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### Report to the People Vol. 14 No. 6

Florence P. Dwyer

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CONGRESSWOMAN DWYER'S

# REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

OF THE UNION-ESSEX SUBURBS

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## A "THIRD WAY" TO END THE WAR

For me, the experience of these four or so weeks since U. S. troops moved into Cambodia -- the sudden and startling (but completely understandable) way this event gripped our minds and emotions, the more than 2,000 letters and telegrams which constituents were moved to send me, the nearly 1,000 more constituents who felt the compulsion to come to Washington for lengthy discussions with me and my staff -- has served above all to confirm three fundamental truths:

First, that almost all Americans want to end the war in Indochina and withdraw American forces as soon as possible;

Second, that we are sharply and often bitterly divided about the means we believe most desirable for accomplishing these objectives -- with the division generally polarized around two main strategies: (a) unilateral U. S. withdrawal as of a fixed date sometime in 1971, and (b) President Nixon's policy of gradual withdrawal over a time span long enough to Vietnamize the war; and

Third, and most important, that a third alternative, a "third way" -- acceptable to both groups -- must be found in order not only to end the war but to end it in a way that will restore national unity here at home.

### A FIVE-POINT TEST

In order to be acceptable, this "third way" of ending the war must, I suggest, meet these tests: (a) lead to the earliest possible halt to the killing and destruction, (b) protect the safety of American forces and assure their early withdrawal, (c) assure the simultaneous withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces, thus precluding any appearance of American "sell-out" or "surrender," (d) provide a realistic chance for a political instead of military solution to the war through resumption of meaningful negotiations in Paris, and (e) offer a maximum opportunity for the Vietnamese people themselves to determine their own fate.

Few Americans, despite our present differences on the war, would dispute these objectives, I suspect. Just as surely, however, neither immediate withdrawal nor gradual withdrawal-plus-Vietnamization could be expected to achieve more than two or three of the five objectives at most. This is especially true of the first, for either immediate or gradual withdrawal would undoubtedly perpetuate the fighting and the killing -- though ultimately, at least, without direct U. S. participation.

I recognize that we may finally have no other option but withdrawal of some kind, but with national unity and the ending of a horrible war at stake, I believe we have both a moral and practical obligation to seek the best possible solution so long as it may be open to us, a solution that meets all the tests I have suggested.

### THE "THIRD WAY": CEASEFIRE

Ceasefire is the way -- the "third way" -- a ceasefire that is mutually binding and enforceable.

But to be effective -- to have a chance to lead to a peaceful settlement of the war on the five-point basis I've proposed -- the ceasefire must be credible. And to be credible it must be more than talk, or a gesture, or a "you go first" proposal, or an ultimatum. We, the United States, must take the initiative and we must do so in a way that will convince the communists, the rest of the world, and especially ourselves that we really mean it.

For about four years now, as many of you know, I have been proposing such a ceasefire initiative -- a series of initiatives, if necessary -- in newsletters, speeches, statements, and in letters and personal conversations with Presidents Johnson and Nixon, their chief advisors, and my Congressional colleagues. But never before have the timing and the circumstances -- and the need -- seemed so immediate and right and hopeful.



Briefly, the "scenario" for my plan goes this way. As soon as feasible -- the completion of our withdrawal from Cambodia would seem particularly appropriate -- the President would publicly announce that as of a date and time certain all aggressive action by U. S. forces (air, land and sea) would cease for a limited period of time (two or three days, perhaps) long enough to allow the North Vietnamese and Vietcong to join in the ceasefire either tacitly or officially.

#### THE KEY: REPEATED INITIATIVES

If they did so, a UN or other ad hoc international truce supervision force would be ordered into South Vietnam to monitor the ceasefire and the withdrawal of all foreign forces -- a move which, in turn, would undoubtedly stimulate effective negotiations. If the communists refused to accept or abide by the ceasefire, we would, of course, reserve the right to defend ourselves against attack. But at the same time, the President would announce that the U. S. would repeat the ceasefire initiative in two weeks time. If that, too, failed, it would be repeated a third and fourth time -- until the communists were convinced the U. S. was serious about ending the war.

The combination of a U. S. initiative and the declared intention to repeat that initiative would, I believe, make the difference between ceasefire proposals which have been mere gestures and the real thing.

If one accepts the premise, as I do -- because I believe it inescapable after all these years -- that there is no ideal or certain solution to the war, that whatever we do may not be adequate or lasting or completely satisfactory, then the wisdom of trying for a ceasefire becomes compelling, for these, among other, reasons:

(1) we would know whether it would work, or could work, in a relatively short time -- a matter of weeks;

(2) if it did work, we would have an improved chance to win objectives in Southeast Asia we all want;

(3) if it didn't work, all our other options would still be open and, more importantly, we would be considerably more unified as a result of the experience of making an open, demonstrably genuine, and wholehearted effort to end the war.

#### NOTHING TO LOSE, MUCH TO GAIN

In other words, we have little or nothing to lose and potentially a great deal to gain by trying this ceasefire idea or something like it.

Honoring Speaker McCormack -- For those who have wondered about the degree of national unity left in Washington, this past week offered a healthy object lesson. In honor of soon-to- retire House Speaker John W. McCormack, President Nixon hosted a luncheon at the White House to which he invited just 100 guests, including House and Senate committee chairmen and ranking minority members, the Chief Justice, present and past Cabinet officers. Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, "hawks" and "doves," all put aside their differences in tribute to a man who, however much they may have differed with him, represented love of country and devotion to public service. As one of only three women present, it was to me one of the most moving experiences of my years in Washington and refreshing evidence of the fact that there is still much more that unites Americans than divides us.

Landmark Social Security Bill -- It has taken years of trying but the House last week finally approved a social security bill which provides for future benefit increases to be made automatically when the cost-of-living increases (a proposal I have long advocated), thereby relieving the retired, disabled and dependent from painful delays when inflation eats away at their limited incomes. In addition, the bill raises benefits five percent beginning next January, increases the amount beneficiaries can earn without losing benefits, improves the medicare and medicaid programs, and removes inequities which have penalized widows and women workers.

Ethics and the SST -- Last week, too, the House tightened its loophole-filled code of ethics by requiring the reporting of all honorariums in excess of \$300 and of all loans and indebtedness of \$10,000 or more which were outstanding for 90 days or longer without the pledge of specific collateral. Unfortunately, however, the House missed by a narrow margin the opportunity to block the Super Sonic Transport (SST), project I believe is unneeded, excessively expensive, and dangerous in terms of noise, climate and environment. I voted against the SST.