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Many citizens, viewing this complex dual process, are likely to be confused and distressed by what seems like an inconsistency in their leaders' policies. Some complain that the talk of peace suggests a weakening of our resolve and of our will to win. Simultaneously others complain that the continued military effort suggests an attempt to bring the adversary to his knees, to break his will--and thus casts doubt on the sincerity of our will to peace.

The great difficulty of achieving peace should serve to remind us that there are substantial conflicting interests at stake which stubbornly resist solution; that peace cannot be bought at any price, nor can real conflicts of purpose be waved away with a magic wand. By the same token, the ferocity of war should not be an incitement to hatred but rather a stern discipline--a reminder of the imperative duty to define responsibly the limited interests for which our soldiers fight and which a peace settlement must protect.

The effort to make such a responsible definition, and to carry it through the process of peace negotiations, is "piled high with difficulty." A genuine meeting of the minds may never be wholly achieved. It is unlikely that terms of settlement for this stubborn conflict can be found which would be wholly pleasing to either side. But it is in our highest national interest that an acceptable, livable solution should be found.

Let no one suppose that patriotism, which is so inspiringly displayed on the battlefield, is not also present at the negotiating table. All our recent Presidents have testified to our country's dedication to negotiation as a means of peacefully bridging difference.

President Eisenhower said in 1955, on the eve of the first Summit Conference with the Soviet leadership:

We shall work with all others so that peaceful and reasonable negotiations may replace the clash of the battlefield.

President Kennedy, in his Inaugural Address, said:

Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

An President Johnson has summed up the true value of negotiation as follows:

To negotiate is not to admit failure. It is to show good sense. We believe that collective bargaining is working as long as parties stay in negotiation. Only when bargaining breaks off do we speak of failure. And so also in foreign policy. There, too, the rule of law and the resort to the bargaining table are the hallmarks of success.

An to these words the President added specifically:

This rule applies without qualification to Vietnam. We shall count it a mark of success when all the parties to that dispute are around a conference table. We Americans are experienced in bargaining; we have nothing to fear from negotiation. And we Americans know the nature of a fair bargain; none need fear negotiating with us.