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LETTER DATED 31 JANUARY 1966 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to request that an urgent meeting of the Security Council be called promptly to consider the situation in Viet-Nam.

As you know, the United States Government has, time and time again, patiently and tirelessly sought a peaceful settlement of this conflict on the basis of unconditional negotiations and the Geneva Accords of 1954. We have done so both inside and outside the United Nations.

In President Johnson's letter of 28 July 1965, to the Secretary-General, in my letter of 30 July 1965 to the President of the Security Council, and in my letter of 4 January 1966 to the Secretary-General, we appealed for whatever help in ending the conflict the Security Council and its members or any other organ of the United Nations might be able to give. We have also been in constant touch with the Secretary-General in order to keep him fully informed and to seek his counsel and assistance. A great number of United Nations Members, acting jointly or separately, have with our earnest encouragement sought to find a means of moving the conflict from the battlefield to the conference table.

As you are also aware, because my Government was advised by many others that a pause in the bombing of North Viet-Nam might contribute to the acceptance by its Government of our offer of unconditional negotiations, we did suspend bombing on 24 December and continued that suspension for some thirty-seven days. At the same time, President Johnson dispatched several high-ranking representatives to explain to His Holiness The Pope and to the Chiefs of State or Heads of Government of a number of States our most earnest desire to end the conflict peacefully and promptly. Our views were set forth in fourteen points which were communicated to a very large number of Governments and later published and which were summarized in the third paragraph of my letter of 4 January 1966 to the Secretary-General.

I should like to repeat that summary to you as follows:

"That the United States is prepared for discussions or negotiations without any prior conditions whatsoever or on the basis of the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962, that a reciprocal reduction of hostilities could be envisaged and that a cease-fire might be the first order of business in any discussions or negotiations, that the United States remains prepared to withdraw its forces from South Viet-Nam as soon as South Viet-Nam is in a position to determine its own future without external interference, that the United States desires no continuing military presence or bases in Viet-Nam, that the future political structure in South Viet-Nam should be determined by the South Viet-Namese people themselves through democratic processes, and that the question of the reunification of the two Viet-Nams should be decided by the free decision of their two peoples."

Subsequently, the President in his State of the Union Address on 12 January reiterated once again our willingness to consider at a conference or in other negotiations any proposals which might be put forward by others. I am authorized to inform the Council that these United States views were transmitted both directly and indirectly to the Government of North Viet-Nam and were received by that Government.

Unhappily, there has been no affirmative response whatsoever from Hanoi to our efforts to bring the conflict to the negotiating table, to which so many Governments lent their sympathy and assistance. Instead, there have been from Hanoi, and of course from Peking as well, merely the familiar charges that our peace offensive, despite the prolonged bombing pause, was merely a "fraud" and a "swindle" deserving no serious consideration. The most recent response seemed to be that set forth in President Ho Chi Minh's letter to certain Heads of State which was broadcast from Hanoi on 28 January. In this letter President Ho Chi Minh made quite clear his unwillingness at this time to proceed with unconditional negotiations; on the contrary, he insisted on a number of preconditions which would in effect require the United States to accept Hanoi's solution before negotiations had even begun. This is obviously unacceptable.

Therefore, Mr. President, my Government has concluded that it should now bring this problem with all its implications for peace formally before the Security Council. We are mindful of the discussions over the past months among the members of the Council as to whether a formal meeting could usefully be held in the context

of other efforts then in train. We are also aware that it may not be easy for the Council itself, in view of all the obstacles, to take constructive action on this question. We are firmly convinced, however, that in light of its obligations under the Charter to maintain international peace and security and the failure so far of all efforts outside the United Nations to restore peace, the Council should address itself urgently and positively to this situation and exert its most vigorous endeavours and its immense prestige to finding a prompt solution to it.

We hope that the members of the Security Council will agree that our common dedication to peace and our common responsibility for the future of mankind require no less. In this connexion, we are mindful of the renewed appeal of His Holiness The Pope only two days ago in which he suggested that "an arbitration of the United Nations confided to neutral nations might tomorrow - we would like to hope even today - resolve this terrible question".

Accept, etc.

(Signed) Arthur J. GOLDBERG

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