. **On the other hand, we have a moderate platform. It combines the views of men who have proven they can win elections. It offers us a chance for peace. It means we can go before the American people as the party of change and progress -- as we always have.**

This is not an issue which involves candidates. No candidate has endorsed the majority position -- and issues of war and peace are broader than that. The issue is not only the war. It may well be the survival of our party.

If you favor the Vice-President, remember: He has never endorsed the majority plank. Moreover, if he is nominated, he would run a stronger race on a platform which called for a change toward peace in Vietnam.