

and labor is inimical to the interests of our young men, 500,000 of them, serving in Vietnam?

Mr. IGNATIUS. Certainly, Mr. Brown, I think any parties to a labor dispute, and particularly in an industry as important as this, and at a time such as the present, have an obligation to attempt to seek agreement.

I have been most impressed in past circumstances that have come to my attention with the ability of the parties to compose their differences. I have seen situations——

Mr. BROWN. You are aware, are you not, Mr. Secretary, that the parties haven't met in this instance since the 25th of April?

Mr. IGNATIUS. I checked this morning, before coming to the committee, with the Labor Department and was advised that there has not been any negotiation in the recent past.

Mr. BROWN. Would you consider this lack of willingness to meet on the part of management and on the part of labor as inimical to our foreign interests?

Mr. IGNATIUS. It is just very clear to me that we must have rail transportation, the national system, at the present time.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. Secretary——

Mr. IGNATIUS. I am answering your question. I would like to think that the parties would make every effort and every last effort in order to reach agreement. The issues, I am told, that separate them are not large, and much progress was made.

Mr. BROWN. Now, the answer to the question: Would you consider the failure to meet inimical to our interests in Vietnam, the interests of the 500,000 young men fighting there, in a position that the President has put them in?

Mr. IGNATIUS. I think they should meet; yes, sir.

Mr. BROWN. Let me switch to another level of questions since I don't feel that is a very direct answer to my question, frankly.

Mr. IGNATIUS. I meant it to be.

Mr. BROWN. You meant it to be direct?

Mr. IGNATIUS. I meant it to be direct.

Mr. BROWN. You think it is inimical to the interests of these young men and to our foreign policy that they are not meeting?

Mr. IGNATIUS. I stated before that the circumstances require a solution to the problem, and the best solution would be for the parties to come into agreement.

Therefore, it would seem to me they should make every effort to do so and if they are not meeting, I would think that they ought to give it another effort and see if they can't come into agreement.

Mr. BROWN. You apparently put the Defense Department in a position of saying that we cannot afford a strike. I am trying to determine whether the fact that the parties are not meeting is irresponsible, because apparently if the parties will not meet and the only way to resolve this problem is through seizure or compulsory arbitration, then I presume, from your statement, that it would be irresponsible if the Congress did not take one action or another, or some action, to avoid a strike.

That is the position that the administration has put the Congress in. I would like to put the rail management and the rail unions in the same position. Is that correct?

Mr. IGNATIUS. Yes, I understand that.