V.A Justification of the War (11 Vols.)
Public Statements (2 Vols.)
Volume II: D—The Johnson Administration

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS
1945 - 1967

VIETNAM TASK FORCE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

SET #13

V. A. - Vol II

V. JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR - PUBLIC STATEMENTS

D. Johnson Administration

PART V.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Foreword

This portion of the study consists of an examination of the public statements justifying U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Only official statements contained in either the U.S. Department of State Bulletins or the Public Papers of the Presidents were reviewed. Although conclusions are based primarily on the statements of the President, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, the statements of other high-ranking government officials were also studied in ascertaining the policy context of the quoted material. This report includes analyses of the Johnson period. The statements are organized chronologically and are summarized for each year.

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JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION - 1964

SUMMARY

President Johnson succeeded to the Presidency upon the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963 only three weeks after the coup d'etat which saw the Ngo Dinh Diem regime crushed and Diem himself murdered. Confronted with a crisis, the U.S. renewed its pledge to support the military junta and the free government of Vietnam. The U.S. increased its support even as the GVN wavered through a series of government changes each reflecting the control retained by the military. U.S. involvement deepened with the increased advisory strength and the introduction of combat troops in 1964. The Tonkin Gulf crisis and the subsequent resolution became benchmarks for the U.S. commitment. The new Administration emphasized the following points:

a. Organized aggression from the North obligated the United States to fulfill its commitments under the SEATO treaty.

b. The strategic importance of Southeast Asia to the security of the United States and the test of "wars of liberation" there as important to the future peace and freedom of South Vietnam.

c. The Gulf of Tonkin action showed that "aggression by terror" had been joined by "open aggression on the high seas" against the United States and the resolution which followed justified measures to "repel any armed attack."

d. The communist "appetite for aggression" through "wars of liberation" threatened not only other Asian countries, but also the United States if left unchecked. The U.S. seeks no wider war.

e. Four basic themes govern U.S. policy, essentially unchanged since 1954: America keeps her word; the future of Southeast Asia is the issue; "our purpose is peace; and, this war is a "struggle for freedom."

V. D. JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- PUBLIC STATEMENTS

JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

1964

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D. Johnson Administration

1. Secretary Rusk Interviewed on Voice of America, 15 February 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 2 March 1964, p. 333:

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"MR. O'NEILL: Well, Hanoi has just publicly now identified itself as supporting the guerrillas in South Vietnam and also threatening that Red China would intervene in any action against North Vietnam. Do you see any connection between that and the French recognition, or do you think this is an isolated development?

"SECRETARY RUSK: I haven't seen anything that would lead me to say there was an organic connection between what Hanoi has just said and what Paris has done. It is true that Hanoi has made no secret of this policy since 1959. They have publicly declared that they are out to take over South Vietnam, and in this same statement to which you are referring they made it very clear that North Vietnam is not going to be neutralized and that their interest in South Vietnam is not so much neutrality as taking it over. So I think the issues have been drawn very clearly out there.

"MR. O'NEILL: While we are on that area, how is the fighting in South Vietnam? Are we going to be able to win out, and do you have any idea as to how soon that might be?

"SECRETARY RUSK: Well, I think we will have to wait a bit before we can speak with complete confidence about it in the short run. In the long run, I have no doubt that the resources, the will, the material are present in South Vietnam to enable the South Vietnamese to do this job. We are determined that Southeast Asia is not going to be taken over by the communists. We must insist that these basic accords be adhered to. And so we are in this to the point where the South Vietnamese are going to be independent and secure."

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"MR. WARD: Mr. Secretary, I wish you'd say something about this word 'neutralization' -- not whether Southeast Asia or some parts thereof should be neutralized, but what the word itself means. It seems to me there is a great deal of misunderstanding that flows from varied uses of the word.

"SECRETARY RUSK: Well, the word gets confused because it has meant so many different things to different people. I suppose in the strictest sense a neutral is, in time of peace, a so-called 'unalined' country, that it is not committed to one of the two major power blocs in the world, the NATO bloc or the communist bloc.

"Well, now, we don't object to neutrals or policies of neutrality or neutralization in that sense. There are a great many countries who are unalined with whom we have very close and friendly relations. We are not looking for allies. We are not looking for military bases out in Southeast Asia. We are not even looking for a military presence in that part of the world.

"Our troops are there assisting the South Vietnamese because people in the north have been putting pressures on Southeast Asia. If those pressures did not exist, those troops wouldn't be there. But when one talks about neutralizing South Vietnam in the present context, this means, really, getting the Americans out. That is all that that means.

"Now, North Vietnam is not going to be neutralized. It's going to remain a member of the communist camp. And from the time that it was established, North Vietnam has broken agreements and has applied pressure on its neighbors, particularly Laos and South Vietnam. So that if anyone has in mind that South Vietnam should be neutralized, meaning that Americans should simply go home and leave it exposed to takeover from the north, then this isn't going to happen.

"Now, if South Vietnam were independent and secure, it would be perfectly free to pursue its own policy. It can be unalined, as far as we are concerned."

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2. TV Interview with President Johnson, 15 March 1964, Public Papers of The Presidents, Johnson, 1963-64, p. 370:

"MR. SEVAREID: Mr. Kennedy said, on the subject of Vietnam, I think, that he did believe in the 'falling domino' theory, that if Vietnam were lost, that other countries in the area would soon be lost.

"THE PRESIDENT: I think it would be a very dangerous thing, and I share President Kennedy's view, and I think the whole of Southeast Asia would be involved and that would involve hundreds of millions of people, and I think it's -- it cannot be ignored, we must do everything that we can, we must be responsible, we must stay there and help them, and that is what we are going to do."

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3. "United States Policy in Vietnam," by Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, 26 March 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 13 April 1964, p. 562:

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"At the Third National Congress of the Lao Dong (Communist) Party in Hanoi, September 1960, North Vietnam's belligerency was made explicit. Ho Chi Minh stated, 'The North is becoming more and more consolidated and transformed into a firm base for the struggle for national reunification.' At the same congress it was announced that the party's new task was 'to liberate the South from the atrocious rule of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen.' In brief, Hanoi was about to embark upon a program of wholesale violations of the Geneva agreements in order to wrest control of South Vietnam from its legitimate government.

"To the communists, 'liberation' meant sabotage, terror, and assassination: attacks on innocent hamlets and villages and the coldblooded murder of thousands of schoolteachers, health workers, and local officials who had the misfortune to oppose the communist version of 'liberation.' In 1960 and 1961 almost 3,000 South Vietnamese civilians in and out of government were assassinated and another 2,500 were kidnaped. The communists even assassinated the colonel who served as liaison officer to the International Control Commission.

"This aggression against South Vietnam was a major communist effort, meticulously planned and controlled, and relentlessly pursued by the government in Hanoi. In 1961 the Republic of Vietnam, unable to contain the menace by itself, appealed to the United States to honor its unilateral declaration of 1954. President Kennedy responded promptly and affirmatively by sending to that country additional American advisers, arms, and aid.

"U.S. Objectives:

"I turn now to a consideration of United States objectives in South Vietnam. The United States has no designs whatever on the resources or territory of the area. Our national interests do not require that South Vietnam serve as a Western base or as a member of a Western alliance. Our concern is threefold.

"First, and most important, is the simple fact that South Vietnam, a member of the free world family, is striving to preserve its independence from communist attack. The Vietnamese have asked our help. We have given it. We shall continue to give it.

"We do so in their interest; and we do so in our own clear self-interest. For basic to the principles of freedom and self-determination which have sustained our country for almost two centuries is the right of peoples everywhere to live and develop in peace. Our own security is strengthened by the determination of others to remain free, and by our commitment to assist them. We will not let this member of our family down, regardless of its distance from our shores.

"The ultimate goal of the United States in Southeast Asia, as in the rest of the world, is to help maintain free and independent nations which can develop politically, economically, and socially and which can be responsible members of the world community. In this region and elsewhere

many peoples share our sense of the value of such freedom and independence. They have taken the risks and made the sacrifices lined to the commitment to membership in the family of the free world. They have done this in the belief that we would back up our pledges to help defend them. It is not right or even expedient -- nor is it in our nature -- to abandon them when the going is difficult.

"Second, Southeast Asia has great strategic significance in the forward defense of the United States. Its location across east-west air and sea lanes flanks the Indian subcontinent on one side and Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines on the other and dominates the gateway between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In communist hands this area would pose a most serious threat to the security of the United States and to the family of free-world nations to which we belong. To defend Southeast Asia, we must meet the challenge in South Vietnam.

"And third, South Vietnam is a test case for the new communist strategy. Let me examine for a moment the nature of this strategy.

"Just as the Kennedy administration was coming into office in January 1961, Chairman Khrushchev made one of the most important speeches on communist strategy of recent decades. In his report on a party conference entitled 'For New Victories of the World Communist Movement,' Khrushchev stated: 'In modern conditions, the following categories of wars should be distinguished: world wars, local wars, liberation wars and popular uprising.' He ruled out what he called 'world wars' and 'local wars' as being too dangerous for profitable indulgence in a world of nuclear weapons. But with regard to what he called 'liberation wars,' he referred specifically to Vietnam. He said, 'It is a sacred war. We recognize such wars...'"

* * *

"President Kennedy and President Johnson have recognized, however, that our forces for the first two types of wars might not be applicable or effective against what the communists call 'wars of liberation,' or what is properly called covert aggression or insurgency. We have therefore undertaken and continue to press a variety of programs to develop skilled specialists, equipment, and techniques to enable us to help our allies counter the threat of insurgency.

"Communist interest in insurgency techniques did not begin with Khrushchev, nor for that matter with Stalin. Lenin's works are full of tactical instructions, which were adapted very successfully by Mao Tse-tung, whose many writings on guerrilla warfare have become classic references. Indeed, Mao claims to be the true heir of Lenin's original prescriptions for the worldwide victory of communism. The North Vietnamese have taken a leaf or two from Mao's book -- as well as Moscow's -- and added some of their own.

"Thus today in Vietnam we are not dealing with factional disputes or the remnants of a colonial struggle against the French but rather with a major test case of communism's new strategy. That strategy has so far been pursued in Cuba, may be beginning in Africa, and failed in Malaya and the Philippines only because of a long and arduous struggle by the people of these countries with assistance provided by the British and the United States.

"In Southeast Asia the communists have taken full advantage of geography -- the proximity to the communist base of operations and the rugged, remote, and heavily foliated character of the border regions. They have utilized the diverse ethnic, religious, and tribal groupings and exploited factionalism and legitimate aspirations wherever possible. And, as I said earlier, they have resorted to sabotage, terrorism, and assassination on an unprecedented scale.

"Who is the responsible party -- the prime aggressor? First and foremost, without doubt, the prime aggressor is North Vietnam, whose leadership has explicitly undertaken to destroy the independence of the South. To be sure, Hanoi is encouraged on its aggressive course by Communist China. But Peiping's interest is hardly the same as that of Hanoi.

"For Hanoi, the immediate objective is limited: conquest of the South and national unification, perhaps coupled with control of Laos. For Peiping, however, Hanoi's victory would be only a first step toward eventual Chinese hegemony over the two Vietnams and Southeast Asia and toward exploitation of the new strategy in other parts of the world.

"Communist China's interests are clear: It has publicly castigated Moscow for betraying the revolutionary cause whenever the Soviets have sounded a cautionary note. It has characterized the United States as a paper tiger and has insisted that the revolutionary struggle for 'liberation and unification' of Vietnam could be conducted without risks by, in effect, crawling under the nuclear and conventional defense of the free world. Peiping thus appears to feel that it has a large stake in demonstrating the new strategy, using Vietnam as a test case. Success in Vietnam would be regarded by Peiping as vindication for China's views in the worldwide ideological struggle.

"Taking into account the relationship of Vietnam to Indochina -- and of both to Southeast Asia, the Far East, and the free world as a whole -- five U.S. Presidents have acted to preserve free-world strategic interests in the area. President Roosevelt opposed Japanese penetration in Indochina; President Truman resisted communist aggression in Korea; President Eisenhower backed Diem's efforts to save South Vietnam and undertook to defend Taiwan; President Kennedy stepped up our counterinsurgency effort in Vietnam; and President Johnson, in addition to reaffirming last week that the United States will furnish assistance and support to South Vietnam for as long as it is required to bring communist aggression and terrorism under control, has approved the program that I shall describe in a few minutes.

"The U.S. role in South Vietnam, then, is first, to answer the call of the South Vietnamese, a member nation of our free-world family, to help them save their country for themselves; second, to help prevent the strategic danger which would exist if communism absorbed Southeast Asia's people and resources; and third, to prove in the Vietnamese test case that the free-world can cope with communist 'wars of liberation' as we have coped successfully with communist aggression at other levels."

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4. "U.S. Calls for Frontier Patrol to Help Prevent Border Incidents Between Cambodia and Vietnam," Statement by Adlai Stevenson to Security Council, 21 May 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 8 June 1964, p. 908:

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"First, the United States had no, repeat no, national military objective anywhere in Southeast Asia. United States policy for Southeast Asia is very simple. It is the restoration of peace so that the peoples of that area can go about their own independent business in whatever associations they may freely choose for themselves without interference from the outside.

"I trust my words have been clear enough on this point.

"Second, the United States Government is currently involved in the affairs of the Republic of Vietnam for one reason and one reason only: because the Republic of Vietnam requested the help of the United States and of other governments to defend itself against armed attack fomented, equipped, and directed from the outside.

"This is not the first time that the United States Government has come to the aid of peoples prepared to fight for their freedom and independence against armed aggression sponsored from outside their borders. Nor will it be the last time unless the lesson is learned once and for all by all aggressors that armed aggression does not pay -- that it no longer works -- that it will not be tolerated.

"The record of the past two decades makes it clear that a nation with the will for self-preservation can outlast and defeat overt or clandestine aggression -- even when that internal aggression is heavily supported from the outside, and even after significant early successes by the aggressors. I would remind the members that in 1947, after the aggressors had gained control of most of the country, many people felt that the cause of the Government of Greece was hopelessly lost. But as long as the people of Greece were prepared to fight for the life of their own country, the United States was not prepared to stand by while Greece was overrun.

"This principle does not change with the geographical setting. Aggression is aggression; organized violence is organized violence. Only the scale and the scenery change; the point is the same in Vietnam today as it was in Greece

in 1947 and in Korea in 1950. The Indochinese Communist Party, the parent of the present Communist Party in North Vietnam, made it abundantly clear as early as 1951 that the aim of the Vietnamese Communist leadership is to take control of all of Indochina. This goal has not changed -- it is still clearly the objective of the Vietnamese Communist leadership in Hanoi.

"Hanoi seeks to accomplish this purpose in South Vietnam through subversive guerrilla warfare directed, controlled, and supplied by North Vietnam. The communist leadership in Hanoi has sought to pretend that the insurgency in South Vietnam is a civil war, but Hanoi's hand shows very clearly. Public statements by the Communist Party in North Vietnam and its leaders have repeatedly demonstrated Hanoi's direction of the struggle in South Vietnam. For example, Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party, stated on September 5, 1960, 'At present our Party is facing [a] momentous task:... to strive to complete...revolution throughout the country...' He also said this: 'The North is the common revolutionary base of the whole country.' Three months after the Communist Party Congress in Hanoi in September 1960, the so-called 'National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam' was set up pursuant to plans outlined publicly at that Congress.

"The International Control Commission in Vietnam, established by the Geneva accords of 1954, stated in a special report which it issued in June 1962 that there is sufficient evidence to show that North Vietnam has violated various articles of the Geneva accords by its introduction of armed personnel, arms, munitions, and other supplies from North Vietnam into South Vietnam with the object of supporting, organizing, and carrying out hostile activities against the Government and armed forces of South Vietnam.

"Infiltration of military personnel and supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam has been carried out steadily over the past several years. The total number of military cadres sent into South Vietnam via infiltration routes runs into the thousands. Such infiltration is well documented on the basis of numerous defectors and prisoners taken by the armed forces of South Vietnam.

"Introduction of communist weapons into South Vietnam has also grown steadily. An increasing amount of weapons and ammunition captured from the Viet Cong has been proven to be of Chinese Communist manufacture or origin. For example, in December 1963 a large cache of Viet Cong equipment captured in one of the Mekong Delta provinces in South Vietnam included recoilless rifles, rocket launchers, carbines, and ammunition of Chinese Communist manufacture.

"The United States cannot stand by while Southeast Asia is overrun by armed aggressors. As long as the peoples of that area are determined to preserve their own independence and ask for our help in preserving it, we will extend it. This, of course, is the meaning of President Johnson's request a few days ago for additional funds for more economic as well as military assistance for Vietnam.

"And if anyone has the illusion that my Government will abandon the people of Vietnam -- or that we shall weary of the burden of support that we are rendering these people -- it can only be due to ignorance of the strength and the conviction of the American people.

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5. "The Defense of the Free World," Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, before the National Ind Conf Bd, 21 May 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 8 June 1964, p. 895:

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"The 'Forward Defense' Nations:

"Our military assistance program today is oriented mainly toward those countries on the periphery of the major communist nations where the threats are greatest and in which the indigenous resources are least. In the fiscal year 1965 program now before the Congress, about two-thirds of the total amount is scheduled to go to the 11 nations on the southern and eastern perimeters of the Soviet and Red Chinese blocs. These sentinels of the free world, in a sense, are in double jeopardy from potential military aggression from without and from attempted subversion from within. These countries are under the Red shadow. They face the major threat, and they are the ones most affected by the modernization of communist forces. For this group we requested $745 million in military assistance. They best illustrate the points I want to make.

"Imagine a globe, if you will, and on that globe the Sino-Soviet bloc. The bloc is contained at the north by the Arctic. To the west are the revitalized nations of Western Europe. But across the south and to the east you find the 11 'forward defense' nations -- Greece, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, Laos, Thailand, South Vietnam, the Philippines, and the Republics of China and Korea. These nations, together with stretches of the Pacific Ocean bearing the U.S. Fleet, describe an arc along which the free world draws its frontlines of defense.

"The frontlines are there in the interests of those 11 nations; the lines are there also in the interests of the United States and the rest of the free world. The areaswhich this 11-nation arc protects are of obvious strategic importance to the United States. More significant, however, is the importance of the arc to the principle that nations have a right to be independent -- a right to develop in peace, in freedom, and according to the principle of self-determination. United States support of these rights at the frontiers thickens the blood of the free-world family; it strengthens our security at home.

"We must recognize, however, that the United States does not have the resources to maintain a credible force by itself along all of this great arc of forward positions. Such a strategy would be unbearably costly to us in both money and human resources. The United States maintains major

combat units ashore in forward positions only in Europe and in parts of the Far East. Such deployments are costly and hurt our balance-of-payments position. We do not now contemplate additional semipermanent deployments of forces abroad."

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6. "Laos and Viet-Nam -- A Prescription for Peace," Address by Secretary Rusk before the American Law Institute, Washington, D.C., 22 May 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 8 June 1964, p. 890:

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"Four Alternatives in Vietnam:

"You are all aware of the four principal alternatives in South Vietnam which have been referred to in recent discussion. The first would be to withdraw and forget about Southeast Asia. That would mean not only grievous losses to the free world in Southeast and southern Asia but a drastic loss of confidence in the will and capacity of the free world to oppose aggression. It would also bring us much closer to a major conflagration. Surely we have learned, in the course of the last 35 years, that a course of aggression means war and that the place to stop it is at its beginning.

* * *

"At the meeting of the Council of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in Manila last month, seven of the eight members joined in declaring the defeat of the aggression against South Vietnam to be 'essential not only to the security of the Republic of Vietnam, but to that of Southeast Asia.' And, they said, its defeat will also be convincing proof that communist expansion by such tactics will not be permitted."

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7. "President Outlines Basic Themes of U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia," Statement by President Johnson at his News Conference on June 2, 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 22 June 1964, p. 953:

"It may be helpful to outline four basic themes that govern our policy in Southeast Asia.

"First, America keeps her word.

"Second, the issue is the future of Southeast Asia as a whole.

"Third, our purpose is peace.

"Fourth, this is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity.

"On the point that America keeps her word, we are steadfast in a policy which has been followed for 10 years in three administrations."

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8. "Address to The Nation by President Johnson," 4 August 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 24 August 1964, p. 259:

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"In the larger sense this new act of aggression, aimed directly at our own forces, again brings home to all of us in the United States the importance of the struggle for peace and security in Southeast Asia. Aggression by terror against the peaceful villagers of South Vietnam has now been joined by open aggression on the high seas against the United States of America."

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9. "Address by The President, Syracuse University, 5 August 1964," Department of State Bulletin, 24 August 1964, p. 260:

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"Aggression -- deliberate, willful, and systematic aggression -- has unmasked its face to the entire world. The world remembers -- the world must never forget -- that aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed.

"We of the United States have not forgotten. That is why we have answered this aggression with action.

"America's course is not without long provocation.

"For 10 years, three American Presidents -- President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and your present President -- and the American people have been actively concerned with threats to the peace and security of the peoples of Southeast Asia from the communist government of North Vietnam.

"President Eisenhower sought -- and President Kennedy sought -- the same objectives that I still seek:

-- That the governments of Southeast Asia honor the international agreements which apply in the area;

-- That those governments leave each other alone;

-- That they resolve their differences peacefully;

-- That they devote their talents to bettering the lives of their peoples by working against poverty and disease and ignorance.

"In 1954 we made our position clear toward Vietnam.

"In July of that year we stated we would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the 1954 agreements 'with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.'

"In September of that year the United States signed the Manila Pact, on which our participation in SEATO is based. That pact recognized that aggression by means of armed attack on South Vietnam would endanger the peace and the safety of the nations signing that solemn agreement.

"In 1962 we made our position clear toward Laos. We signed the Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos. That accord provided for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and respect for the neutrality and independence of that little country.

"The agreements of 1954 and 1962 were also signed by the government of North Vietnam.

"In 1954 that government pledged that it would respect the territory under the military control of the other party and engage in no hostile act against the other party.

"In 1962 that government pledged that it would 'not introduce into the Kingdom of Laos foreign troops or military personnel.'

"That government also pledged that it would 'not use the territory of the Kingdom of Laos for interference in the internal affairs of other countries.'

"That government of North Vietnam is now willfully and systematically violating those agreements of both 1954 and 1962.

"To the south, it is engaged in aggression against the Republic of Vietnam.

"To the west, it is engaged in aggression against the Kingdom of Laos.

"To the east, it has now struck out on the high seas in an act of aggression against the United States of America.

"There can be and there must be no doubt about the policy and no doubt about the purpose.

"So there can be no doubt about the responsibilities of men and the responsibilities of nations that are devoted to peace.

"Peace cannot be assured merely by assuring the safety of the United States destroyer MADDOX or the safety of other vessels of other flags.

"Peace requires that the existing agreements in the area be honored.

"Peace requires that we and all our friends stand firm against the present aggressions of the government of North Vietnam.

"The government of North Vietnam is today flouting the will of the world for peace. The world is challenged to make its will against war known and to make it known clearly and to make it felt and to make it felt decisively.

"So, to our friends of the Atlantic alliance, let me say this this morning. The challenge that we face in Southeast Asia today is the same challenge that we have faced with courage and that we have met with strength in Greece and Turkey, in Berlin and Korea, in Lebanon and in Cuba, and to any who may be tempted to support or to widen the present aggression I say this: There is no threat to any peaceful power from the United States of America. But there can be no peace by aggression and no immunity from reply. That is what is meant by the actions that we took yesterday.

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10. "President's Message to Congress, 5 August 1964," Department of State Bulletin, 24 August 1964, p. 261:

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"These latest actions of the North Vietnamese regime have given a new and grave turn to the already serious situation in Southeast Asia. Our commitments in that area are well known to the Congress. They were first made in 1954 by President Eisenhower. They were further defined in the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty approved by the Senate in February 1955.

"This treaty with its accompanying protocol obligates the United States and other members to act in accordance with their constitutional processes to meet communist aggression against any of the parties or protocol states.

"Our policy in Southeast Asia has been consistent and unchanged since 1954. I summarized it on June 2 in four simple propositions:

"1. America keeps her word. Here as elsewhere, we must and shall honor our commitments.

"2. The issue is the future of Southeast Asia as a whole. A threat to any nation in that region is a threat to all, and a threat to us.

"3. Our purpose is peace. We have no military, political, or territorial ambitions in the area.

"4. This is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity. Our military and economic assistance to South Vietnam and Laos in particular has the purpose of helping these countries to repel aggression and strengthen their independence.

"The threat to the free nations of Southeast Asia has long been clear. The North Vietnamese regime has constantly sought to take over South Vietnam and Laos. This communist regime has violated the Geneva accords for Vietnam. It has systematically conducted a campaign of subversion, which includes the direction, training, and supply of personnel and arms for the conduct of guerrilla warfare in South Vietnamese territory. In Laos, the North Vietnamese regime has maintained military forces, used Laotian territory for infiltration into South Vietnam, and most recently carried out combat operations -- all in direct violation of the Geneva agreements of 1962.

"In recent months, the actions of the North Vietnamese regime have become steadily more threatening. In May, following new acts of communist aggression in Laos, the United States undertook reconnaissance flights over Laotian territory, at the request of the Government of Laos. These flights had the essential mission of determining the situation in territory where communist forces were preventing inspection by the International Control Commission. When the communists attacked these aircraft, I responded by furnishing escort fighters with instructions to fire when fired upon. Thus, these latest North Vietnamese attacks on our naval vessels are not the first direct attack on armed forces of the United States.

"As President of the United States I have concluded that I should now ask the Congress, on its part, to join in affirming the national determination that all such attacks will be met, and that the United States will continue in its basic policy of assisting the free nations of the area to defend their freedom.

"As I have repeatedly made clear, the United States intends no rashness, and seeks no wider war. We must make it clear to all that the United States is united in its determination to bring about the end of communist subversion and aggression in the area. We seek the full and effective restoration of the international agreements signed in Geneva in 1954, with respect to South Vietnam, and again in Geneva in 1962, with respect to Laos."

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11. "Secretary Rusk Discusses Asian Situation on NBC Program," 5 August 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 24 August 1964, p. 268:

"Following is the transcript of an interview of Secretary Rusk by NBC correspondent Elie Abel, broadcast over nationwide television on August 5.

"MR. ABEL: Mr. Secretary, are we going to get through this situation without touching off a bigger war?

"SECRETARY RUSK: Well, Mr. Abel, one can't be a reliable prophet when the other side helps to write the scenario. But I do want to insist upon one point, that the purpose of the United States in Southeast Asia for these past 10 years or more has been a part of a general policy of the United States since World War II, that is, to organize a decent world community in which nations will leave their neighbors alone and in which nations can have a chance to live at peace with each other and cooperate on a basis of their common interests.

"Now, in Southeast Asia we have been saying over and over again, in conferences such as the Geneva conference of 1962 and elsewhere, that there is only one problem with peace in Southeast Asia and that is these pressures from the north, that if the north would leave their neighbors to the south alone, these peoples of that area could have their peace and could have a chance to work out their own lives in their own way. That is the problem, and to come to the decision to leave their neighbors alone is a necessary decision which Hanoi and anyone supporting Hanoi must reach.

"Q. Why was it necessary, Mr. Secretary, for us to strike as swiftly and abruptly as we did without taking time even to notify our allies?

"A. Well, in the first place, we had some ships in the Gulf of Tonkin who were under attack, and they were dodging torpedoes. Here is a vast expanse of international waters in which we have a perfect right to be. We had to strike immediately because we didn't expect to ask those ships to run a continuing gauntlet of torpedoes on their way back to the Gulf of Tonkin when their mission was completed, nor were we prepared to have them denied international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin.

"Further than that, if under these attacks there had not been an immediate and appropriate response, then Hanoi and those who might be standing behind Hanoi in this might well have come to a very formidable mistaken judgment about what is possible in the Southeast Asian situation.

"Q. You mean their view that we are a paper tiger might have been confirmed?

"A. That's correct. They could have made a basic miscalculation about what the commitment of the United States means in a situation of this sort.

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12. Text of Joint Resolution, August 7, Department of State Bulletin, 24 August 1964, p. 268:

"To promote the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia.

"Whereas naval units of the communist regime in Vietnam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international

law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters, and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace; and

"Whereas these attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom; and

"Whereas the United States is assisting the peoples of Southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these peoples should be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way: Now, therefore, be it

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

"Sec. 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

"Sec. 3. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress."

13. "Freedom in the Postwar World," by Secretary Rusk before American Veterans of WWII and Korea, Philadelphia, 29 August 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 14 September 1964, p. 365:

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"In Southeast Asia the free world suffered a setback in 1954 when, after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam was divided and a communist regime was consolidated in Hanoi. We helped South Vietnam to get on its feet and to build its military defenses. It made remarkable progress for a few years -- which is perhaps why Communist North Vietnam, with the backing of Communist China, renewed its aggression against South Vietnam in 1959. In 1961 President Kennedy reviewed the situation, concluded that the assault from

the north had been underestimated, and substantially increased our assistance to the Government and people of South Vietnam."

* * *

"Hanoi and Peiping have not yet learned that they must leave their neighbors alone. But this is a decision which they must reach. We and our SEATO allies have declared that the communist aggressions in Southeast Asia must be defeated. As you said, Commander Gulewicz, in your statement to the platform committees of the two major parties, '...we cannot afford to abandon the free people of Vietnam. The world watches because South Vietnam is a critical test-case for new communist strategy.'"

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14. "Progress and Problems in East Asia: An American Viewpoint," by William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Address made before the Research Institute of Japan at Tokyo, 29 September 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 19 October 1964, p. 537:

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"A word further about the situation in Southeast Asia, especially in South Vietnam. Here the aim of our policy is to assist the Government of South Vietnam in maintaining its independence and its control over the territory allotted to it by the Geneva accords of 1954. We do not aim at overthrowing the communist regime of North Vietnam but rather at inducing it to call off the war it directs and supports in South Vietnam.

"We believe it essential to the interests of the free world that South Vietnam not be permitted to fall under communist control. If it does, then the rest of Southeast Asia will be in grave danger of progressively disappearing behind the Bamboo Curtain and other Asian countries like India and even in time Australia and your own nation in turn will be threatened. If Hanoi and Peiping prevail in Vietnam in this key test of the new communist tactics of 'wars of national liberation,' then the communists will use this technique with growing frequency elsewhere in Asia, Africa, and Latin America."

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15. Secretary Rusk's News Conference of December 23, Press Release dated 23 December 1964, Department of State Bulletin, 11 January 1965, p. 37:

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"American Interest in Vietnamese Independence:

"Q. Mr. Secretary, it is sometimes stated that one of the reasons for American assistance to Vietnam is the fact that vital Western interests

are involved in the situation there. Now that we are once again confronted with what apparently is a critical situation, could you define for us the precise nature and extent of those vital Western interests, as you see them?

"A. Well, our interest in Southeast Asia has been developed and expressed throughout this postwar period. Before SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) came into existence, we and Britain and France were in very close touch with that situation. SEATO underlined the importance we attached to the security of the countries of that area.

"But actually the American interest can be expressed in very simple terms. Where there is a country which is independent and secure and in a position to work out its own policy and be left alone by its neighbors, there is a country whose position is consistent with our understanding of our interests in the world. It's just as simple as that.

"If we have military personnel in Southeast Asia, it is because we feel that they are needed to assist South Vietnam at the present time to maintain its security and independence. If South Vietnam's neighbors would leave it alone, those military people could come home.

"We have no desire for any bases or permanent military presence in that area. We are interested in the independence of states. That is why we have more than 40 allies. That is why we are interested in the independence and security of the nonalined countries. Because, to us, the general system of states represented in the United Nations Charter is our view of a world that is consistent with American interests. So our own interest there is very simple.

"But it is very important, because we feel that we have learned in the last many decades that a persistent course of aggression left to go unchecked can only lead to a general war and therefore that the independence of particular countries is a matter of importance to the general peace.

"Peiping's Militant Doctrine:

"Q. Mr. Secretary, could I put that question slightly differently? In the last decade or so, over three or four administrations, this Government has taken the position that the Indochina peninsula had an importance to this country beyond the actualities of the countries involved; that is, that it had a relationship to the American problem with China, and out of this developed, over a long period of time, the so-called falling-domino theory. Could you tell us whether you subscribe to that theory and whether you look upon our interest in Vietnam and Laos -- or how you look upon our interest in Vietnam and Laos in relation to China?

"A. Well, I would not myself go to the trouble of trying to outline a 'domino' theory. The theory of the problem rests in Peiping. It rests in a militant approach to the spread of the world revolution as seen from the communist point of view. And we know, given their frequently and publicly

proclaimed ambitions in this respect and what they say not only about their neighbors in Asia but such continents as Africa -- Africa is ripe for revolution, meaning to them ripe for an attempt on their part to extend their domination into that continent -- there is a primitive, militant doctrine of world revolution that would attempt to destroy the structure of international life as written into the United Nations Charter.

"Now, these are appetites and ambitions that grow upon feeding. In 1954 Vietnam was divided. North Vietnam became communist. The next result was pressures against Laos, contrary to those agreements; pressures against South Vietnam, contrary to those agreements. In other words, until there is a determination in Peiping to leave their neighbors alone and not to press militantly their notions of world revolution, then we are going to have this problem.

"And it's the same problem we have had in another part of the world in an earlier period in this postwar period in such things as the Berlin blockade, the pressures against Greece. Those things had to be stopped. They were stopped in the main.

"Now the problem is out in the Pacific. And we have a large interest in the way these problems evolve in the Pacific, because we have allies and we have interests out there. Southeast Asia is at the present time the point at which this issue of militant aggression against one's neighbors for ideological reasons is posed."

* * *

1965

JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION - 1965

SUMMARY

The level of war was escalated by introduction of increased U.S. combat troop strength and the initiation of air strikes against targets in North Vietnam. The Administration justified the escalation on the basis of increased infiltration of North Vietnamese units into South Vietnam and, in general, justified U.S. involvement using much the same rationale as the Kennedy Administration. The "domino theory," however, was de-emphasized in light of communist proclamations and predictions for success. The role of Communist China was given more publicity. The Administration's public pronouncements stressed the following:

a. The U.S. had been committed ten years before and had pledged help to the people of South Vietnam. "Three Presidents have supported that pledge" and it would not be broken. The "integrity of the American commitment" is at the heart of the problem as a point of national honor.

b. The security of the U.S. was tied closely to the expansion of communism in Southeast Asia: if the American counterinsurgency efforts are defeated in Vietnam, they can be defeated anywhere in the world. Failure to halt aggression through "wars of national liberation" would see increasing communist pressure on neighboring states and subsequently greater aggression. "These are big stakes indeed."

c. The basic issue of the conflict was "letting the nations of the area develop as they see fit"; if South Vietnam fell to communist control it would be difficult to prevent the fall of neighboring states. The "domino theory" was not considered a suitable explanation for the SEA situation.

d. "The confused nature of this conflict cannot mask the fact that it is the new face of an old enemy. Over this war -- and all Asia -- is another reality: the deepening shadow of Communist China. The rulers in Hanoi are urged on by Peiping."

e. South Vietnam represented a major test of the communism's new strategy of "wars of liberation." Veiled aggression under this strategy had its source in North Vietnam -- previously a privileged sanctuary -- and free nations had to defend themselves. "The simple issue is that military personnel and arms have been sent across an international demarcation line contrary to international agreements and law..."

V. D. JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- PUBLIC STATEMENTS

JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

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CONTENTS

16. A Conversation with Dean Rusk, NBC News Program on January 3, 1965, Department of State Bulletin, January 18, 1965, p. 64.

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"Secretary Rusk: ....Now, when North Viet-Nam was organized as a Communist country, almost immediately its neighbor, Laos, and its neighbor, South Viet-Nam, came under direct pressure from North Viet-Nam. Now, this is the nature of the appetite proclaimed from Peiping. One doesn't require a 'domino' theory to get at this. Peiping has announced the doctrine. It is there in the primitive notion of a militant world revolution which has been promoted by these veterans of the long march who now control mainland China. So we believe that you simply postpone temporarily an even greater crisis if you allow an announced course of aggression to succeed a step at a time on the road to a major catastrophe.

* * *

"Now, there are some in other countries, for example, who seem to be relatively indifferent to problems of this sort in Southeast Asia, and yet they are the first ones to say that if we were to abandon Southeast Asia, this would cause them to wonder what our commitments under such arrangements as NATO would mean. Do you see?

"In other words, the issue here is the capability of halting a course of aggression at the beginning, rather than waiting for it to produce a great conflagration."

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17. The State of the Union Address of the President to the Congress, January 4, 1965, Public Papers of the Presidents, Johnson, 1965, p. 3.

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"We are there, first, because a friendly nation has asked us for help against the Communist aggression. Ten years ago our President pledged our help. Three Presidents have supported that pledge. We will not break it now.

"Second, our own security is tied to the peace of Asia. Twice in one generation we have had to fight against aggression in the Far East. To ignore aggression now would only increase the danger of a much larger war.

"Our goal is peace in Southeast Asia. That will come only when aggressors leave their neighbors in peace."

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18. American Policy in South Viet-Nam and Southeast Asia, William P. Bundy, Remarks Made Before the Washington (Mo.) Chamber of Commerce on January 23, 1965, Department of State Bulletin, February 8, 1965, p. 168.

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"In retrospect, our action in Korea reflected three elements:

--a recognition that aggression of any sort must be met early and head-on or it will have to be met later and in tougher circumstances. We had relearned the lessons of the 1930's--Manchuria, Ethiopia, the Rhineland, Czechoslovakia.

--a recognition that a defense line in Asia, stated in terms of an island perimeter, did not adequately define our vital interests, that those vital interests could be affected by action on the mainland of Asia.

--an understanding that, for the future, a power vacuum was an invitation to aggression, that there must be local political, economic, and military strength in being to make aggression unprofitable, but also that there must be a demonstrated willingness of major external power both to assist and to intervene if required."

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"Such was the situation President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles faced in 1954. Two things were clear: that in the absence of external help communism was virtually certain to take over the successor states of Indochina and to move to the borders of Thailand and perhaps beyond, and that with France no longer ready to act, at least in South Viet-Nam, no power other than the United States could move in to help fill the vacuum. Their decision, expressed in a series of actions starting in late 1954, was to move in to help these countries. Besides South Viet-Nam and more modest efforts in Laos and Cambodia, substantial assistance was begun to Thailand.

"The appropriations for these actions were voted by successive Congresses, and in 1954 the Senate likewise ratified the Southeast Asia Treaty, to which Thailand and the Philippines adhered along with the United States, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan. Although not signers of the treaty, South Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia could call on the SEATO members for help against aggression.

"So a commitment was made, with the support of both political parties, that has guided our policy in Southeast Asia for a decade now. It was not a commitment that envisaged a United States position of power in Southeast Asia or United States military bases there. We threatened no one. Nor was it a commitment that substituted United States responsibility

for the basic responsibility of the nations themselves for their own defense, political stability, and economic progress. It was a commitment to do what we could to help these nations attain and maintain the independence and security to which they were entitled--both for their own sake and because we recognized that, like South Korea, Southeast Asia was a key area of the mainland of Asia. If it fell to Communist control, this would enormously add to the momentum and power of the expansionist Communist regimes in Communist China and North Viet-Nam and thus to the threat to the whole free-world position in the Pacific."

* * *

"....In simple terms, a victory for the Communists in South Viet-Nam would inevitably make the neighboring states more susceptible to Communist pressure and more vulnerable to intensified subversion supported by military pressures. Aggression by 'wars of national liberation' would gain enhanced prestige and power of intimidation throughout the world, and many threatened nations might well become less hopeful, less resilient, and their will to resist undermined. These are big stakes indeed."

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19. William Bundy Discusses Vietnam Situation, February 7, 1965, Department of State Bulletin, March 8, 1965, p. 292.

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"....Why are we there? What is our national interest? I think it was pretty well stated by Congress last August when it passed a resolution, following the Gulf of Tonkin affair, in which it stated that the United States 'regards as vital to its national interest and world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia.' And that's the basic reason right there--peace in the area, letting the nations of the area develop as they see fit and free from Communist external infiltration, subversion, and control.

"Secondly, it's obvious on the map that if South Viet-Nam were to fall under Communist control it would become very much more difficult--I'm not using what's sometimes called 'the domino theory,' that anything happens automatically or quickly--but it would become very much more difficult to maintain the independence and freedom of Thailand, Cambodia, of Malaysia, and so on. And the confidence of other nations in the whole perimeter of Southeast Asia would necessarily be affected, and the Communists would think they had a winning game going for them. So that's a very important, strategic reason in addition to the fact that we're helping a nation under aggression.

"And thirdly, this technique they're using--they call it 'wars of national liberation'--is a technique that will be used elsewhere in the world if they get away with this one, and they'll be encouraged to do that.

"So those are the three basic reasons why our national interest--and basically our national interest in peace in this whole wide Pacific area with which we have historically had great concern and for which we fought in World War II and in Korea--are deeply at stake in this conflict.

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20. Secretary Rusk's News Conference of February 25, 1965, Department of State Bulletin, March 15, 1965, p. 367.

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"Q. Mr. Secretary, what kind of legal basis did the United States have to bomb the targets of North Viet-Nam?

"A. Self-defense of South Viet-Nam and the commitments of the United States with respect to the security and the self-defense of South Viet-Nam."

* * *

21. Statement Submitted By Adlai Stevenson to U.N. Summarizing a Significant Report Entitled, "Aggression From the North, the Record of North Vietnam's Campaign to Conquer South Vietnam." It was released as Department of State Publication 7839, February 27, 1965.

"EXCELLENCY: For the information of the Members of the Security Council, I am transmitting a special report entitled Aggression From the North, the Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign To Conquer South Viet-Nam, which my Government is making public today. It presents evidence from which the following conclusions are inescapable:

"First, the subjugation by force of the Republic of Viet-Nam by the regime in northern Viet-Nam is the formal, official policy of that regime; this has been stated and confirmed publicly over the past five years.

"Second, the war in Viet-Nam is directed by the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party (Communist) which controls the government in northern Viet-Nam.

"Third, the so-called People's Revolutionary Party in the Republic of Viet-Nam is an integral part of the Lao Dong Party in North Viet-Nam.

"Fourth, the so-called liberation front for South Viet-Nam is a subordinate unit of the Central Office for South Viet-Nam, an integral part of the governmental machinery in Hanoi.

"Fifth, the key leadership of the Viet-Cong--officers, specialists, technicians, intelligence agents, political organizers and propagandists--has been trained, equipped and supplied in the north and sent into the Republic of Viet-Nam under Hanoi's military orders.

"Sixth, most of the weapons, including new types recently introduced, and most of the ammunition and other supplies used by the Viet-Cong, have been sent from North to South Viet-Nam.

"Seventh, the scale of infiltration of men and arms, including regular units of the armed forces of North Viet-Nam, has increased appreciably in recent months.

"Eighth, this entire pattern of activity by the regime in Hanoi is in violation of general principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and is in direct violation of the Geneva Accords of 1954. Such a pattern of violation of the treaty obligations undertaken at Geneva was confirmed by a special report of the International Control Commission in 1962 and it has been greatly intensified since then.

"These facts about the situation in Viet-Nam make it unmistakably clear that the character of that conflict is an aggressive war of conquest waged against a neighbor--and make nonsense of the cynical allegation that this is simply an indigenous insurrection.

"I request that you circulate copies of the Report, together with copies of this letter, to the Delegations of all Member States as a Security Council document.

"In making this information available to the Security Council, my Government wishes to say once more that peace can be restored quickly to Viet-Nam by a prompt and assured cessation of aggression by Hanoi against the Republic of Viet-Nam. In that event, my Government--as it has said many times before--would be happy to withdraw its military forces from the Republic of Viet-Nam and turn promptly to an international effort to assist the economic and social development of Southeast Asia.

"In the meantime, my Government awaits the first indication of any intent by the government in Hanoi to return to the ways of peace and peaceful resolution of this international conflict.

"Accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

"ADLAI E. STEVENSON."

22. "Some Fundamentals of American Policy," Address by Secretary Rusk Before the U.S. Council of the International Chamber of Commerce at New York, March 4, 1965, Department of State Bulletin, March 22, 1965, p. 401.

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"The defeat of these aggressions is not only essential if Laos and South Viet-Nam are to remain independent; it is important to the security of Southeast Asia as a whole. You will recall that Thailand has already been proclaimed as the next target by Peiping. This is not something up in the clouds called the domino theory. You don't need that. Listen to the proclamation of militant, world revolution by Peiping, proclaimed with a harshness which has caused deep division within the Communist world itself, quite apart from the issues posed for the free world.

"The U.S. Stake in Viet-Nam

"So what is our stake? What is our commitment in that situation? Can those of us in this room forget the lesson that we had in this issue of war and peace when it was only 10 years from the seizure of Manchuria to Pearl Harbor; about 2 years from the seizure of Czechoslovakia to the outbreak of World War II in Western Europe? Don't you remember the hopes expressed in those days: that perhaps the aggressor will be satisfied by this next bite, and perhaps he will be quiet? Remember that? You remember that we thought that we could put our Military Establishment on short rations and somehow we needn't concern ourselves with peace in the rest of the world. But we found that ambition and appetite fed upon success and the next bite generated the appetite for the following bite. And we learned that, by postponing the issue, we made the result more terrible, the holocaust more dreadful. We cannot forget that experience.

"We have a course of aggression proclaimed in Peiping, very clear for all to see, and proclaimed with a militancy which says that their type of revolution must be supported by force and that much of the world is ripe for that kind of revolution. We have very specific commitments--the Manila Pact, ratified by the Senate by a vote of 82 to 1, a pact to which South Viet-Nam is a protocol state. We have the decision of President Eisenhower in 1954 to extend aid...."

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23. "Viet-Nam Action Called 'Collective Defense Against Armed Aggression'," /Department Statement read to news correspondents on March 4, 1965 by Robert J. McCloskey, Director, Office of News/, Department of State Bulletin, March 22, 1965, p. 403.

"The fact that military hostilities have been taking place in Southeast Asia does not bring about the existence of a state of war, which is

a legal characterization of a situation rather than a factual description. What we have in Viet-Nam is armed aggression from the North against the Republic of Viet-Nam. Pursuant to a South Vietnamese request and consultations between our two Governments, South Viet-Nam and the United States are engaged in collective defense against that armed aggression. The inherent right of individual and collective self-defense is recognized in article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

"If the question is intended to raise the issue of legal authority to conduct the actions which have been taken, there can be no doubt that these actions fall within the constitutional powers of the President and within the congressional resolution of August 1964."

24. "Pattern for Peace in Southeast Asia," Address by President Johnson at John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland on April 7, 1965, Department of State Bulletin, April 26, 1965, p. 607.

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"The confused nature of this conflict cannot mask the fact that it is the new face of an old enemy.

"Over this war--and all Asia--is another reality: the deepening shadow of Communist China. The rulers in Hanoi are urged on by Peiping. This is a regime which has destroyed freedom in Tibet, which has attacked India, and has been condemned by the United Nations for aggression in Korea. It is a nation which is helping the forces of violence in almost every continent. The contest in Viet-Nam is part of a wider pattern of aggressive purposes.

"Why Are We in South Viet-Nam?

"Why are these realities our concern? Why are we in South Viet-Nam?

"We are there because we have a promise to keep. Since 1954 every American President has offered support to the people of South Viet-Nam. We have helped to build, and we have helped to defend. Thus, over many years, we have made a national pledge to help South Viet-Nam defend its independence.

"And I intend to keep that promise.

"To dishonor that pledge, to abandon this small and brave nation to its enemies, and to the terror that must follow, would be an unforgivable wrong.

"We are also there to strengthen world order. Around the globe, from Berlin to Thailand, are people whose well-being rests in part on

the belief that they can count on us if they are attacked. To leave Viet-Nam to its fate would shake the confidence of all these people in the value of an American commitment and in the value of America's word. The result would be increased unrest and instability, and even wider war.

"We are also there because there are great stakes in the balance. Let no one think for a moment that retreat from Viet-Nam would bring an end to conflict. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another. The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. To withdraw from one battlefield means only to prepare for the next. We must say in Southeast Asia--as we did in Europe--in the words of the Bible: 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.'

"There are those who say that all our effort there will be futile--that China's power is such that it is bound to dominate all Southeast Asia. But there is no end to that argument until all of the nations of Asia are swallowed up.

"There are those who wonder why we have a responsibility there. Well, we have it there for the same reason that we have a responsibility for the defense of Europe. World War II was fought in both Europe and Asia, and when it ended we found ourselves with continued responsibility for the defense of freedom.

"Our objective is the independence of South Viet-Nam and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves--only that the people of South Viet-Nam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way. We will do everything necessary to reach that objective, and we will do only what is absolutely necessary.

"In recent months attacks on South Viet-Nam were stepped up. Thus it became necessary for us to increase our response and to make attacks by air. This is not a change of purpose. It is a change in what we believe that purpose requires.

"We do this in order to slow down aggression.

"We do this to increase the confidence of the brave people of South Viet-Nam who have bravely borne this brutal battle for so many years with so many casualties."

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25. Address by Leonard Unger, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Before the Detroit Economic Club, "Present Objectives and Future Possibilities in Southeast Asia," April 19, 1965, Department of State Bulletin, May 10, 1965, p. 712.

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"These objectives are not just pious generalities, nor is Southeast Asia just a configuration on a map. Distant though it may seem from Detroit, that area has great strategic significance to the United States and the free world. Its location across east-west air and sea lanes flanks the Indian subcontinent on one side and Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines on the other, and dominates the gateway between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

"In Communist hands this area would pose a most serious threat to the security of the United States and to the family of free-world nations to which we belong. To defend Southeast Asia, we must meet the challenge in South Viet-Nam.

"Communist 'Wars of Liberation'

"Equally important, South Viet-Nam represents a major test of communism's new strategy of 'wars of liberation.'"

* * *

"After the Communists' open aggression failed in Korea, they had to look for a more effective strategy of conquest. They chose to concentrate on 'wars of national liberation' -- the label they use to describe aggression directed and supplied from outside a nation but cloaked in nationalist guise so that it could be made to appear an indigenous insurrection.

"That strategy was tried on a relatively primitive scale, but was defeated in Malaya and the Philippines only because of a long and arduous struggle by the people of those countries, with assistance provided by the British and the United States. In Africa and Latin America such 'wars of liberation' are already being threatened. But by far the most highly refined and ambitious attempt at such aggression by the Communists is taking place today in Viet-Nam...."

* * *

"In order to cope with this veiled aggression, free nations must determine the real source of the aggression and take steps to defend themselves from this source. In Viet-Nam this has meant ending privileged sanctuary heretofore afforded North Viet-Nam--the true source of the Viet Cong movement.

"The 'wars of national liberation' approach has been adopted as an essential element of Communist China's expansionist policy. If this technique adopted by Hanoi should be allowed to succeed in Viet-Nam, we would be confirming Peiping's contention that militant revolutionary struggle is a more productive Communist path than Moscow's doctrine of peaceful coexistence.. We could expect 'wars of national liberation' to spread. Thailand has already been identified by Communist China as being the next target for a so-called 'liberation struggle.' Peiping's Foreign Minister Chen Yi has promised it for this year. Laos, Malaysia, Burma--one Asian nation after another--could expect increasing Communist pressures. Other weakly defended nations on other continents would experience this new threat of aggression by proxy.

"Even the Asian Communists have acknowledged that Viet-Nam represents an important test situation for indirect aggression. North Viet-Nam's Premier Pham Van Dong recently commented that:

'The experience of our compatriots in South Viet-Nam attracts the attention of the world, especially the peoples of South America.'

"General /Vo Nguyen/ Giap, the much-touted leader of North Viet-Nam's army, was even more explicit. In another recent statement, he said that,

'South Viet-Nam is the model of the national liberation movement of our time....If the special warfare that the U.S. imperialists are testing in South Viet-Nam is overcome, then it can be defeated everywhere in the world.'

"Our strong posture in Viet-Nam then seeks peace and security in three dimensions: for South Viet-Nam, for the sake of Southeast Asia's independence and security generally, and for the other small nations that would face the same kind of subversive threat from without if the Communists were to succeed in Viet-Nam...."

* * *

"All this, of course, is contrary to the 1954 Geneva accords on Viet-Nam and the 1962 agreement on Laos. I mention the latter because it is an established fact that Hanoi has been both threatening Laos and using Laos as a corridor for supplying personnel and arms to the Viet Cong.

"Our State Department has documented the character and intensity of North Viet-Nam's aggressive efforts since 1959 in the recent white paper, and in the similar report issued in 1961. The 1962 report of the International Control Commission for Viet-Nam also spelled out North Viet-Nam's aggressive actions in flagrant violation of the 1954 and 1962 agreements."

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"The Communists are fond of saying that whether the Viet Cong are born in the North or South, they are still Vietnamese and therefore an indigenous revolt must be taking place. Certainly, they are Vietnamese, and the North Koreans who swept across their boundary in 1950 to attack South Korea were also Koreans. However, this did not make the Korean war an indigenous revolt from the point of view of either world security or in terms of acceptable standards of conduct.

"By the same token, if West Germany were to take similar action against East Germany, it is doubtful that the East Germans, the Soviet Union, and the rest of the Communist bloc would stand aside on the grounds that it was nothing more than an indigenous affair.

"The simple issue is that military personnel and arms have been sent across an international demarcation line (just as valid a border as Korea or Germany) contrary to international agreements and law to destroy the freedom of a neighboring people."

* * *

"....It is for that reason, and because Hanoi has stepped up its aggression, that the Government of South Viet-Nam and the United States have been forced to increase our response and strike through the air at the true source of the aggression--North Viet-Nam. This does not represent a change of purpose on our part but a change in the means we believe are necessary to stem aggression.

"And there can be no doubt that our actions are fully justified as an exercise of the right of individual and collective self-defense recognized by article 51 of the United Nations Charter and under the accepted standards of international law."

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26. Address by Secretary Rusk, Made Before the American Society of International Law on April 23, 1965, "The Control of Force in International Relations, Department of State Bulletin, May 10, 1965, p. 697.

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"What Is a 'War of National Liberation'?

"What is a 'war of national liberation'? It is, in essence, any war which furthers the Communist world revolution--what, in broader terms, the Communists have long referred to as a 'just' war. The term 'war of national liberation' is used not only to denote armed insurrection by people still under colonial rule--there are not many of those left outside the Communist world. It is used to denote any effort led by Communists to overthrow by force any non-Communist government.

"Thus the war in South Viet-Nam is called a 'war of national liberation.' And those who would overthrow various other non-Communist governments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are called the 'forces of national liberation.'

"Nobody in his right mind would deny that Venezuela is not only a truly independent nation but that it has a government chosen in a free election. But the leaders of the Communist insurgency in Venezuela are described as leaders of a fight for 'national liberation'--not only by themselves and by Castro and the Chinese Communists but by the Soviet Communists.

"A recent editorial in Pravda spoke of the 'peoples of Latin America ...marching firmly along the path of struggle for their national independence' and said, '...the upsurge of the national liberation movement in Latin American countries has been to a great extent a result of the activities of Communist parties.' It added:

'The Soviet people have regarded and still regard it as their sacred duty to give support to the peoples fighting for their independence. True to their international duty the Soviet people have been and will remain on the side of the Latin American patriots.'

"In Communist doctrine and practice, a non-Communist government may be labeled and denounced as 'colonialist,' 'reactionary,' or a 'puppet,' and any state so labeled by the Communists automatically becomes fair game--while Communist intervention by force in non-Communist states is justified as 'self-defense' or part of the 'struggle against colonial domination.' 'Self-determination' seems to mean that any Communist nation can determine by itself that any non-Communist state is a victim of colonialist domination and therefore a justifiable target for a 'war of liberation.'

"As the risks of overt aggression, whether nuclear or with conventional forces, have become increasingly evident, the Communists have put increasing stress on the 'war of national liberation.' The Chinese Communists have been more militant in language and behavior than the Soviet Communists. But the Soviet Communist leadership also has consistently proclaimed its commitment in principle to support wars of national liberation. This commitment was reaffirmed as recently as Monday of this week by Mr. Kosygin /Aleksai N. Kosygin, Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers/.

"International law does not restrict internal revolution within a state or revolution against colonial authority. But international law does restrict what third powers may lawfully do in support of insurrection. It is these restrictions which are challenged by the doctrine, and violated by the practice, of 'wars of liberation.'

"It is plain that acceptance of the doctrine of 'wars of liberation' would amount to scuttling the modern international law of peace which the charter prescribes. And acceptance of the practice of 'wars of liberation,'

as defined by the Communists, would mean the breakdown of peace itself.

"South Viet-Nam's Right of Self-Defense

"Viet-Nam presents a clear current case of the lawful versus the unlawful use of force. I would agree with General Giap [Vo Nguyen Giap, North Vietnamese Commander in Chief] and other Communists that it is a test case for 'wars of national liberation.' We intend to meet that test.

"Were the insurgency in South Viet-Nam truly indigenous and self-sustained, international law would not be involved. But the fact is that it receives vital external support--in organization and direction, in training, in men, in weapons and other supplies. That external support is unlawful for a double reason. First, it contravenes general international law, which the United Nations Charter here expresses. Second, it contravenes particular international law: the 1954 Geneva accords on Viet-Nam and the 1962 Geneva agreements on Laos.

"In resisting the aggression against it, the Republic of Viet-Nam is exercising its right of self-defense. It called upon us and other states for assistance. And in the exercise of the right of collective self-defense under the United Nations Charter, we and other nations are providing such assistance.

"The American policy of assisting South Viet-Nam to maintain its freedom was inaugurated under President Eisenhower and continued under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Our assistance has been increased because the aggression from the North has been augmented. Our assistance now encompasses the bombing of North Viet-Nam. The bombing is designed to interdict, as far as possible, and to inhibit, as far as may be necessary, continued aggression against the Republic of Viet-Nam.

"When that aggression ceases, collective measures in defense against it will cease. As President Johnson has declared:

'...if that aggression is stopped, the people and Government of South Viet-Nam will be free to settle their own future, and the need for supporting American military action there will end.'

"The fact that the demarcation line between North and South Viet-Nam was intended to be temporary does not make the assault on South Viet-Nam any less of an aggression. The demarcation lines between North and South Korea and between East and West Germany are temporary. But that did not make the North Korean invasion of South Korea a permissible use of force.

"Let's not forget the salient features of the 1962 agreements on Laos. Laos was to be independent and neutral. All foreign troops, regular or irregular, and other military personnel were to be withdrawn within 75 days, except a limited number of French instructors as requested by

the Lao Government. No arms were to be introduced into Laos except at the request of that Government. The signatories agreed to refrain 'from all direct or indirect interference in the internal affairs' of Laos. They promised also not to use Lao territory to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries--a stipulation that plainly prohibited the passage of arms and men from North Viet-Nam to South Viet-Nam by way of Laos. An International Control Commission of three was to assure compliance with the agreements.

"What happened? The non-Communist elements complied. The Communists did not. At no time since that agreement was signed have either the Pathet Lao or the North Viet-Nam authorities complied with it. The North Vietnamese left several thousand troops there--the backbone of almost every Pathet Lao battalion. Use of the corridor through Laos to South Viet-Nam continued. And the Communists barred the areas under their control both to the Government of Laos and the International Control Commission.

"Nature of Struggle in Viet-Nam

"To revert to Viet-Nam: I continue to hear and see nonsense about the nature of the struggle there. I sometimes wonder if the gullibility of educated men and the stubborn disregard of plain facts by men who are supposed to be helping our young to learn--especially to learn how to think.

"Hanoi has never made a secret of its designs. It publicly proclaimed in 1960 a renewal of the assault on South Viet-Nam. Quite obviously its hopes of taking over South Viet-Nam from within had withered to close to zero--and the remarkable economic and social progress of South Viet-Nam contrasted, most disagreeably for the North Vietnamese Communists, with their own miserable economic performance.

"The facts about the external involvement have been documented in white papers and other publications of the Department of State. The International Control Commission has held that there is evidence 'beyond reasonable doubt' of North Vietnamese intervention.

"There is no evidence that the Viet Cong has any significant popular following in South Viet-Nam. It relies heavily on terror. Most of its reinforcements in recent months have been North Vietnamese from the North Vietnamese Army.

"Let us be clear about what is involved today in Southeast Asia. We are not involved with empty phrases or conceptions which ride upon the clouds. We are talking about the vital national interests of the United States in the peace of the Pacific. We are talking about the appetite for aggression--an appetite which grows upon feeding and which is proclaimed to be insatiable. We are talking about the safety of nations with whom we are allied--and the integrity of the American commitment to join in meeting attack.

"It is true that we also believe that every small state has a right to be unmolested by its neighbors even though it is within reach of a great power. It is true that we are committed to general principles of law and procedure which reject the idea that men and arms can be sent freely across frontiers to absorb a neighbor. But underlying the general principles is the harsh reality that our own security is threatened by those who would embark upon a course of aggression whose announced ultimate purpose is our own destruction.

"Once again we hear expressed the views which cost the men of my generation a terrible price in World War II. We are told that Southeast Asia is far away--but so were Manchuria and Ethiopia. We are told that, if we insist that someone stop shooting, that is asking them for unconditional surrender. We are told that perhaps the aggressor will be content with just one more bite. We are told that, if we prove faithless on one commitment, perhaps others would believe us about other commitments in other places. We are told that, if we stop resisting, perhaps the other side will have a change of heart. We are asked to stop hitting bridges and radar sites and ammunition depots without requiring that the other side stop its slaughter of thousands of civilians and its bombings of schools and hotels and hospitals and railways and buses.

"Surely we have learned over the past three decades that the acceptance of aggression leads only to a sure catastrophe. Surely we have learned that the aggressor must face the consequences of his action and be saved from the frightful miscalculation that brings all to ruin. It is the purpose of law to guide men away from such events, to establish rules of conduct which are deeply rooted in the reality of experience."

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27. Statement by President Johnson at a News Conference at the White House on April 27, 1965 and Transcript of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's New Conference of April 26, 1965 on the Situation in Viet-Nam, Department of State Bulletin, May 17, 1965, p. 748.

"Statement by President Johnson

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"Independent South Viet-Nam has been attacked by North Viet-Nam. The object of that attack is conquest.

"Defeat in South Viet-Nam would be to deliver a friendly nation to terror and repression. It would encourage and spur on those who seek

to conquer all free nations within their reach. Our own welfare and our own freedom would be in danger.

"This is the clearest lesson of our time. From Munich until today we have learned that to yield to aggression brings only greater threats--and more destructive war. To stand firm is the only guarantee of lasting peace."

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"Viet Cong Weapons From External Sources

"The latest step has been the covert infiltration of a regular combat unit of the North Vietnamese Army into South Viet-Nam. Evidence accumulated within the last month now confirms the presence in northwest Kontum Province--that is in the central highland area of South Viet-Nam, around Pleiku and north of Pleiku--recent evidence which we have received confirms the presence in that northwest Kontum Province of the 2d Battalion of the 325th Division of the regular North Vietnamese Army. It is important to recognize, I think, that the great bulk of the weapons which the Viet Cong are using and with which they are supplied come from external sources."

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/Secretary McNamara/

"Communist Strategy

"Q. Mr. Secretary, a personal question. As the fighting has increased in Viet-Nam, more and more of the U.S. critics of the administration's policy have been referring to this as 'McNamara's war.' What is your reaction? Does this annoy you?

"A. It does not annoy me because I think it is a war that is being fought to preserve the freedom of a very brave people, an independent nation. It is a war which is being fought to counter the strategy of the Communists, a strategy which Premier Khrushchev laid out very clearly in the very famous speech which he made on January 6, 1961.

"You may recall that at that time he divided all wars into three categories. He spoke of world wars, meaning nuclear wars; he spoke of local wars, by which he meant large-scale conventional wars; and then he spoke of what he called 'wars of liberation.'

"He ruled out world wars as being too dangerous to the existence of the Communist states. He ruled out local wars because he said they could very easily escalate into nuclear wars which would lead to the ultimate destruction of the Communist states. But he strongly endorsed 'wars of

liberation' and made it perfectly clear that it would be through application of that strategy that the Communists would seek to subvert independent nations throughout the world, seek to extend their domination, their political domination, of other nations.

"It is very clear that that is the Communist Chinese strategy in Southeast Asia. It is a strategy I feel we should oppose, and, while it is not my war, I don't object to my name being associated with it."

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28. Statement by Secretary Ball on May 3, 1965 at the Opening Session of the SEATO Council Ministers' 10th Meeting at London, Department of State Bulletin, June 7, 1965, p. 922.

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"We have, however, come to realize from the experience of the past years that aggression must be dealt with wherever it occurs and no matter what mask it may wear. Neither we nor other nations of the free world were always alert to this. In the 1930's Manchuria seemed a long way away, but it was only 10 years from Manchuria to Pearl Harbor. Ethiopia seemed a long way away. The rearmament of the Rhineland was regarded as regrettable but not worth a shooting war. Yet after that came Austria. And after Austria, Czechoslovakia. Then Poland. Then the Second World War.

"The central issue we face in South Viet-Nam should, I think, be clear for all to see. It is whether a small state on the periphery of Communist power should be permitted to maintain its freedom. And that is an issue of vital importance to small states everywhere.

"Moreover, it is an issue that affects the security of the whole free world. Never has that point been more succinctly stated than by one of the greatest of all Englishmen, Sir Winston Churchill. 'The belief,' he said, 'that security can be obtained by throwing a small state to the wolves is a fatal illusion.' And let us not forget that General /Vo Nguyen/ Giap, the head of the North Vietnamese armed forces, has said quite explicitly that if the so-called 'war of liberation' technique succeeds in Viet-Nam, it can succeed 'everywhere in the world.'"

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29. Remarks by President Johnson at White House Before House and Senate Committees on May 4, 1965, "Congress Approves Supplemental Appropriation for Vietnam," Department of State Bulletin, May 24, 1965, p. 817.

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"This is not the same kind of aggression which the world has long been used to. Instead of the sweep of invading armies there is the steady and the deadly attack in the night by guerrilla bands that come without warning, that kill people while they sleep.

"In Viet-Nam we pursue that same principle which has infused American action in the Far East for a quarter of a century. There are those who ask why this responsibility should be ours. The answer, I think, is simple. There is no one else who can do the job. Our power alone, in the final test, can stand between expanding communism and independent Asian nations.

"Thus, when India was attacked, it looked to us for help, and we gave it immediately. We believe that Asia should be directed by Asians. But that means that each Asian people must have the right to find its own way, not that one group or one nation should overrun all the others.

"Now make no mistake about it, the aim in Viet-Nam is not simply the conquest of the South, tragic as that would be. It is to show that American commitment is worthless, and they would like very much to do that, and once they succeed in doing that, the gates are down and the road is open to expansion and to endless conquest. Moreover, we are directly committed to the defense of South Viet-Nam beyond any question.

"In 1954 we signed the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and that treaty committed us to act to meet aggression against South Viet-Nam...."

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30. Address by William P. Bundy Before Dallas Council on World Affairs on May 13, 1965, "Reality and Myth Concerning South Vietnam," Department of State Bulletin, June 7, 1965, p. 893.

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"Myths on the South Viet-Nam Story

"This is the simple basic story of what has happened in South Viet-Nam since 1954. Let me now turn to certain myths that have arisen concerning that story.

"First, there is the question of the attitude of the South Vietnamese Government and ourselves toward the reunification of Viet-Nam through free elections. The 1954 Geneva accords had provided for free elections by secret ballot in 1956, and it has been alleged that the failure to proceed with these elections in some way justified Hanoi's

action in resorting to military measures, first slowly and then by the stepped-up infiltration beginning in 1959 and 1960.

"The facts are quite otherwise. The Eisenhower administration had fully supported the principle of free elections under international supervision, in Viet-Nam as in other situations where a country was divided, Korea and Germany.

"A similar position was taken by President Diem of South Viet-Nam. For example, in January 1955 Diem made it clear to an American correspondent that:

'The clauses providing for the 1956 elections are extremely vague. But at one point they are clear--in stipulating that the elections are to be free. Everything will now depend on how free elections are defined. The President said he would wait to see whether the conditions of freedom would exist in North Viet-Nam at the time scheduled for the elections. He asked what would be the good of an impartial counting of votes if the voting had been preceded in North Viet-Nam by the ruthless propaganda and terrorism on the part of a police state.'

"I do not think any of us would dissent from this description of what is required for free elections. And the simple fact is that, when the issue arose concretely in 1956, the regime in Hanoi--while it kept calling for elections in its propaganda--made no effort to respond to the call of the Soviet Union and Great Britain, as cochairmen of the 1954 Geneva conference, for the setting up of the appropriate machinery for free elections.

"The reason is not far to seek. For North Viet-Nam in 1956--and indeed today--is a Communist state and in 1956 North Viet-Nam was in deep trouble. Its own leaders admitted as much in their party congress in the fall of 1956 in a statement by General [Vo Nguyen] Giap referring to widespread terror, failure to respect the principles of faith and worship in the so-called land reform program, the use of torture as a normal practice, and a whole list of excesses which even the Communists had come to realize went too far.

"So the answer is, I repeat, simple. There was no chance of free elections in North Viet-Nam in 1956. We shall wait to see whether there will ever be such a chance in the future.

"Second, there is the myth that the Viet Cong movement has any significant relationship to the political opposition to President Diem. I have referred already to the unfortunate trends that developed after 1959 in President Diem's rule. There was unquestionably opposition to him within South Viet-Nam, and that opposition included many distinguished South Vietnamese, some of whom went into exile as a result. Others stayed in Saigon, and some were imprisoned.

"But the point is this. The men who led the opposition to Diem are not today in the Viet Cong. On the contrary, the present Prime Minister, Dr. /Phan Huy/ Quat, and his group of so-called Caravellistes, all of whom opposed Diem, are today the leaders of the Government. These men, and their followers, are nationalists and strongly anti-Communist; not one of them, of any significance, went over to the Viet Cong.

"This brings me to the question of the so-called National Liberation Front, which is the political facade, made in Hanoi, for the Viet Cong movement. I doubt if any of you can name a single leader of the National Liberation Front. But these are faceless men installed by Hanoi to give the appearance of bourgeois and truly South Vietnamese support for the operation.

"Lest you think I exaggerate, I refer you to the excellent recent account by Georges Chaffard, a French correspondent for L'Express in Paris, who recently visited the Viet Cong and interviewed some of its "leaders." Chaffard describes vividly what these men are, including their strong desire to find a replacement for the obscure lawyer named Tho who is the titular head of the front and who apparently is the only figure Hanoi can find who was even in Saigon or participating in South Vietnamese political life during the latter Diem period. Chaffard's conclusion, which I quote, is that:

'The Front for National Liberation structure is the classic structure of a 'National Front' before the taking over of power by the Communists.'

"So there should be no doubt of the true nature of the Viet Cong and its Liberation Front, or that they are a completely different movement from the political opposition to Diem. As to the latter, and its present emergence into a truly nationalistic amalgam of forces--regional, religious, military, and civilian--I can perhaps best refer you to the excellent lead article by Mr. George Carver, an American with long experience in Saigon, in the April issue of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Carver tells a fascinating story of the emergence of these new nationalistic forces in South Viet-Nam, with all their difficulties and weaknesses, but with the fundamental and overriding fact that they are the true new voice of South Viet-Nam and that they have never had anything to do with the Viet Cong."

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"The Korean War also had an important message for the Communists--and as a result we may have seen the last of the old classical war of open invasions. Korea proved to the Communists that they had to find a more effective strategy of conquest. They chose to refine a technique that they had used on a primitive scale and to their ultimate defeat in Greece, Malaya, and the Philippines. I am referring to the so-called 'war of national liberation.' This is the label Khrushchev employed in

1961 to describe Communist strategy for the future--aggression directed and supplied from outside a nation, but disguised in nationalist trappings so that it might pass as an indigenous insurrection.

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"The Communists have expanded upon their 'wars of liberation' technique. Africa and Latin America are already feeling the threat of such thrusts. But by far the most highly sophisticated and ambitious attempt at such aggression by the Communists is taking place today in Viet-Nam.

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"The 'wars of liberation' strategy is at this time an essential element of the expansionist policy of Communist China and her Asian ally, North Viet-Nam. If we allow it to succeed in Viet-Nam, we would be confirming Peiping's assertion that armed struggle is a more productive Communist course than Moscow's doctrine of peaceful coexistence. 'Wars of national liberation' would most certainly spread. Red China has already identified Thailand as the next target for a so-called 'liberation struggle,' and its Foreign Minister Chen Yi has promised that it will be launched before the end of this year.

"The major test to date of this new Communist strategy is taking place today in Viet-Nam. Even the Asian Communists have acknowledged the larger implications of this confrontation. Not long ago General Giap, the well-known leader of North Viet-Nam's army, declared that,

'South Viet-Nam is the model of the national liberation movement of our time....If the special warfare that the U.S. imperialists are testing in South Viet-Nam is overcome, then it can be defeated everywhere in the world.'

"In another recent comment, North Viet-Nam's Premier Pham Van Dong said that:

'The experience of our compatriots in South Viet-Nam attracts the attention of the world, especially the peoples of South America.'

"The People's Daily, Peiping's official newspaper, echoed those statements in an editorial on May Day this year. It said:

'The Vietnamese people's struggle against U.S. imperialism has become the focal point of the international class struggle at this moment. This is an acid test for all political forces in the world.'

"Our firm posture in Viet-Nam, then, seeks peace and security in three related dimensions: for South Viet-Nam, for the sake of Southeast

Asia's independence and security generally, and for the other small nations everywhere that would face the same kind of subversive threat from without if the Communists were to succeed in Vietnam...."

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31. Address by President Johnson Before the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists at the White House on May 13, 1965, "Viet-Nam: The Third Face of the War," Department of State Bulletin, May 31, 1965, p. 838.

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"....Communist China apparently desires the war to continue whatever the cost to their allies. Their target is not merely South Viet-Nam; it is Asia. Their objective is not the fulfillment of Vietnamese nationalism; it is to erode and to discredit America's ability to help prevent Chinese domination over all of Asia."

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32. Address by William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Before the Faculty Forum of the University of California at Berkeley on May 27, 1965, "A Perspective on U.S. Policy in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, June 21, 1965, p. 1001.

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"For the underlying fact is that there cannot be a balance of power in Asia without us. Under the control of a Communist regime still at the peak of its ideological fervor, a unified mainland China today does threaten the outnumbered newly independent nations of Asia, not merely in the sense of influence but in the sense of domination and the denial of national self-determination and independence--not necessarily drastically or at once, for the Chinese Communist leaders are patient; not necessarily, or even in their eyes preferably, by conventional armed attack, but surely and inexorably, as they see it, through the technique of spurious national movements deriving their real impetus and support from external and Communist sources.

"And in this central Communist effort, the other Communist nations of Asia, North Viet-Nam and North Korea, are willing partners. They have their national character, they are not true satellites--indeed, deep down, they too fear Chinese domination. Yet, so long as the spoils are fairly divided, they are working together with Communist China toward a goal the opposite of the one we seek, subjugation of the true national independence of smaller countries, an Asia of spheres of domination."

* * *

"For South Viet-Nam is the outcome of a very particular slice of recent Asian history. Only in Viet-Nam was a genuine nationalist movement taken over by Communist leaders and transmuted into the Communist state of North Viet-Nam. And so the French, instead of yielding gradually or with the fullest possible preparation for self-government, as the British wisely did in India, Pakistan, and Malaysia, were effectively driven out in 1954 and Viet-Nam was divided."

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"By 1956, to paraphrase the same eminent scholar, Communist China and North Viet-Nam, all propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding, simply were not willing to risk the loss of South Viet-Nam in elections, and, perhaps most crucial, the conditions for free elections did not prevail in either North or South Viet-Nam. So the date passed, and the dividing line between the two Viet-Nams became a political division as in Germany and Korea, with reunification left to the future. And in the course of time another 30-odd nations recognized South Viet-Nam, and recognize it today.

"(By the way, the eminent scholar I have just been citing was Professor Hans J. Morgenthau, writing in a pamphlet entitled 'America's Stake in Viet-Nam,' published in 1956. One of the other participants in that conference was the then junior Senator from Massachusetts. He was a bit more downright than the professor, saying that 'neither the United States nor Free Viet-Nam is ever going to be a party to an election obviously stacked and subverted in advance.')

"Since 1956 two different strands have dominated developments in South Viet-Nam. One is a genuine nationalist internal political ferment, in which the South Vietnamese themselves are seeking a lasting political base for their country--in the face of the same problems other new nations have faced, but compounded by the colonial heritage of lack of training and divide-and-rule tactics. That ferment should not surprise us; almost every new nation has gone through it--for example, Korea and Pakistan. Under Diem it drove many distinguished South Vietnamese to exile or prison, from 1962 until early this year it seriously weakened the defense of the nation, and it now has brought into power a regime led by men who were the real opponents of Diem and are something close to the true voice of South Vietnamese nationalism--men, too, who are already widening the base of support and holding local elections.

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"The other, and entirely different, strand has been Hanoi's effort to take over the South by subversive aggression. On this the facts are plain and have been fully set out, though still in summary form, in the white papers published in December of 1961 and February 1965. If these

do not convince you, read Hanoi's own pronouncements over the years, the eyewitness accounts of the tons of weapons found just in recent months, the personal interrogation of a typical infiltrated Viet Cong by Seymour Topping in Sunday's New York Times, or the recent accounts by the Frenchman, George Chaffard, who concluded that the so-called National Liberation Front was a classic example of the type of Communist organization used to take over another country.

"In short, North Viet-Nam has been from the start, quite proudly and unashamedly, what President Johnson has called the heartbeat of the Viet Cong. As in Greece, the Viet Cong have won control of major areas of the country, playing in part on propaganda and the undoubted weaknesses of Diem and his successors, but relying basically on massive intimidation of civilians. Over the years, the rate of civilian casualties--deliberate action casualties, killed, wounded and kidnaped--has been about 40 a day in South Viet-Nam; civilian officials have been particular targets, with the obvious aim of crippling the government structure."

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"I come now to the choice of methods. Till 1961 President Eisenhower and President Kennedy limited our help to a massive economic effort and to the supply of military equipment under the terms of the Geneva accords. When, after 2 years of intensified effort from the North, the situation had become serious in late 1961, President Kennedy made the decision to send thousands of our military men for advisory and other roles short of the commitment of combat units. President Johnson intensified this effort in every possible way and only in February of this year took the further decision, urged by the South Vietnamese themselves, to do what would have been justified all along--and had never been excluded--engage in highly selective and measured military bombing of the North itself, still coupled with every possible effort to assist in the South in the struggle which only the South Vietnamese can win there."

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33. Address by President Johnson in Chicago, Illinois on June 3, 1965, "The Peace of Mankind," Department of State Bulletin, June 21, 1965, p. 987.

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"In the 1930's we made our fate not by what we did but what we Americans failed to do. We propelled ourselves and all mankind toward tragedy, not by decisiveness but by vacillation, not by determination and resolution but by hesitancy and irresolution, not by action but by inaction.

"The failure of free men in the 1930's was not of the sword but of the soul. And there just must be no such failure in the 1960's."

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34. Secretary Rusk's Interview re Vietnam on "Issues and Answers," American Broadcasting Company Radio and Television on July 11, 1965, With ABC Correspondents William H. Lawrence and John Scali, Department of State Bulletin, August 2, 1965, p. 188.

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"U.S. Obligation to Allies

"Mr. Scali: Mr. Secretary, you have mentioned repeatedly, in explaining why we are fighting, that the credibility of American pledges is at stake here and that if the Communists succeed in overrunning South Viet-Nam we will have trouble elsewhere in the world. What, specifically, could you foresee in the unlikely event we did lose this?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, suppose that our 41 other allies--or 42 allies--should find themselves questioning the validity of the assurance of the United States with respect to their security? What would be the effect of that? If our commitment to South Viet-Nam did not mean anything, what would you think if you were a Thai and considered what our commitments meant to Thailand? What would you think if you were West Berliners and you found that our assurance on these matters did not amount to very much?

"Now, this is utterly fundamental in maintaining the peace of the world, utterly fundamental. South Viet-Nam is important in itself, but Hanoi moved tens of thousands of people in there in the face of an American commitment of 10 years' standing. Now, this is something that we cannot ignore because this begins to roll things up all over the world if we are not careful here.

"Mr. Scali: Is the converse not also true--if we stop the Communists in South Viet-Nam that it will make it considerably easier to achieve an enduring peace elsewhere?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, I think that one can say with reasonable confidence that both sides recognize that a nuclear exchange is not a rational instrument of policy and that mass divisions moving across national frontiers is far too dangerous to use as an easy instrument of policy, but now we have this problem of 'wars of liberation' and we must find a complete answer to that, and the other side must realize that the use of militancy, of men and arms across frontiers in pursuit of what they call 'wars of liberation,' also is too dangerous.

"Now, there has been a big argument between Moscow and Peiping on

this subject over the years, but Peiping must also begin to work its way back toward the idea of mutual coexistence. Otherwise there is going to be very great trouble ahead."

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35. Statement by President Johnson at White House News Conference on July 28, 1965, "We Will Stand in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, August 16, 1965, p. 262.

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"....Three times in my lifetime, in two world wars and in Korea, Americans have gone to far lands to fight for freedom. We have learned at a terrible and brutal cost that retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace.

"It is this lesson that has brought us to Viet-Nam. This is a different kind of war. There are no marching armies or solemn declarations. Some citizens of South Viet-Nam, at times with understandable grievances, have joined in the attack on their own government.

"But we must not let this mask the central fact that this is really war. It is guided by North Viet-Nam, and it is spurred by Communist China. Its goal is to conquer the South, to defeat American power, and to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism.

"There are great stakes in the balance.

"Most of the non-Communist nations of Asia cannot, by themselves and alone, resist growing might and the grasping ambition of Asian communism.

"Our power, therefore, is a very vital shield. If we are driven from the field in Viet-Nam, then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise or in American protection.

"In each land the forces of independence would be considerably weakened and an Asia so threatened by Communist domination would certainly imperil the security of the United States itself.

"We did not choose to be the guardians at the gate, but there is no one else.

"Nor would surrender in Viet-Nam bring peace, because we learned from Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite of aggression. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another country, bringing with it perhaps even larger and crueler conflict, as we have learned from the lessons of history.

"Moreover, we are in Viet-Nam to fulfill one of the most solemn pledges of the American nation. Three Presidents--President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and your present President--over 11 years have committed themselves and have promised to help defend this small and valiant nation.

"Strengthened by that promise, the people of South Viet-Nam have fought for many long years. Thousands of them have died. Thousands more have been crippled and scarred by war. We just cannot now dishonor our word, or abandon our commitment, or leave those who believed us and who trusted us to the terror and repression and murder that would follow.

"This, then, my fellow Americans, is why we are in Viet-Nam."

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36. Statement by Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, Before the Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations of the Senate Committee on Appropriations on August 4, 1965, "Buildup of U.S. Forces in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, August 30, 1965, p. 369.

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"The issue in Viet-Nam is essentially the same as it was in 1954 when President Eisenhower said:

'I think it is no longer necessary to enter into a long argument or exposition to show the importance to the United States of Indochina and of the struggle going on there. No matter how the struggle may have started, it has long since become one of the testing places between a free form of government and dictatorship. Its outcome is going to have the greatest significance for us, and possibly for a long time into the future.

'We have here a sort of cork in the bottle, the bottle being the great area that includes Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, all of the surrounding areas of Asia with its hundreds of millions of people....'

"What is at stake there is the ability of the free world to block Communist armed aggression and prevent the loss of all of Southeast Asia, a loss which in its ultimate consequences could drastically alter the strategic situation in Asia and the Pacific to the grave detriment of our own security and that of our allies....

"The struggle there has enormous implications for the security of the United States and the free world and, for that matter, the Soviet

Union as well. The North Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists have chosen to make South Viet-Nam the test case for their particular version of the so-called 'wars of national liberation.' The extent to which violence should be used in overthrowing non-Communist governments has been one of the most bitterly contested issues between the Chinese and the Soviet Communists. Although the former Chairman, Mr. Khrushchev, fully endorsed 'wars of national liberation' as the preferred means of extending the sway of communism, he cautioned that 'this does not necessarily mean that the transition to Socialism will everywhere and in all cases be linked with armed uprising and civil war....Revolution by peaceful means accords with the interests of the working class and the masses.'

"The Chinese Communists, however, insist that:

'Peaceful co-existence cannot replace the revolutionary struggles of the people. The transition from capitalism to socialism in any country can only be brought about through proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in that country....The vanguard of the proletariat will remain unconquerable in all circumstances only if it masters all forms of struggle--peaceful and armed, open and secret, legal and illegal, parliamentary struggle and mass struggle, and so forth. (Letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, June 14, 1963.)'

"Their preference for violence was even more emphatically expressed in an article in the Peiping People's Daily of March 31, 1964:

'It is advantageous from the point of view of tactics to refer to the desire for peaceful transition, but it would be inappropriate to emphasize the possibility of peaceful transition....the proletarian party must never substitute parliamentary struggle for proletarian revolution or entertain the illusion that the transition to socialism can be achieved through the parliamentary road....Violent revolution is a universal law of proletarian revolution. To realize the transition to socialism, the proletariat must wage armed struggle, smash the old state machine and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.'

"'Political power,' the article quotes Mao Tse-tung as saying, 'grows out of the barrel of a gun.'

"Throughout the world we see the fruits of these policies and in Viet-Nam, particularly, we see the effects of the Chinese Communists' more militant stance and their hatred of the free world. They make no secret of the fact that Viet-Nam is the test case, and neither does the regime in Hanoi. General Giap, head of the North Vietnamese army, recently said that 'South Viet-Nam is the model of the national liberation movement of our time....If the special warfare that the U.S. imperialists are testing in South Viet-Nam is overcome, then it can be defeated everywhere in the world.' And Pham Van Dong, Premier of North Viet-Nam, pointed out that 'The experience of our compatriots in South Viet-Nam attracts the attention of the world, especially the peoples of South America.'

"It is clear, therefore, that a Communist success in South Viet-Nam would be taken as positive proof that the Chinese Communists' position is correct and they will have made a giant step forward in their efforts to seize control of the world Communist movement. Furthermore, such a success would greatly increase the prestige of Communist China among the nonalined nations and strengthen the position of their followers everywhere. In that event we would then have to be prepared to cope with the same kind of aggression in other parts of the world wherever the existing governments are weak and the social structures fragmented. If Communist armed aggression is not stopped in Viet-Nam as it was in Korea, the confidence of small nations in America's pledge of support will be weakened, and many of them, in widely separated areas of the world, will feel unsafe.

"Thus the stakes in South Viet-Nam are far greater than the loss of one small country to communism. Its loss would be a most serious setback to the cause of freedom and would greatly complicate the task of preventing the further spread of militant Asian communism. And, if that spread is not halted, our strategic position in the world will be weakened and our national security directly endangered.

"It was in recognition of this fundamental issue that the United States, under three Presidents, firmly committed itself to help the people of South Viet-Nam defend their freedom. That is why President Eisenhower warned at the time of the Geneva conference in July 1954 that 'any renewal of Communist aggression would be viewed by us as a matter of grave concern.' That is why President Johnson in his statement last Wednesday made it clear to all the world that we are determined to stand by our commitment and provide whatever help is required to fulfill it."

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"....We have also identified at least three battalions of the regular North Vietnamese army, and there are probably considerably more. At the same time the Government of South Viet-Nam has found it increasingly difficult to make a commensurate increase in the size of its own forces, which now stand at about 545,000 men, including the regional and local defense forces but excluding the national police."

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37. Interview with Secretary Rusk and Secretary McNamara on a Columbia Broadcasting System television program by Peter Kalischer, Alexander Kendrick, and Harry Reasoner, on August 9, 1965, "Political and Military Aspects of U.S. Policy in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, August 30, 1965, p. 342.

"Mr. Reasoner:

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"I would like to begin by asking both Secretaries two basic questions: First, how is our honor involved in Viet-Nam? And second, how is our security involved in those rice paddies and remote villages? And since sometimes in international relations security comes before honor, I will ask Mr. McNamara to answer first.

"Why U.S. National Security is Involved

"Secretary McNamara: First, let me make clear, Mr. Reasoner, that this is not primarily a military problem. Above all else, I want to emphasize that. It is a battle for the hearts and the minds of the people of South Viet-Nam, and it will only be won if we make clear to those people that their longrun security depends on the development of a stable political institution and an expanding economy. That is our objective.

"As a prerequisite to that, we must be able to guarantee their physical security. How does our physical security, our national interest, become involved in this? That is your question. Secretary Rusk will elaborate on it, but let me say to start with that it is apparent that underlying the terror, the harassment, of the South Vietnamese by the Viet Cong is the purpose and the objective of North Viet-Nam, backed by Communist China, to expand Communist control over the peoples of the independent nations of Southeast Asia and to use this as a test of their method of expanding control over independent peoples throughout the world in the undeveloped areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The leaders of those two nations have on numerous instances stated this as their purpose. For example, General /Vo Nguyen/ Giap, who is the head of the North Vietnamese military forces, said not long ago that South Viet-Nam is the model of the national liberation movement of our time. If the special warfare that the United States is testing in South Viet-Nam is overcome, then it can be defeated anywhere in the world.

"And perhaps more pertinently in relation to Latin America is the comment of Pham Van Dong, who is the Prime Minister of North Viet-Nam, who said recently: 'The experience of our compatriots in South Viet-Nam attracts the attention of the world, especially the peoples of Latin America,' and the interests of the Chinese Communists in advancing Asian communism by force are well known.

"But I want to call your attention to two important statements emphasizing that. The Peiping People's Daily said about 12 months ago from Peiping, China: 'It is advantageous from the point of view of tactics to refer to the desire for peaceful transition from capitalism to communism, but it would be inappropriate to emphasize that possibility. The Communist Party must never entertain the illusion that the transition to communism can be achieved through the parliamentary road....Violent revolution is a universal law of proletarian revolution. To realize the transition to communism the proletariat must wage armed struggle....' And, put even more succinctly, Mao Tse-tung said recently, 'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.'

"That is why our national security is involved in South Viet-Nam.

"Integrity of American Commitment

"Mr. Reasoner: And the honor, Secretary Rusk?

"Secretary Rusk: . Mr. Reasoner, the answer to this question is extremely simple and need not be complicated.

"When President Johnson talks about our national honor, he is not using some empty phrase of 18th-century diplomacy. He is talking about the life and death of the Nation. Now, the essential fact from which we start is that North Viet-Nam has sent tens of thousands of men and large quantities of arms into South Viet-Nam to take over that country by force. We have a very simple commitment to South Viet-Nam. It derives out of the Southeast Asia Treaty, out of the bilateral arrangements that President Eisenhower made with the Government of South Viet-Nam, out of regular authorizations and appropriations of the Congress in giving aid to South Viet-Nam, out of the resolution of the Congress of last August, out of the most formal declarations of three Presidents of both political parties.

"Now, there is no need to parse these commitments in great detail. The fact is that we know we have a commitment. The South Vietnamese know we have a commitment. The Communist world knows we have a commitment. The rest of the world knows it.

"Now, this means that the integrity of the American commitment is at the heart of this problem. I believe that the integrity of the American commitment is the principal structure of peace throughout the world. We have 42 allies. Those alliances were approved by overwhelming votes of our Senate. We didn't go into those alliances through some sense of amiability or through some philanthropic attitude toward other nations. We went into them because we consider these alliances utterly essential for the security of our own nation.

"Now, if our allies or, more particularly, if our adversaries should discover that the American commitment is not worth anything, then the world would face dangers of which we have not yet dreamed. And so it is important for us to make good on that American commitment to South Viet-Nam.

"Mr. Kendrick: But, sir, don't you have to reckon honor at its cost? I mean, it is not an abstract thing. It has to be evalued and weighed according to what it costs you. And what about dishonor? What about the world image that we now present? We are burning villages, we are killing civilians. Now, don't you weigh one against the other?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, let me say that you also weigh the costs of dishonor, that is, the failure of an American commitment. And I would hope that our own American news media would go to some effort to present

a balanced picture of what is going on in South Viet-Nam: the thousands of local officials who have been kidnaped, the tens of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians who have been killed or wounded by North Vietnamese mortars and by the constant depredations of these acts of violence against the civilian population.

"No, there are costs involved in meeting your commitments of honor. There always have been, there always will be. But I would suggest, if we look at the history of the last 30 or 40 years, that the costs of not meeting your obligations are far greater than those of meeting your obligations.

"Political and Military Situation in Viet-Nam

"Mr. Reasoner: Gentlemen, having set the stage, more or less, with your opening statements, I would like to start off first in the area of what we hope to achieve there this year and how we are doing militarily and politically. Peter?

"Mr. Kalischer: Well, I would like to bring up the subject of who we are committed to. You mentioned the fact, Mr. Secretary, that we have had a commitment to the Vietnamese Government. That government has changed some seven or eight times in the last 18 to 20 months, and when we say we have this commitment to this government, are we reasonably assured that this government represents the people of South Viet-Nam or even a large number of the people in South Viet-Nam?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, we recognize, of course, that there are difficulties in the top leadership in South Viet-Nam and have been over the months, but that does not mean that our commitment to the nation and to the people of South Viet-Nam is changed any more than the fact that we have had three changes of government in our own Government during the period of this commitment.

"Mr. Kalischer: In a slightly different form.

"Secretary Rusk: The impression we have is that among the 14 million people in South Viet-Nam we do not find any significant group outside of the Viet Cong itself, relatively limited in numbers, that seems to be looking to Hanoi for the answer. The Buddhists are not, the Catholics are not, the other sects are not, the montagnards are not, the million Cambodians living in South Viet-Nam are not. In other words, we, I think, would know very quickly, because we have lots of Americans living throughout the countryside--we would know very quickly if these people of South Viet-Nam wanted the program of the Liberation Front or wanted domination from Hanoi. That we do not find."

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"Mr. Kendrick:

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"....I wonder, now, if we are still fighting the same war with Communist China that we were fighting in Korea; is that really the enemy?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, the present enemy on the ground is North Viet-Nam and infiltration from North Viet-Nam, as far as we are concerned. This appeal by the Liberation Front to Hanoi and Hanoi's response to it simply repeats the factual situation. Hanoi has been sending tens of thousands of men and large quantities of arms into South Viet-Nam. This is not new.

"Now, in terms of the more general problem, as you know, there have been very important disputes within the Communist world, and specifically between Moscow and Peiping, on the question of strategy and tactics in promoting the world revolution. Moscow has been more prudent, more cautious in this respect. Peiping has announced a doctrine of militancy which has caused great problems even within the Communist world. Now, if Peiping should discover that a doctrine of militancy is a successful policy through what happens to Southeast Asia, then the dangers throughout the rest of the world mount very quickly and very substantially."

* * *

"U.S. Commitment Fundamental to Peace

"Mr. Reasoner: Secretary Rusk, I think Americans sometimes have--while they support this policy--have trouble understanding just what we mean when we speak in the pattern of having to defend it here or we will have to fight in some less suitable place. To be hypothetical, what would happen if Secretary McNamara announced that we had done all we could and we were now withdrawing because we needed the boys at home and we left? What do you think would ensue?

"Secretary Rusk: I think that it would not be for me to answer that one directly. But imagine yourself to be a Thai, and ask what the American commitment to Thailand would mean to you under those circumstances. Think of your self as a West Berliner, and ask yourself what the American commitment to you would mean under those circumstances.

"At the very heart, gentlemen, of the maintenance of peace in the world is the integrity of the American commitment under our alliances.

"Mr. Kendrick: Is it possible that it is an overcommitment?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, that can be argued. But it should have been argued at the time, at the various stages. I personally do not think so, because we have made 42 allies, as you know, in this postwar period, and at the time it seemed to be in the vital interest of the United States that these alliances be formed."

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"So we do not have a worldwide commitment as the gendarme of the universe, but we do have 42 allies, and South Viet-Nam is a protocol state of the Southeast Asia Treaty and it does have a commitment from us. Therefore, the nature of that commitment is fundamental here if we are to maintain peace in the years ahead.

"Mr. Reasoner: Are we overcommitted from your standpoint, Mr. Secretary? Can you handle everything you foresee?

"Secretary McNamara: I believe so. The military forces of this country have been built up in strength, as you know. We do have 45 percent more combat-ready divisions today than we did 3 or 4 years ago. We do have nearly 50 percent more tactical fighter squadrons today than we did then. We have been building up our inventories in men and equipment.

"I think the question is really more fundamental than are we overcommitted. The question is, what kind of a world would we and our children live in if we failed to carry out the commitments we have or sought to reduce them?"

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38. Address by William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, on November 5, 1965, "A Perspective on U.S. Policy in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, December 6, 1965, p. 890.

"Our own objectives in relation to the Far East are simple. There, as throughout the world, we wish to see independent nations developing as they see fit and in accordance with their own traditions. We may hope that the development will be in the direction of governments based on consensus and increasingly on democratic processes, with economic systems that enlist the initiatives of the individual. But we have long since outgrown any notion that we have a blueprint for government and economic organization that can be applied in any pat sense to other nations, particularly in the less developed state.

"Moreover, our national interest is no longer guided in the Far East by particular economic or military concern with individual areas, as was to a considerable extent the case before the war. We have a deep concern for expanded trade and cultural ties--which alone can in the end bind the world together--and we have military base rights and needs related to our role in assisting in the security of the area. But neither of these is an end in itself: The first will, we believe, flourish if the nations of the area are able to develop in freedom; the second must now be maintained but will over time, we hope, become susceptible of reduction and indeed, wherever possible, of elimination.

"Rather, we care about the total picture partly because a nation with our traditions and our present power could hardly do otherwise, but partly because we know in our hearts that it makes a great deal of difference to our most concrete national interests that the vast potential and talent of the Far East should be developed in healthy national entities and that the Far East should not go through a second stage--as Europe had to do--of waves of domination that must in the end be met at the cost of vast human misery."

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39. President Johnson's Telephone Remarks to the AFL-CIO Convention Meeting at San Francisco on December 9, 1965, "Why We Are in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, December 27, 1965, p. 1014.

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"We are there because for all our shortcomings, for all our failings as a nation and a people, we remain fixed on the pursuit of freedom as a deep and moral obligation that will not let us go.

"To defend that freedom--to permit its roots to deepen and grow without fear of external suppression--is our purpose in South Viet-Nam. Unchecked aggression against free and helpless people would be a grave threat to our own freedom--and an offensive to our own conscience."

* * *

1966

JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION - 1966

SUMMARY

The Johnson Administration continued to employ the rationale of previous administrations throughout 1966 in justifying U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The Administration attempted continually to explain why the U.S. was involved. Significantly, the U.S. also sought to publicize the legal basis for the commitment as well as establishing firmly that the commitment under SEATO would be fulfilled. The themes initially stressed reassurance of the U.S. intent to remain in the struggle, later building on the legality of commitment, and finally, stressing American aims and objectives in Vietnam. Points emphasized were:

a. The U.S. pledged to stay in Vietnam until aggression had stopped and to honor commitments. "Our stand must be as firm as ever."

b. The question -- why are we in Vietnam? -- was repeatedly answered: to help promote Vietnamese freedom and world security, to fulfill the SEATO obligation, to stop aggression and wars of liberation, to make Communist expansion unprofitable, and to prove that guerrilla wars cannot succeed.

c. Legally, the U.S. involvement was traced from the Geneva Accords and the Eisenhower commitment in 1954 ("to assist the Government of Vietnam in developing and maintain a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means."), through SEATO ("collective self-defense against armed attack") to the Kennedy commitments of 1961.

d. Asian communism was recognized repeatedly as a clear and present danger -- "aggression feeds on aggression" -- as well as the fact that the security of Southeast Asia was extremely important to the security interests of the U.S.

e. The fulfillment of the U.S. commitment had necessarily changed with the nature of the aggression requiring combat troops only because of the "escalation of aggression by the other side."

f. The U.S. aims in Vietnam were limited to the desire for a political solution, to assure self-determination for the people of South Vietnam, and reunification of Vietnam decided by free choice.

V. D. JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- PUBLIC STATEMENTS

JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

1966

CONTENTS

40. The State of the Union Address of President Johnson to the Congress (Excerpts), January 12, 1966; Department of State Bulletin, January 31, 1966, p. 153.

* * *

"And we will stay until aggression has stopped.

"We will stay because a just nation cannot leave to the cruelties of its enemies a people who have staked their lives and independence on America's solemn pledge--a pledge which has grown through the commitments of three American Presidents.

"We will stay because in Asia--and around the world--are countries whose independence rests, in large measure, on confidence in America's word and in America's protection. To yield to force in Viet-Nam would weaken that confidence, would undermine the independence of many lands, and would whet the appetite of aggression. We would have to fight in one land, and then we would have to fight in another--or abandon much of Asia to the domination of Communists."

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41. Statement by President Johnson, U.S. and South Vietnamese Leaders Meet at Honolulu, February 6, 1966; Department of State Bulletin, February 28, 1966, p. 303.

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"....We cannot accept their logic that tyranny 10,000 miles away is not tyranny to concern us, or that subjugation by an armed minority in Asia is different from subjugation by an armed minority in Europe. Were we to follow their course, how many nations might fall before the aggressor? Where would our treaties be respected, our word honored, and our commitment believed?

"In the forties and fifties we took our stand in Europe to protect the freedom of those threatened by aggression. If we had not then acted, what kind of Europe might there be today? Now the center of attention has shifted to another part of the world where aggression is on the march and enslavement of free men is its goal.

"Our stand must be as firm as ever. If we allow the Communists to win in Viet-Nam, it will become easier and more appetizing for them to take over other countries in other parts of the world. We will have to fight again someplace else--at what cost no one knows. That is why it is vitally important to every American that we stop the Communists in South Viet-Nam."

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42. Statement by Secretary Rusk Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, February 18, 1966, "The U.S. Commitment in Viet-Nam: Fundamental Issues" (Broadcast Live on Nationwide Television Networks); Department of State Bulletin, March 7, 1966, p. 346.

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"Why are we in Viet-Nam? Certainly we are not there merely because we have power and like to use it. We do not regard ourselves as the policeman of the universe. We do not go around the world looking for quarrels in which we can intervene. Quite the contrary. We have recognized that, just as we are not gendarmes of the universe, neither are we the magistrate of the universe. If other governments, other institutions, or other regional organizations can find solutions to the quarrels which disturb the present scene, we are anxious to have this occur. But we are in Viet-Nam because the issues posed there are deeply intertwined with our own security and because the outcome of the struggle can profoundly affect the nature of the world in which we and our children will live."

* * *

"What are our world security interests involved in the struggle in Viet-Nam?

"They cannot be seen clearly in terms of Southeast Asia only or merely in terms of the events of the past few months. We must view the problem in perspective. We must recognize that what we are seeking to achieve in South Viet-Nam is part of a process that has continued for a long time--a process of preventing the expansion and extension of Communist domination by the use of force against the weaker nations on the perimeter of Communist power.

"This is the problem as it looks to us. Nor do the Communists themselves see the problem in isolation. They see the struggle in South Viet-Nam as part of a larger design for the steady extension of Communist power through force and threat."

* * *

"But the Communist world has returned to its demand for what it calls a 'world revolution,' a world of coercion in direct contradiction to the Charter of the United Nations. There may be differences within the Communist world about methods, and techniques, and leadership within the Communist world itself, but they share a common attachment to their 'world revolution' and to its support through what they call 'wars of liberation.'

"So what we face in Viet-Nam is what we have faced on many occasions before--the need to check the extension of Communist power in order to maintain a reasonable stability in a precarious world...."

* * *

"Under Secretary Smith's statement was only a unilateral declaration, but in joining SEATO the United States took a solemn treaty engagement of far-reaching effect. Article IV, paragraph 1, provides that 'each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack... would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.'

"It is this fundamental SEATO obligation that has from the outset guided our actions in South Viet-Nam.

"The language of this treaty is worth careful attention. The obligation it imposes is not only joint but several. The finding that an armed attack has occurred does not have to be made by a collective determination before the obligation of each member becomes operative. Nor does the treaty require a collective decision on actions to be taken to meet the common danger. If the United States determines that an armed attack has occurred against any nation to whom the protection of the treaty applies, then it is obligated to 'act to meet the common danger' without regard to the views or actions of any other treaty member."

* * *

"Our multilateral engagement under the SEATO treaty has been reinforced and amplified by a series of bilateral commitments and assurances directly to the Government of South Viet-Nam. On October 1, 1954, President Eisenhower wrote to President Diem offering 'to assist the Government of Viet-Nam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means.' In 1957 President Eisenhower and President Diem issued a joint statement which called attention to 'the large build-up of Vietnamese Communist military forces in North Viet-Nam' and stated:

'Noting that the Republic of Viet-Nam is covered by Article IV of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, President Eisenhower and President Ngo Dinh Diem agreed that aggression or subversion threatening the political independence of the Republic of Viet-Nam would be considered as endangering peace and stability.'

"On August 2, 1961, President Kennedy declared that 'the United States is determined that the Republic of Viet-Nam shall not be lost to the Communists for lack of any support which the United States can render.'

"On December 14, 1961, President Kennedy wrote to President Diem, recalling the United States declaration made at the end of the Geneva conference in 1954. The President once again stated that the United States was 'prepared to help the Republic of Viet-Nam to protect its people and to preserve its independence.' This commitment has been reaffirmed many times since.

"These, then, are the commitments we have taken to protect South Viet-Nam as a part of protecting our own 'peace and security.' We have sent American forces to fight in the jungles of that beleaguered country because South Viet-Nam has, under the language of the SEATO treaty, been the victim of 'aggression by means of armed attack.'"

* * *

"Up to this point I have tried to describe the nature of our commitments in South Viet-Nam and why we have made them. I have sought to put those commitments within the framework of our larger effort to prevent the Communists from upsetting the arrangements which have been the basis for our security. These policies have sometimes been attacked as static and sterile. It has been argued that they do not take account of the vast changes which have occurred in the world and are still in train.

"These contentions seem to me to miss the point. The line of policy we are following involves far more than a defense of the status quo. It seeks rather to insure that degree of security which is necessary if change and progress are to take place through consent and not through coercion. Certainly, as has been frequently pointed out, the world of the mid-20th century is not standing still. Movement is occurring on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Communism today is no longer monolithic; it no longer wears one face but many, and the deep schism between the two great power centers of the Communist world--Moscow and Peking--is clearly one of the major political facts of our time.

"There has been substantial change and movement within the Soviet Union as well--and perhaps even more among the countries of Eastern Europe. These changes have not been inhibited because of our efforts to maintain our postwar arrangements by organizing the Western alliance. They have taken place because of internal developments as well as because the Communist regime in Moscow has recognized that the Western alliance cannot permit it to extend its dominion by force.

"Over time the same processes hopefully will work in the Far East. Peking--and the Communist states living under its shadow--must learn that they cannot redraw the boundaries of the world by force.

"What we are pursuing, therefore, is not a static concept. For, unlike the Communists, we really believe in social revolution and not

merely in power cloaked as revolution."

* * *

"Our purpose is equally clear and easily defined. In his Baltimore speech of April 7, 1965, President Johnson did so in the following terms:

'Our objective is the independence of South Viet-Nam and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves--only that the people of South Viet-Nam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way.'

"This has been our basic objective since 1954. It has been pursued by three successive administrations and remains our basic objective today.

"Like the Communists, we have secondary objectives derived from the basic one. We intend to show that the 'war of liberation,' far from being cheap, safe, and disavowable, is costly, dangerous, and doomed to failure. We must destroy the myth of its invincibility in order to protect the independence of many weak nations which are vulnerable targets for subversive aggression--to use the proper term for the 'war of liberation.' We cannot leave while force and violence threaten them.

"The question has been raised as to whether this clash of interests is really important to us. An easy and incomplete answer would be that it must be important to us since it is considered so important by the other side. Their leadership has made it quite clear that they regard South Viet-Nam as the testing ground for the 'war of liberation' and that, after its anticipated success there, it will be used widely about the world. Kosygin told Mr. Reston in his interview of last December:

'We believe that national liberation wars are just wars and they will continue as long as there is national oppression by imperialist powers.'

"Before him, Khrushchev, in January 1961, had the following to say:

'Now a word about national liberation wars. The armed struggle by the Vietnamese people or the war of the Algerian people serve as the latest example of such wars. These are revolutionary wars. Such wars are not only admissible but inevitable. Can such wars flare up in the future? They can. The Communists fully support such just wars and march in the front rank of peoples waging liberation struggles.'

"General Giap, the Commander in Chief of the North Vietnamese forces, has made the following comment:

'South Viet-Nam is the model of the national liberation movement of our time. If the special warfare that the United States imperialists are testing in South Viet-Nam is overcome, then it can be defeated anywhere in the world.'

"The Minister of Defense of Communist China, Marshal Lin Piao, in a long statement of policy in September 1965, described in detail how Mao Tse-tung expects to utilize the 'war of liberation' to expand communism in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

"These testimonials show that, apart from the goal of imposing communism on 15 million South Vietnamese, the success of the 'war of liberation' is in itself an important objective of the Communist leadership. On our side, we can understand the grave consequences of such a success for us. President Eisenhower in 1959 stressed the military importance of defending Southeast Asia in the following terms. He said:

'Strategically, South Viet-Nam's capture by the Communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries of Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement....The loss of South Viet-Nam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us and for freedom.'

"This view has often been referred to as the 'domino theory.' I personally do not believe in such a theory if it means belief in a law of nature which requires the collapse of each neighboring state in an inevitable sequence, following a Communist victory in South Viet-Nam. However, I am deeply impressed with the probable effects worldwide, not necessarily in areas contiguous to South Viet-Nam, if the 'war of liberation' scores a significant victory there. President Kennedy commented on this danger with moving eloquence: 'The great battleground for the defense and expansion of freedom today is the southern half of the globe--Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East--the lands of the people who harbor the greatest hopes. The enemies of freedom think they can destroy the hopes of the newer nations and they aim to do it before the end of this decade. This is a struggle of will and determination as much as one of force and violence. It is a battle for the conquest of the minds and souls as much as for the conquest of lives and territory. In such a struggle, we cannot fail to take sides.'

"Gentlemen, I think a simple answer to the question, what are we doing in South Viet-Nam, is to say that for more than a decade we have been taking sides in a cause in which we have a vital stake."

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43. Address by President Johnson at a Freedom House Dinner at New York, February 23, 1966, "Viet-Nam: The Struggle to Be Free," Department of State Bulletin, March 14, 1966, p. 390.

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"Our purpose in Viet-Nam is to prevent the success of aggression. It is not conquest; it is not empire; it is not foreign bases; it is not domination. It is, simply put, just to prevent the forceful conquest

of South Viet-Nam by North Viet-Nam."

* * *

"The contest in Viet-Nam is confused and hard, and many of its forms are new. Yet our American purpose and policy are unchanged. Our men in Viet-Nam are there. They are there, as Secretary Dillon [former Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon] told you, to keep a promise that was made 12 years ago. The Southeast Asia Treaty promised, as Secretary John Foster Dulles said for the United States, that 'an attack upon the treaty area would occasion a reaction so united, so strong, and so well placed that the aggressor would lose more than it could hope to gain.'

"...But we keep more than a specific treaty promise in Viet-Nam tonight. We keep the faith for freedom.

"Four Presidents have pledged to keep that faith."

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44. Legal Memorandum Prepared by Leonard C. Meeker, State Department Legal Adviser, for Submission to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 4, 1966, "The Legality of United States Participation in the Defense of Viet-Nam"; Department of State Bulletin, March 28, 1966, pp. 15-16.

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"V. CONCLUSION

"South Viet-Nam is being subjected to armed attack by Communist North Viet-Nam, through the infiltration of armed personnel, military equipment, and regular combat units. International law recognizes the right of individual and collective self-defense against armed attack. South Viet-Nam, and the United States upon the request of South Viet-Nam, are engaged in such collective defense of the South. Their actions are in conformity with international law and with the Charter of the United Nations. The fact that South Viet-Nam has been precluded by Soviet veto from becoming a member of the United Nations and the fact that South Viet-Nam is a zone of a temporarily divided state in no way diminish the right of collective defense of South Viet-Nam.

"The United States has commitments to assist South Viet-Nam in defending itself against Communist aggression from the North. The United States gave undertakings to this effect at the conclusion of the Geneva conference in 1954. Later that year the United States undertook an international obligation in the SEATO treaty to defend South Viet-Nam against Communist armed aggression. And during the past decade the United States has given additional assurances to the South Vietnamese Government.

"The Geneva accords of 1954 provided for a cease-fire and regroupment of contending forces, a division of Viet-Nam into two zones, and

a prohibition on the use of either zone for the resumption of hostilities or to 'further an aggressive policy.' From the beginning, North Viet-Nam violated the Geneva accords through a systematic effort to gain control of South Viet-Nam by force. In the light of these progressive North Vietnamese violations, the introduction into South Viet-Nam beginning in late 1961 of substantial United States military equipment and personnel, to assist in the defense of the South, was fully justified; substantial breach of an international agreement by one side permits the other side to suspend performance of corresponding obligations under the agreement. South Viet-Nam was justified in refusing to implement the provisions of the Geneva accords calling for reunification through free elections throughout Viet-Nam since the Communist regime in North Viet-Nam created conditions in the North that made free elections entirely impossible.

"The President of the United States has full authority to commit United States forces in the collective defense of South Viet-Nam. This authority stems from the constitutional powers of the President. However, it is not necessary to rely on the Constitution alone as the source of the President's authority, since the SEATO treaty--advised and consented to by the Senate and forming part of the law of the land--sets forth a United States commitment to defend South Viet-Nam against armed attack, and since the Congress--in the joint resolution of August 10, 1964, and in authorization and appropriations acts for support of the U.S. military effort in Viet-Nam--has given its approval and support to the President's actions. United States actions in Viet-Nam, taken by the President and approved by the Congress, do not require any declaration of war, as shown by a long line of precedents for the use of United States armed forces abroad in the absence of any congressional declaration of war."

45. Address by Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg, U.S. Representative to the United Nations, Before the Pilgrim Society at London, England on March 4, 1966, "America and Britain: Unity of Purpose"; Department of State Bulletin, April 4, 1966, p. 539.

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"The most unspoken and unuttered--almost concealed--thought of some in the fight against the American involvement in Southeast Asia is: First, America cannot win the war in South Viet-Nam; second, while South Viet-Nam or, indeed, Southeast Asia may be important to American interests, these areas are not crucial to those interests. Therefore, since we cannot win in a war theater where the territory is peripheral to American interests, let us retreat, let us withdraw with no further nonsense.

"In my view, the complete answer is that there would be no greater danger to world peace than to start segregating mankind and the countries

they live in as either peripheral or crucial. Perhaps in those halcyon days when the Congress of Vienna was the supreme example of intelligent diplomacy, such distinctions had meaning. The introduction of Marxism-Leninism into world society and the visible determination by its militant exponents to implement that doctrine through 'wars of national liberation' has today obliterated such distinctions. So has the expansion of technology, which has made this a shrinking world of interdependent nations."

* * *

"ATTITUDE OF COMMUNIST CHINA

"But President Johnson has spoken to ears which hear only the echo of their own doctrine. It is not Dennis Healey nor Robert McNamara but the Red Chinese Minister, Marshal Lin Piao, who wrote 6 months ago, and I quote:

'We know that war brings destruction, sacrifice, and suffering on the people. (But) the sacrifice of a small number of people in revolutionary wars is repaid by security for whole nations....war can temper the people and push history forward. In this sense, war is a great school....In diametrical opposition to the Khrushchev revisionists, the (Chinese) Marxist-Leninists...never take a gloomy view of war.'

"Marshal Lin Piao's statement didn't come out of thin air. In his book Problems of War and Strategy Mao Tse-tung wrote, and this was before 1949:

'The seizure of power by armed forces, the settlement of an issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution.'

"When Mao wrote these words, he lacked nuclear capability. Today the story is different, and the implications of his words and those of Marshal Lin are more dreadful."

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46. Vice President Humphrey Reports to President on Asian Trip, White House Press Release of March 6, 1966; Department of State Bulletin, March 28, 1966, p. 490.

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"3. The significance of the struggle in Vietnam is not simply the defense of a small nation against powerful neighbors. Vietnam is, in a larger sense, the focus of a broad effort to restrain the attempt by Asian Communists to expand by force--as we assisted our European allies in resisting Communist expansion in Europe after World War II.

"4. The Honolulu Declaration emphasizing the defeat of aggression and the achievement of a social revolution could represent a historic turning point in American relationships with Asia. The goals agreed upon by President Johnson and the Chief of State and Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam at Honolulu are taken very seriously:

"to defeat aggression,

"to defeat social misery,

"to build a stable democratic government,

"to reach an honorable, just peace.

"5. Most Asian leaders are concerned about the belligerence and militancy of Communist China's attitudes. None wishes to permit his country to fall under Communist domination in any form. All are dedicated nationalists.

"6. Among the leaders with whom I spoke, there was repeatedly expressed a concern as to whether our American purpose, tenacity and will were strong enough to persevere in Southeast Asia. I emphasized not only the firmness of our resolve but also our dedication to the rights of free discussion and dissent."

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47. Address by Vice President Humphrey at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., March 11, 1966, "United States Tasks and Responsibilities in Asia"; Department of State Bulletin, April 4, 1966, p. 523.

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"Why are we in South Viet-Nam?

"We are in South Viet-Nam to repel and prevent the success of aggression against the Government and the people of that country.

"We are there to help assure the South Vietnamese people the basic right to decide their own futures, freely and without intimidation.

"We are there to help those people achieve a better standard of living for themselves and their children.

"We are there to help establish the principle that, in this nuclear age, aggression cannot be an acceptable means either of settling international disputes or of realizing national objectives. If aggression is permitted to go unchecked, we cannot in good faith hold out much hope for the future of small nations or of world peace."

* * *.

"ASIAN COMMUNISM, A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

"At the beginning today, I said the conflict in Viet-Nam was the focus of a wider struggle taking place in Asia.

"During my recent mission I was struck by the depth of feeling, among almost all Asian leaders, that Asian communism had direct design on their national integrity and independence. Almost all cited examples of subversion and in many cases direct military involvement by Communist troops within their countries. And none--without any exception--questioned our involvement in Viet-Nam. There were questions about aspects of our policy there but none concerning the fact of our presence there and our resistance to aggression.

"Among the leaders with whom I spoke, there was repeatedly expressed a deep concern as to whether our American purpose, tenacity, and will were strong enough to persevere in Southeast Asia. Public debate in America was sometimes interpreted as a weakening of purpose. I emphasized not only the firmness of our resolve but also our dedication to the rights of free discussion and dissent.

"For we know that John Stuart Mill's advice remains valid: 'We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavoring to stifle is a false opinion; and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still.'

"Asian communism may be a subject for discussion here. In Asia, it is a clear and present danger. No single, independent nation in Asia has the strength to stand alone against that danger.

"I believe that the time may come when Asian communism may lose its fervor, when it may lose some of its neuroses, when it may realize that its objectives cannot be gained by aggression. But until that time I believe we have no choice but to help the nations of Southeast Asia strengthen themselves for the long road ahead.

"I also said, at the beginning today, that some very basic principles of international conduct were under test in Viet-Nam. Some people think not.

"Of them, I ask this: Were we to withdraw from Viet-Nam under any conditions short of peace, security, and the right of self-determination for the South Vietnamese people, what conclusions would be drawn in the independent nations of Asia? In Western Europe? In the young, struggling countries of Africa? In the nations of Latin America beset by subversion and unrest? What conclusions would be drawn in Hanoi and Peking?"

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48. Address by Secretary Rusk at the Founder's Day Banquet of the Boston University School of Public Communications at Boston, Massachusetts on March 14, 1966, "Keeping Our Commitment to Peace"; Department of State Bulletin, April 4, 1966, p. 514.

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"....The lesson of World War II was that it was necessary to organize and defend a peace--not merely to wish for it--and to 'unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.'

"Article 1 of the United Nations Charter is utterly fundamental and, although some may think it old-fashioned to speak of it, I should like to remind you of what it says:

'To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;...'

"Unhappily and tragically, the ink was not dry on the United Nations Charter before it became fully apparent that Joseph Stalin had turned to world revolution and a policy of aggressive militancy. The first major issue before the Security Council was his attempt to keep Russian forces in Iran. Then came guerrilla operations against Greece, pressure on Turkey, the Berlin blockade, and the Korean aggression. These moves led to defensive action by the free world and a number of mutual defense treaties--the Rio Pact, NATO, the ANZUS treaty with Australia and New Zealand, and bilateral treaties with the Philippines and Japan.

"Under President Eisenhower we concluded the Southeast Asia treaty, which, by a protocol, committed us to help the three non-Communist states of former French Indochina--South Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia--to repel armed attacks, if they asked for help. Under Eisenhower we also entered mutual defense pacts with the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China on Formosa.

"All of those commitments to oppose aggression--through the United Nations and through our various defensive alliances--were approved by the Senate by overwhelming majorities of both parties. And these and related obligations have been sustained over the years by authorizations, appropriations, and other supporting measures enacted by bipartisan votes in both Houses of Congress.

"THE BACKBONE OF WORLD PEACE

"I have read that I have drawn 'no distinction between powerful

industrial democratic states in Europe and weak and undemocratic states in Asia.' The answer is that, for the Secretary of State, our treaty commitments are a part of the supreme law of the land, and I do not believe that we can be honorable in Europe and dishonorable in Asia.

"I do believe that the United States must keep its pledged word. That is not only a matter of national honor but an essential to the preservation of peace. For the backbone of world peace is the integrity of the commitment of the United States."

* * *

"The fact is that I have always treated the SEATO treaty--which the Senate approved with only one dissenting vote--as an important part of our commitment to defend South Viet-Nam."

* * *

"I do not regard our policy in Viet-Nam as based only on past commitments. I believe that it is now just as much in our interest--and that of the free world--to repel Communist aggression there as it was when we made those earlier commitments."

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49. Article by Leonard Unger, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, "The United States and the Far East: Problems and Policies"; Department of State Bulletin, March 21, 1966, p. 452.

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"Our national interest--I speak as an American--is no longer explicitly guided in the Far East, by particular economic or military concerns with individual areas, as was indeed to a considerable extent the case not only with ourselves but also with the British and others before World War II. We have a deep concern for expanded trade and cultural ties--which alone can in the end bind the world together--and we have military base rights and needs related to our role in assisting in the security in the area. But neither of these is an end in itself. The first will, we believe, flourish if the nations in the area are able to develop in freedom; the second, the security role, must now be maintained but will over time, we hope, become susceptible of reduction and indeed, wherever possible, of elimination."

* * *

"....In the fall of 1961 President Kennedy made the decision that the United States would have to go beyond the limits of the Geneva accords. That decision was a fully justified response to the wholesale

violation of the accords by the other side. We raised our military personnel from the levels provided in the Geneva accords to 10,000 men in 1962 and to roughly 25,000 men at the end of 1964. These men acted as advisers and assisted the Government of South Viet-Nam in its logistics. They did not operate as combat ground units."

* * *

"There is in addition the strategic stake, for, without accepting the pat simplicities of 'domino' theories, none of us could doubt that the preservation of the independence of Thailand, of Malaysia, of Singapore, of Burma, and beyond them in the long run of India, the Philippines, and Australia would become infinitely more difficult if this Communist venture were to succeed in South Viet-Nam. It is a Hanoi venture, but its success would feed the fires of the clearly expansionist thrust of Communist Chinese policy. That expansion must be contained so that over time there may emerge the latent moderate and constructive elements within Communist China.

"There is the world stake in defeating efforts to change the international framework by force, whether the attempt be, as in this case, by a Communist nation across a line that separates it from a non-Communist country or across a line that divides countries where communism is not a part of the issue. These are the stakes as we see them.. We shall continue to do what is necessary to insure that South Viet-Nam will be able to stand on its own feet and determine its own future."

50. Address by Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg, U.S. Representative to the United Nations, at the University of California, Berkeley, California on March 25, 1966, "The Quest for Peace"; Department of State Bulletin, April 18, 1966, p. 608.

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"Such principles are all very well. But between the idea and the reality falls the shadow--the shadow of Viet-Nam. Can this war be fitted into any wider concept of the search for better methods of peacekeeping? I think it can. No thinking American would support it if it could not. Let me begin by saying what this war is not.

"It is not emphatically a war to establish an American 'imperialism' or an American 'sphere of influence' in Asia. What exclusive interests have we there? Investment? trade? settlement? None.

"It is not a war to threaten or frustrate the legitimate interests of the Chinese people--though it seeks to discourage violence and aggression and play some part in persuading them that the imperialist world, once known to the Central Kingdom, is dead and will not be resurrected.

"It is in part, if you like, to persuade them that the fact that large parts of Asia--including all Southeast Asia and the hill states of the Himalayas--once, supposedly, paid the emperors tribute is no reason why they should revert to the status of vassal states in the 20th century.

"Again, this war is not a holy war against communism as an ideology. It does not seek unconditional surrender--from North Viet-Nam or anyone else. It does not seek to deny any segment of South Vietnamese opinion its part in peacefully establishing a stable regime.

"It does, however, preclude retreat before two things--first, the program of the Viet Cong, strongly controlled by the North, to impose its will by violence; and second, its claim to be the 'sole genuine representative' of a people, the vast majority of whom have rejected this claim.

"This, I believe, is the background against which to consider in positive terms what this war is about. It is, I suggest, another step in a limited operation of a policing type--an operation designed to check violence as a means to settle international disputes.

"The violence is no less total because it has been largely organized as a guerrilla operation...."

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51. Statement by Secretary Rusk Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on May 9, 1966, "Background of U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia"; Department of State Bulletin, May 30, 1966, p. 830.

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"I was myself in Government during the Truman administration and well recall the discussions which were held at the highest levels of Government in the National Security Council as well as the strategic problems considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"If the committee will search its own and the public records on this matter during that period and since, they could surely have no doubt that it was the judgment that the security of Southeast Asia was extremely important to the security interests of the United States. This was because of the more than 200 million people in Southeast Asia, the geography of that area, the important natural resources of the countries involved, the relationship of Southeast Asia to the total world situation, and the effect upon the prospects of a durable peace.

"I emphasize the last point because the overriding security interest of the United States is in organizing a stable peace. The sacrifices of World War II and the almost unimaginable losses of a world war III underline this central objective of American policy.

"There was also involved the problem of the phenomenon of aggression. We had found ourselves in the catastrophe of World War II because aggressions in Asia, in Africa, and in Europe had demonstrated that the aggressor would not stop until compelled to do so. It was the determination of the United States to learn the lessons of that experience by moving in the U.N. and otherwise to try to build an enduring international peace."

* * *

"LEGALITY OF U.S. EFFORTS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

"Very briefly, on the second question, Mr. Chairman, the matter was raised with respect to the legal issues surrounding our efforts in South Viet-Nam. We have made available to the committee an extensive legal memorandum on these matters, and the law officers of the Government are available to discuss this in whatever detail the committee may wish.

"In this brief statement today I shall merely outline the essence of our view.

"Military actions of the United States in support of South Viet-Nam, including air attacks on military targets in North Viet-Nam, are authorized under international law by the well-established right of collective self-defense against armed attack.

"South Viet-Nam is the victim of armed attack from the North through the infiltration of armed personnel, military equipment, and regular combat units. This armed attack preceded our strikes at military targets in North Viet-Nam.

"The fact that South Viet-Nam is not a member of the United Nations, because of the Soviet Union's veto, does not affect the lawfulness of collective self-defense of South Viet-Nam. The United Nations Charter was not designed to, and does not, limit the right of self-defense to United Nations members.

"Nor does South Viet-Nam's status under the Geneva accords of 1954, as one zone of a temporarily divided state, impair the lawfulness of the defense against attack from the other zone.

"As in Germany and Korea, the demarcation line is established by an international agreement, and international law requires that it be respected by each zone. Moreover, South Viet-Nam has been recognized as an independent entity by more than 60 governments around the world and admitted to membership in a number of the specialized agencies of the U.N.

"Nothing in the U.N. Charter purports to restrict the exercise of the right of collective self-defense to regional organizations such as the OAS [Organization of American States].

"As required by the U.N. Charter, the United States has reported to the Security Council the actions it has taken in exercising the right of collective self-defense in Viet-Nam. It has indeed requested the Council to seek a peaceful settlement on the basis of the Geneva accords, but the Council has not been able to act.

"There is no requirement in international law for a declaration of war before the right of individual or collective self-defense can be exercised.

"South Viet-Nam did not violate the Geneva accords of 1954 by refusing to engage in consultations with the North Vietnamese in 1955 with a view to holding general elections in 1956, as provided for in those accords. Even assuming that the election provisions were binding on South Viet-Nam, which did not agree to them, conditions in the North clearly made impossible the free expression of the national will contemplated by the accords. In these circumstances, at least, South Viet-Nam was justified in declining to participate in planning for a nationwide election.

"The introduction of U.S. military personnel and equipment in South Viet-Nam is not a violation of the accords. Until late 1961 U.S. military personnel and equipment in South Viet-Nam were restricted to replacements for French military personnel and equipment in 1954. Such replacement was expressly permitted by the accords.

"North Viet-Nam, however, had from the beginning violated the accords by leaving forces and supplies in the South and using its zone for aggression against the South. In response to mounting armed infiltration from the North, the United States, beginning in late 1961, substantially increased its contribution to the South's defense. This was fully justified by the established principle of international law that a material breach of an agreement by one party entitles another party at least to withhold compliance with a related provision.

"The United States has commitments to assist South Viet-Nam in defending itself against Communist aggression: In the SEATO treaty--which I have already mentioned and which is similar in form to our defense commitments to South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of China--and even earlier in the Geneva conference we had declared that we would regard a renewal of Communist aggression in Viet-Nam with 'grave concern.'

"Since 1954 three Presidents have reaffirmed our commitments to the defense of South Viet-Nam.

"Finally, the President of the United States has full authority to commit U.S. forces in the collective defense of South Viet-Nam. This

authority stems from the constitutional powers of the President as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, with responsibilities as well for the conduct of foreign relations. However, it is not necessary to rely upon the Constitution alone as the source of the President's authority. The SEATO treaty, which forms part of the law of the land, sets forth a United States commitment to defend South Viet-Nam against armed attack, and the Congress, in a joint resolution of August 1964 and in authorization and appropriation acts in support of the military effort in Viet-Nam, has given its approval and support to the President's action.

"The Constitution does not require a declaration of war for U.S. actions in Viet-Nam taken by the President and approved by the Congress. A long line of precedents, beginning with the undeclared war with France in 1798-1800 and including actions in Korea and Lebanon, supports the use of U.S. armed forces abroad in the absence of a congressional declaration of war."

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52. Address by Secretary Rusk Before the Council on Foreign Relations at New York, New York on May 24, 1966, "Organizing the Peace for Man's Survival"; Department of State Bulletin, June 13, 1966, p. 926.

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"And significant changes have occurred within the Communist world. It has ceased to be monolithic, and evolutionary influences are visible in most of the Communist states. But the leaders of both the principal Communist nations are committed to the promotion of the Communist world revolution, even while they disagree--perhaps bitterly--on questions of tactics.

"If mankind is to achieve a peaceful world order safe for free institutions, it is of course essential that aggression be eliminated--if possible by deterring it or, if it occurs, by repelling it. The clearest lesson of the 1930's and --40's is that aggression feeds on aggression. I'm aware that Mao and Ho Chi Minh are not Hitler and Mussolini, but we should not forget what we have learned about the anatomy and physiology of aggression. We ought to know better than to ignore the aggressor's openly proclaimed intentions or to fall victim to the notion that he will stop if you let him have just one more bite or speak to him a little more gently."

* * *

"....But what the Communists, in their familiar upside down language, call 'wars of liberation' are advocated and supported by Moscow as well as by Peiping. And the assault on the Republic of Viet-Nam is a critical test of that technique of aggression.

"It is as important to deter this type of aggression in Southeast Asia now as it was to defeat it in Greece 19 years ago. The aggression against Greece produced the Truman Doctrine, a declaration of a general policy of assisting other free nations who were defending themselves against external attacks or threats....

"THE 'WHY' OF OUR COMMITMENT

"In the discussion of our commitment in Southeast Asia, three different aspects are sometimes confused--why we made it, how we made it, and the means of fulfilling it.

"The 'why' was a determination that the peace and security of that area are extremely important to the security of the United States. That determination was made first before the Korean war by President Truman on the basis of protracted analysis in the highest councils of the Government. The problem was reexamined at least twice during his administration and at intervals thereafter. And the main conclusion was always the same. It was based on the natural resources and the strategic importance of the area, on the number of nations and peoples involved, more than 200 million, as well as on the relationship of Southeast Asia to the world situation as a whole and to the prospects for a durable peace....

"THE 'HOW' OF OUR COMMITMENT

"The 'how' of the commitment consists of various acts and utterances by successive Presidents and Congresses, of which the most solemn is the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, signed in 1954 and approved by the Senate in early 1955 with only one dissenting vote. I do not find it easy to understand how anyone could have voted for that treaty--or even read it--without realizing that it was a genuine collective defense treaty.

"It says in article IV that each party recognizes that 'aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area'--which by protocol included the nations which came out of French Indochina--'would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.' And, in his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State Dulles said specifically that this clause covered an armed attack 'by the regime of Ho Chi Minh.' There was never any doubt about it when this treaty was signed. Article IV binds each party individually; it does not require a formal collective finding. And that too was made plain when the treaty was under consideration and has been reiterated on various occasions since then.

"Now the assertion that we have only recently discovered the SEATO Treaty is just untrue. I have referred to it frequently myself, beginning with a public statement in Bangkok in March 1961 that the United States would live up to its obligations under that treaty and would

'continue to assist free nations of this area who are struggling for their survival against armed minorities directed, supplied, and supported from without,' just as we would assist those under attack by naked aggression. President Kennedy referred to our obligations under SEATO on a number of occasions, including his last public utterance, and President Johnson has done so frequently.

"In April 1964 the SEATO Council of Ministers declared that the attack on the Republic of Viet-Nam was an aggression 'directed, supplied and supported by the Communist regime in North Vietnam, in flagrant violation of the Geneva accords of 1954 and 1962.' They declared also that the defeat of that 'Communist campaign is essential' and that the members of SEATO should remain prepared to take further steps in fulfillment of their obligations under the treaty. Only France did not join in these declarations.

"A few days later, in this city, President Johnson said that:

'The statement of the SEATO allies that Communist defeat is 'essential' is a reality. To fail to respond...would reflect on our honor as a nation, would undermine worldwide confidence in our courage, would convince every nation in South Asia that it must now bow to Communist terms to survive....So let no one doubt (he said) that we are in this battle as long as South Viet-Nam wants our support and needs our assistance to protect its freedom.'

"The resolution of August 1964, which the House of Representatives adopted unanimously and the Senate with only two negative votes, said that 'the United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia.' It also said that 'the United States is, therefore; prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.'

"FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENT

"Now the third aspect is the means of fulfilling our commitment. These have changed with the nature of the problem and as the dimensions of the aggression have grown. The decision to commit American forces into combat was made by the President with understandable sobriety and reluctance and only because it became necessary to cope with the escalation of the aggression by the other side.

"I have no doubt that a large majority of the governments of the free world are sympathetic to our efforts in Southeast Asia and would be deeply concerned were they to fail...."

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53. Address by Vice President Humphrey at Commencement Exercises at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York on June 8, 1966, "Perspective on Asia'; Department of State Bulletin, July 4, 1966, p. 2.

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"World peace and security will be threatened by propaganda, subversion, and agitation, by economic warfare, by assassination of honest and able leaders, as well as by the naked use of armed force.

"World peace and security will be threatened, above all, by the very existence, for two-thirds of mankind, of conditions of hunger, disease, and ignorance.

"We must learn that the simple solutions of times past will not meet the present day challenges and new forms of aggression we face.

"Our 'doves' must learn that there are times when power must be used. They must learn that there is no substitute for force in the face of a determined enemy who resorts to terror, subversion, and aggression, whether concealed or open.

"Our 'hawks' must learn that military power is not enough. They must learn, indeed, that it can be wholly unavailing if not accompanied by political effort and by the credible promise to ordinary people of a better life.

"And all of us must learn to adapt our military planning and actions to the new conditions of subversive warfare, the so-called 'wars of national liberation.'"

* * *

"America's role in Asia today is a direct product of the century that preceded World War II and of the war itself. For with the end of that war, the responsibilities of victory imposed on us a stabilizing role in Japan and Korea. And with the beginning of the cold war, the Communist victory in China, and the outbreak of the Korean war, American power was the only shield available to fragile and newly independent nations in non-Communist Asia."

* * *

"But what of the states of former French Indochina? There, of course, is the present focal point of war and revolution in Asia. And there we are tested as never before. We face a situation of external aggression and subversion against a postcolonial nation that has never had the breathing space to develop its politics or its economy.

"In South Viet-Nam both defense and development--the war against the aggressor and the war against despair--are fused as never before. Viet-Nam challenges our courage, our ingenuity, and our ability to persevere. If we can succeed there--if we can help sustain an independent South Viet-Nam, free to determine its own future--then our prospects, and the prospects for free men throughout Asia, will be bright indeed.

"We know this. Our friends and allies know it. And our adversaries know it. That is why one small country looms so large today on everyone's map of Asia."

* * *

"War is always cruel. But the war in Viet-Nam should not obscure for us the fact that behind the smoke and uproar is the testing of an issue vital to all of Asia and indeed the world. Can independent, non-Communist states not only survive but grow and flourish in face of Communist pressure?"

* * *

54. Address by President Johnson at Omaha Municipal Dock on June 30, 1966, "Two Threats to Peace: Hunger and Aggression"; Department of State Bulletin, July 25, 1966, p. 115.

* * *.

"Now I want to point out to you that the conflict there is important for many reasons, but I have time to mention only a few. I am going to mention three specifically.

"The first reason: We believe that the rights of other people are just as important as our own. We believe that we are obligated to help those whose rights are being threatened by brute force."

* * *

"The North Vietnamese at this hour are trying to deny the people of South Viet-Nam the right to build their own nation, the right to choose their own system of government, the right to go and vote in a free election and select their own people, the right to live and work in peace.

"South Viet-Nam has asked us for help. Only if we abandon our respect for the rights of other people could we turn down their plea.

"VIET-NAM AND THE SECURITY OF ASIA

"Second, South Viet-Nam is important to the security of the rest of all of Asia.

"A few years ago the nations of free Asia lay under the shadow of Communist China. They faced a common threat, but not in unity. They were still caught up in their old disputes and dangerous confrontations. They were ripe for aggression.

"Now that picture is changing. Shielded by the courage of the South Vietnamese, the peoples of free Asia today are driving toward economic and social development in a new spirit of regional cooperation.

"All you have to do is look at that map and you will see independence growing, thriving, blossoming, and blooming.

"They are convinced that the Vietnamese people and their allies are going to stand firm against the conqueror, or against aggression.

"Our fighting in Viet-Nam, therefore, is buying time not only for South Viet-Nam, but it is buying time for a new and a vital, growing Asia to emerge and develop additional strength.

"If South Viet-Nam were to collapse under Communist pressure from the North, the progress in the rest of Asia would be greatly endangered. And don't you forget that!

"The third reason is: What happens in South Viet-Nam will determine--yes, it will determine--whether ambitious and aggressive nations can use guerrilla warfare to conquer their weaker neighbors.

"It will determine whether might makes right.

"Now I do not know of a single more important reason for our presence than this.

"We are fighting in South Viet-Nam a different kind of war than we have ever known in the past."

* * *

"If by such methods the agents of one nation can go out and hold and seize power where turbulent change is occurring in another nation, our hope for peace and order will suffer a crushing blow all over the world. It will be an invitation to the would-be conqueror to keep on marching. That is why the problem of guerrilla warfare--the problem of Viet-Nam--is a critical threat to peace not just in South Viet-Nam, but in all of this world in which we live."

* * *

55. Address by President Johnson on Nationwide Radio and Television to the American Alumni Council on July 12, 1966, "Four Essentials for Peace in Asia"; Department of State Bulletin, August 1, 1966, p. 158.

* * *

"Americans entered this century believing that our own security had no foundation outside our own continent. Twice we mistook our sheltered position for safety. Twice we were dead wrong.

"If we are wise now, we will not repeat our mistakes of the past. We will not retreat from the obligations of freedom and security in Asia.

"MAKING AGGRESSION A 'LOSING GAME'

"The second essential for peace in Asia is this: to prove to aggressive nations that the use of force to conquer others is a losing game."

* * *

"We are there because we are trying to make the Communists of North Viet-Nam stop shooting at their neighbors;

-- because we are trying to make this Communist aggression unprofitable;

--because we are trying to demonstrate that guerrilla warfare, inspired by one nation against another nation, can never succeed. Once that lesson is learned, a shadow that hangs over all of Asia tonight will begin, I think, to recede."

* * *

56. Address by President Johnson at the White House, 15 August 1966, "The Enemy We Face in Viet-Nam"; Department of State Bulletin, August 15, 1966, p. 227.

* * *

"They may not look like we do. They don't speak the same language that we do. They may not even think like we do. But they are human beings. We promised them, by treaty, to help protect their independence, and America doesn't break its promises. We are going to stay there."

* * *

"Second, a victory for the Communists in South Viet-Nam will be followed by new ambitions in Asia.

"The Communists have taught us that aggression is like hunger: It obeys no law but its own appetite. For this reason they have gambled heavily on success in the South.

"The leaders of free Asian nations know this better than anyone. If South Viet-Nam falls, then they are the next targets. North Viet-Nam's effort to impose its own system on South Viet-Nam is a new form of colonialism. The free nations of Asia want it stopped now. Many of them are standing there by our side, helping us stop them now.

"Third, a Communist victory in South Viet-Nam would inspire new aggression in the rest of the world.

"Listen to me while I repeat the words of North Viet-Nam's top military commander. I want you to hear what he says:

'The war has become (in his words) the model of the national liberation movement of our time. If the special warfare that the United States imperialists are testing in South Viet-Nam is overcome, then it can be defeated anywhere in the world.'

"Let me repeat to you those last words: '...it can be defeated anywhere in the world.'

"Now what he really means is this: If guerrilla warfare succeeds in Asia, it can succeed in Africa. It can succeed in Latin America. It can succeed anywhere in the world."

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57. Address by President Johnson before the Navy League at Manchester, N.H., August 20, 1966, "Our Objective in Vietnam"; Department of State Bulletin, September 12, 1966, p. 368.

* * *

"...But I think most Americans want to know why Viet-Nam is important.

"I think they know that communism must be halted in Viet-Nam, as it was halted in Western Europe and in Greece and Turkey and Korea and the Caribbean, if it is determined to swallow up free peoples and spread its influence in that area trying to take freedom away from people who do want to select their own leaders for themselves.

"I think that our people know that if aggression succeeds there, when it has failed in other places in the world, a harsh blow would be

dealt to the security of other free nations in Asia and perhaps a blow to the peace in the entire world."

* * *

"To give them time to build is one reason that we are all there. For there are times when the strong must provide a shield for those on whom the Communists prey. We have provided that shield in other countries. We are providing it there. And this is such a time.

"We are there for another reason, too, and that is because the United States must stand behind its word, even when conditions have added to the cost of honoring a pledge that was given a decade ago.

"I do not have to remind you that our pledge was in fact given by treaty to uphold the security of Southeast Asia. Now that security is in jeopardy because people are trying to use force to take over South Viet-Nam. When adversity comes is no time to back down on our commitment, if we expect our friends around the world to have faith in our word."

* * *

58. Address by President Johnson before the American Legion National Convention in Washington, D.C. on August 30, 1966, "The True Meaning of Patriotism"; Department of State Bulletin, September 19, 1966, p. 425.

* * *

"Make no mistake about the character of this war. Our adversaries have done us at least one great service: They have described this war for what it is--in unmistakable terms. It is meant to be the opening salvo in a series of bombardments, or, as they are called in Peking, 'wars of liberation.'

"And if it succeeds in South Viet-Nam, then, as Marshal Lin Piao says, 'The people in other parts of the world will see...that what the Vietnamese people can do, they can do, too.'"

* * *

59. Statement by Arthur J. Goldberg before the U.N. General Assembly on September 22, 1966, "Initiative for Peace"; Department of State Bulletin, October 10, 1966, p. 518.

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"OUR AFFIRMATIVE AIMS IN VIET-NAM

"It is because of the attempt to upset by violence the situation in Viet-Nam, and its far-reaching implications elsewhere, that the United States and other countries have responded to appeals from South Viet-Nam for military assistance.

"Our aims in giving this assistance are strictly limited.

"We are not engaged in a 'holy war' against communism.

"We do not seek to establish an American empire or a sphere of influence in Asia.

"We seek no permanent military bases, no permanent establishment of troops, no permanent alliances, no permanent American presence of any kind in South Viet-Nam.

"We do not seek to impose a policy of alinement on South Viet-Nam.

"We do not seek to overthrow the Government of North Viet-Nam.

"We do not seek to do any injury to mainland China nor to threaten any of its legitimate interests.

"We do not ask of North Viet-Nam an unconditional surrender or indeed the surrender of anything that belongs to it.

"Nor do we seek to exclude any segment of the South Vietnamese people from peaceful participation in their country's future.

"Let me state affirmatively and succinctly what our aims are.

"We want a political solution, not a military solution, to this conflict. By the same token, we reject the idea that North Viet-Nam has the right to impose a military solution.

"We seek to assure for the people of South Viet-Nam the same right of self-determination--to decide its own political destiny, free of force--that the United Nations Charter affirms for all.

"And we believe that reunification of Viet-Nam should be decided upon through a free choice by the peoples of both the North and the South without outside interference, the results of which choice we are fully prepared to support."

* * *

60. Address by Secretary Rusk before the George C. Marshall Memorial Dinner of the Association of the United States Army at Washington, D.C. on October 12, 1966, "Requirements for Organizing the Peace"; Department of State Bulletin, October 31, 1966, p. 658.

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"And early in 1950, after extended consultations with his principal foreign policy and military advisers, President Truman determined that we had an important national security interest in keeping Southeast Asia, including Viet-Nam, within the free world. That finding was repeatedly reviewed--by him, and then by Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson--always with the same conclusion.

"I have heard it said or implied that President Kennedy did not regard the security of Southeast Asia generally, and of South Viet-Nam in particular, as important to the free world and the United States. If he ever had such views--or even any doubts about the importance of our stake in that area--he never revealed them to his Secretary of State.

"In his news conference of September 12, 1963, President Kennedy summed up our objective in Viet-Nam in these words:

'...we want the war to be won, the Communists to be contained, and the Americans to go home....But we are not there to see a war lost, and we will follow the policy which I have indicated today of advancing those causes and issues which help win the war.'

"The great decisions of President Truman in both Europe and Asia remind us that the community of nations must have the courage to resist aggression no matter what form it takes."

* * *

"There is an indigenous element in the war in South Viet-Nam, but relatively it is even smaller than was the indigenous element in the case of Greece. We consider it well within the capacity of the South Vietnamese to handle. We and others are there because of aggression from the North--an aggression which the other side has repeatedly escalated and now includes many regiments of the regular army of North Viet-Nam. And we shall leave when these invaders and arms from the North go home."

* * *

"And, let me emphasize, we had better not forget the ghastly mistakes which led to the Second World War. For, there won't be any opportunity to apply any lessons after a third world war. We had better remember what we know and see to it that a third world war does not occur."

"....Prudence dictates that we use enough force to achieve the essential purpose of deterring or repelling aggression. That has been the practice of all four of our postwar Presidents. That is the road which offers the best hope of reaching a reliable peace.

"For we can never forget that our objective is a secure peace. We want nothing else from anybody, anywhere in the world."

* * *

61. Address by Secretary Rusk before the Annual Meeting of the Association of State Colleges and National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges at Washington, D.C., November 15, 1966, "The Future of the Pacific Community"; Department of State Bulletin, December 5, 1966, p. 838.

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"AGGRESSION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

"But indirect aggression by infiltration of men and arms across frontiers is still with us. It was tried in Greece, in Malaya, in the Philippines, and now in South Viet-Nam. The label 'civil war' or 'war of national liberation' does not make it any less an aggression. The purpose is to impose on others an unwanted regime. It substitutes terror for persuasion, force for free choice. And especially if it succeeds, it contains the inherent threat of further aggression--and eventually a great war."

* * *

"The militant Asian Communists have themselves proclaimed the attack on South Viet-Nam to be a critical test of this technique. And beyond South Viet-Nam and Laos they have openly designated Thailand as the next target."

* * *

"Now, as a generation ago, some people are saying that if you let an aggressor take just one more bite, he will be satisfied. But one of the plainest lessons of our times is that one aggression leads to another--but the initial aggressor and perhaps by others who decide there would be profit in emulating him.

"Some assert that we have no national security interest in South Viet-Nam and Southeast Asia. But that is not the judgment of those who have borne the high responsibilities for the safety of the United States. Beginning with President Truman, four successive Presidents, after extended consultation with their principal advisers, have decided that we have a very important interest in the security of that area.

"There is a further and more specific reason why we are assisting South Viet-Nam: Out of the strategic conclusions of four successive Presidents came commitments, including the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. The Senate approved it with only one negative vote.

"Our commitments are the backbone of world peace. It is essential that neither our adversaries nor our friends ever doubt that we will do what we say we will do. Otherwise, the result is very likely to be a great catastrophe.

"In his last public utterance President Kennedy reviewed what the United States had done to preserve freedom and peace since the Second World War, and our defensive commitments, including our support of South Viet-Nam. He said: 'We are still the keystone in the arch of freedom, and I think we will continue to do as we have done in the past, our duty....'"

* * *

1967

JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION - 1967

SUMMARY

In general, the justification of U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1967 centered on the determination of America to honor the commitment under SEATO. The continuation of the build-up of U.S. military strength was justified as necessary to fight the "limited war in Vietnam in an attempt to prevent a larger war...." -- to stop what Secretary Rusk called the "phenomenon of aggression." The national interests of the U.S. were enunciated to establish the "credibility" of U.S. diplomacy. Justification for U.S. policy considered the following:

a. The United States was in Vietnam because of the SEATO commitment to the collective self-defense against armed aggression. This commitment was necessary to eliminate aggression and build a durable peace. The ultimate aims are to protect the security of the U.S. and to resist aggression.

b. The "domino theory" was not needed to explain the future of Southeast Asia -- the world revolution of militant communism proclaimed by Peking was the theory, that is, the "phenomenon of aggression."

c. The U.S. commitment has bolstered our allies, promoted a confidence factor in Vietnam, and provided the crucial test for "wars of national liberation" as a tool of communist revolution.

d. U.S. policy has been guided by two basic propositions: that extension of hostile control by Asian communism was a threat to U.S. interests, and that a free and independent East Asian and Pacific region is essential to world peace.

e. The U.S. involvement has followed a legal course from the Eisenhower commitments and "domino theory" of the 1950's through the escalation of the 1960's. Senate approvals of SEATO, various authorizations and appropriations, and the joint resolution of August, 1964, have supported Presidential action.

f. "Aggressive conduct if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war." The appetite of aggression feeds on aggression -- the U.S. seeks to prevent a wider war by challenging communist expansion now in Southeast Asia -- as opposed to appeasement diplomacy of the 1930's.

V. D. JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- PUBLIC STATEMENTS

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62. Letter from Secretary Rusk to 100 Student Leaders, January 4, 1967; "Secretary Rusk Redefines United States Policy on Viet-Nam for Student Leaders," Department of State Bulletin, January 23, 1967, p. 133.

* * *

"There is no shadow of doubt in my mind that our vital interests are deeply involved in Viet-Nam and in Southeast Asia.

"We are involved because the nation's word has been given that we would be involved. On February 1, 1955, by a vote of 82 to 1 the United States Senate passed the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. That Treaty stated that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area would endanger our own peace and safety and, in that event, 'we would act to meet the common danger.' There is no question that an expanding armed attack by North Viet-Nam on South Viet-Nam has been under way in recent years; and six nations, with vital interests in the peace and security of the region, have joined South Viet-Nam in defense against that armed attack.

"Behind the words and the commitment of the Treaty lies the lesson learned in the tragic half century since the First World War. After that war our country withdrew from effective world responsibility. When aggressors challenged the peace in Manchuria, Ethiopia, and then Central Europe during the 1930's, the world community did not act to prevent their success. The result was a Second World War--which could have been prevented."

* * *

"In short, we are involved in Viet-Nam because we know from painful experience that the minimum condition for order on our planet is that aggression must not be permitted to succeed. For when it does succeed, the consequence is not peace, it is the further expansion of aggression.

"And those who have borne responsibility in our country since 1945 have not for one moment forgotten that a third world war would be a nuclear war."

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63. The State of the Union Address of President Johnson to the Congress (Excerpts), January 10, 1967; Department of State Bulletin, January 30, 1967, p. 158.

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"We are in Viet-Nam because the United States of America and our allies are committed by the SEATO Treaty to 'act to meet the common danger' of aggression in Southeast Asia.

"We are in Viet-Nam because an international agreement signed by the United States, North Viet-Nam, and others in 1962 is being systematically violated by the Communists. That violation threatens the independence of all the small nations in Southeast Asia and threatens the peace of the entire region and perhaps the world.

"We are there because the people of South Viet-Nam have as much right to remain non-Communist--if that is what they choose--as North Viet-Nam has to remain Communist.

"We are there because the Congress has pledged by solemn vote to take all necessary measures to prevent further aggression.

"No better words could describe our present course than those once spoken by the great Thomas Jefferson: 'It is the melancholy law of human societies to be compelled sometimes to choose a great evil in order to ward off a greater.'

"We have chosen to fight a limited war in Viet-Nam in an attempt to prevent a larger war--a war almost certain to follow, I believe, if the Communists succeed in overrunning and taking over South Viet-Nam by aggression and by force. I believe, and I am supported by some authority, that if they are not checked now the world can expect to pay a greater price to check them later."

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64. Secretary Rusk Interview on 'Today' Program, January 12, 1967, With Hugh Downs from New York and Joseph C. Harsch in Washington; Department of State Bulletin, January 30, 1967, p. 168.

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"AGGRESSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

"Mr. Harsch: Thank you, Hugh. I'm glad I am here.

"Mr. Secretary, I'd like to start it out by going back to the news conference that Secretary-General U Thant of the United Nations did 2 days ago. In that there appeared to be considerable differences with American policy. For example, he said, 'I do not subscribe to the generally held view that if South Viet-Nam falls, then country X, then country Y, then country Z will follow. I do not agree with this so-called domino theory.' Is this a matter of difference with our policy?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, I myself have never subscribed to something called the domino theory, because that suggests that we're merely playing games with little wooden blocks with dots on them. Actually, the problem is the old problem of the phenomenon of aggression.

"Country X, if you like, is South Viet-Nam. North Viet-Nam is trying to seize South Viet-Nam by force.

"Country Y is, perhaps, Laos. We had an agreement on Laos in 1962 under which there would be no North Vietnamese forces in Laos. And Laos would not be used as a route of infiltration into South Viet-Nam. That has not been performed. And the government that we agreed on in Geneva in 1962 has not been permitted to exercise authority throughout Laos. And the International Control Commission has not been permitted to exercise its functions in the Communist-held areas of Laos. So, undoubtedly, there are appetites with respect to Laos.

"Country Z is, perhaps, already Thailand. The other side has announced that they are going after Thailand. There are subversive guerrilla elements in northeast Thailand trained outside. There's a Thai training camp now in North Viet-Nam preparing additional guerrillas to go into Thailand.

"So, there's no need for something called the domino theory.

"The theory is that proclaimed in Peking repeatedly, that the world revolution of communism must be advanced by militant means. Now, if they can be brought toward an attitude of peaceful coexistence, if the second generation in China can show some of the prudence that the second generation in the Soviet Union has shown, then, maybe, we can begin to build a durable peace there.

"Mr. Harsch: Mr. Secretary, the Secretary-General of the U.N. also in that same news conference said, 'I do not subscribe to the view that South Viet-Nam is strategically vital to Western interests and Western security.' What are our vital strategic interests in the area? Do you regard Viet-Nam as vital?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, there are important geographical features, natural resources, large numbers of people in Southeast Asia.

"I think the heart of the matter is, again, the phenomenon of aggression. And if the momentum of aggression should begin to roll in that part of the world, stimulated or supported or engaged in by those who are committed to the spread of the world revolution by violence, then that seems to put us back on the trail that led us into World War II.

"What is important is that all nations, large and small, have a chance to live unmolested by their neighbors, as provided in the United Nations Charter.

"Article 1 of the charter deals with acts of aggression, breaches of the peace, the necessity for peaceful settlement of disputes. Article 2 of the charter is about the self-determination of people. These are

very important lessons derived from the events which led us into World War II. We feel that we've got to hang on to those lessons, because if they lead us into world war III, there won't be much left from which we can draw lessons and start over again.

"THREAT TO DURABLE PEACE

"Mr. Harsch: Mr. Secretary, is it not the question so much of our vital interests, as of the threat to our vital interests?

"Now, you said yesterday that four Presidents have identified this area as being strategically important to us. At the time that process started--we're talking about President Truman now and then President Eisenhower's time--there certainly did seem to be a major threat to our interests in that area.

"What has happened to the nature of that threat? During the last year I had in mind the breach between Moscow and Peking. Is there not a diminution in the threat to our interests in that area because Moscow and Peking are no longer close together?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, Peking has the capability of maintaining a major threat there, depending upon both its policy and its action.

"You see, we have a very strong interest in the organization of peace in the Pacific, just as we have in the Atlantic. We have alliances with Korea and Japan and the Republic of China and the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand. So, we are very much interested in the stability of the peace in the Pacific Ocean area and in East Asia.

"Now, if these aggressive pressures from Hanoi, with the support of Peking, should move into Southeast Asia, not only are hundreds of millions of people involved and vital resources involved, but the prospects for a durable peace dissolve.

"And so we have a tremendous interest in establishing in that area of the world, as we have done in the NATO area, the notion that the nations must be left alone and be allowed to live in peace, as the Charter of the United Nations provides."

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65. Address by William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, before the Commonwealth Club of California, at San Francisco, California, January 20, 1967; "East Asia Today," Department of State Bulletin, February 27, 1967, p. 323.

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"THE CONFIDENCE FACTOR

"Now, in this broad picture I have already referred to our stand in Viet-Nam as having made a major contribution to the confidence factor. I will not review here the current situation in Viet-Nam, because I think the interpretive reporting you get is on the whole good.

"I come back to the central point: that what we have done in Viet-Nam did have a major part in developing the confidence factor, the sense that progress is possible, the sense that security can be maintained in the nations of free Asia. To virtually all the non-Communist governments of the area--and they often say this as bluntly as President Marcos did in his opening address at the Manila Conference--that security requires a continued United States ability to act, not necessarily an American presence, although that, too, may be required in individual cases, but an ability to act for a long time. And that we must--and, I think, shall--provide, and we shall keep on in Viet-Nam, as the President has made completely clear. Without what we have done in Viet-Nam, without the regeneration of the spirit of cooperation among the Western nations, ourselves included, and the nations of Asia, I doubt very much if the favorable developments I have described could have taken place on anything like the scale that has in fact been happening. And I think that is the very strongly felt judgment of responsible people, in government and out, throughout East Asia.

"If that vast area with its talents and its capacity were to fall under domination by a hostile power or group of powers, or if it were to fall into chaos and instability, the result would be vast human misery and possibly a wider war. However, today, I think, more than at any time in the 15 years that I have personally been associated with the area, East Asia offers the hope of becoming a region of stable nations, developing in their own way, each according to its own strong national and cultural heritage. And that is our hope and our fundamental national interest, both in Asia and throughout the rest of the world."

66. Address by Secretary Rusk before a Joint Session of the Legislature of Texas at Austin, Texas, January 26, 1967; "Building a Durable Peace," Department of State Bulletin, p. 269.

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"Obviously, the first essential in building a durable peace is to eliminate aggression--by preventing it, if possible, and by repelling it when it occurs or is threatened....

"The United Nations has helped to make and keep peace in many situations. We continue to support it and to seek ways of strengthening it. But because it has been unable to function in some of the most dangerous situations, the main job of preventing and repelling aggression has been accomplished by the defensive alliances of the free world--defensive

alliances organized and conducted in complete harmony with the U.N. Charter, which expressly recognizes the right of individual and collective self-defense and also provides for regional organizations or agencies to maintain international peace and security.

"Under those alliances, the United States is specifically pledged to assist in the defense of more than 40 nations. Those commitments, and the power that lies behind them, are the backbone of world peace.

"....But the principal Communist states remain publicly committed to what they call 'wars of liberation'--the infiltration of arms and trained men. That is the type of aggression by which Communist North Viet-Nam set out to conquer South Viet-Nam. It is an aggression which has become less and less indirect since the closing months of 1964, when North Viet-Nam began to move an entire division of its regular army into South Viet-Nam.

"Four successive Presidents of the United States, after extended study in consultation with their chief advisers on defense and foreign policy, have concluded that the security of Southeast Asia, and of South Viet-Nam in particular, is very important to the security of the United States. Those who take a different view are at odds with the men who have borne the highest responsibility for the defense of the United States and the free world since the Second World War.

"U.S. COMMITMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

"In accordance with our national interest in the security of South Viet-Nam, the Government of the United States made commitments, of which the most solemn was the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. That treaty was approved by the United States Senate in 1955 with only one dissenting vote. It bound us to take action in the event of an armed attack on South Viet-Nam, among other nations. And Secretary of State Dulles told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that that commitment included the case of an attack by 'the regime of Ho Chi Minh in North Viet-Nam.'

"The United States cannot run away from its commitments. If either our adversaries or our friends should begin to doubt that the United States will honor its alliances, the result could be catastrophe.

"We are fighting in Viet-Nam because also we have not forgotten the lesson of the tragic 1930's, the lesson that was foremost in the minds of the authors of the U.N. Charter: the lesson that one aggression leads to another...."

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67. Secretary Rusk Interview, Videotaped in Washington on January 31, 1967 and Broadcast by the British Independent Television Network on February 1, 1967; "Secretary Rusk Discusses Viet-Nam in Interview for British Television," Department of State Bulletin, February 20, 1967, p. 274.

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"PEKING AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

"Q. Mr. Rusk, could we look at the objects of this war? There appears to us in Britain to be a certain confusion in your war aims. Is this a war for the containment of China, or is it simply a war for the independence of South Viet-Nam? Could you tell us precisely what your war aims are?

"A. I don't know that there is a choice between those two objectives. My guess is that if the authorities in Peking were to throw their weight behind peace in Southeast Asia, there would be peace in Southeast Asia.

"But, nevertheless, the immediate events which brought our Armed Forces into South Viet-Nam were the movement of substantial numbers of North Vietnamese men in arms, including some now 20 regiments of their North Vietnamese regular army, into South Viet-Nam for the purpose of imposing a political settlement on the South by force. Now, this cuts right across our commitments under the SEATO Treaty. Under article IV of that treaty, each signatory determines what steps it will take to meet the common danger in the event of an aggression by means of armed attack; and it was specifically understood at the time that that would apply to an aggression by Ho Chi Minh, as well as to others.

"Now, the Chinese are not actively involved in this situation in South Viet-Nam. We do know that they are trying to stir up problems for the Thais in the northeast section of Thailand. China has publicly announced that Thailand is next on the list; but the key point is that if these countries would live at peace, we would be the first to give that our full support--leave these countries alone ourselves, get out of there."

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68. Sir Montague Burton Lecture by W. W. Rostow, The University of Leeds, Leeds, England, 23 February 1967, "The Great Transition: Tasks of the First and Second Postwar Generations"; White House Press Release, 23 February 1967.

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"The postwar Communist offensive had a certain shape and rhythm.

There was Stalin's thrust of 1946-51, in association with Mao, from 1949; Khrushchev's of 1958-62; finally, the offensive conducted over the past four years by Mao and those who accepted his activist doctrines and policies with respect to so-called 'wars of national liberation.'

* * *

"At one point after another this Chinese Communist offensive in the developing world fell apart, leaving the war in Viet Nam perhaps the last major stand of Mao's doctrine of guerrilla warfare.

"There is a certain historical legitimacy in this outcome.

"For the better part of a decade, an important aspect of the struggle within the Communist movement between the Soviet Union and Communist China had focused on the appropriate method for Communist parties to seize power. The Soviet Union had argued that the transit of frontiers with arms and men should be kept to a minimum and the effort to seize power should be primarily internal. They argued that it was the essence of 'wars of national liberation' to expand Communist power without causing major confrontation with the United States and other major powers. The Chinese Communists defended a higher risk policy; but they were militarily cautious themselves. Nevertheless, they urged others to accept the risks of confrontation with United States and Western strength against which the Soviet Union warned.

"Although Hanoi's effort to take over Laos and South Viet Nam proceeded from impulses which were substantially independent of Communist China, its technique constituted an important test of whether Mao's method would work even under the optimum circumstances provided by the history of the area. As General Giap has made clear, Hanoi is conscious of this link: 'South Viet Nam is the model of the national liberation movement in our time...if the special warfare that the United States imperialists are testing in South Viet Nam is overcome, this means that it can be defeated everywhere in the world.'"

* * *

"Similarly, a failure of the Vietnamese and their allies to see through the engagement to an honorable peace could destroy the emerging foundation for confidence and regional cooperation in Asia, with further adverse consequences on every continent."

* * *

"On the other hand, we are confident that what we are seeking to accomplish in Viet Nam is right and essential if we are to move successfully through the great transition.

"We are honoring a treaty which committed us to 'act to meet the common danger' in the face of 'aggression by means of armed attack' in the treaty area. And this commitment is also being honored by Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand--as well as by the remarkable action of South Korea, which was not bound by treaty in this manner.

"We are also dealing with the gross and systematic violation of an agreement, signed in 1962, which committed all parties, including Hanoi, to withdraw their military forces from Laos; to refrain from reintroducing such forces; and to refrain from using the territory of Laos for interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

"We are also encouraged by the efforts of the people of South Viet Nam to make a transition to orderly constitutional government of the kind which the people of South Korea have accomplished with such notable success since 1961.

"And we are answering, as we have had to answer on other occasions, the question: Are the word and commitment of the United States reliable? For the United States cannot be faithful to its alliances in the Atlantic and unfaithful to its alliances in the Pacific."

* * *

"But in the perspective I have presented tonight, what is old-fashioned about Viet Nam is the effort by the leaders in Hanoi to make their lifelong dream of achieving control over Southeast Asia come to reality by the use of force.

"It is their concept of 'wars of national liberation' that is old-fashioned. It is being overtaken not merely by the resistance of the seven nations fighting there, but also by history and by increasingly pervasive attitudes of pragmatism and moderation.

"History, I deeply believe, will show in Southeast Asia, as it has displayed in many other parts of the world, that the international status quo cannot be altered by use of external force. That demonstration is costing the lives of many South Vietnamese, Americans, Koreans, Australians, and others who understand the danger to them of permitting a change in the territorial or political status quo by external violence -- who cherish the right of self-determination for themselves and for others.

"If the argument I have laid before you is correct -- and if we have the common will to hold together and get on with the job -- the struggle in Viet Nam might be the last great confrontation of the post-war era."

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69. Address by President Johnson before a Joint Session of the Tennessee State Legislature at Nashville, Tennessee on March 15, 1967; "The Defense of Viet-Nam: Key to the Future of Free Asia," Department of State Bulletin, April 3, 1967, p. 534.

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"As our commitment in Viet-Nam required more men and more equipment, some voices were raised in opposition. The administration was urged to disengage, to find an excuse to abandon the effort.

"These cries came despite growing evidence that the defense of Viet-Nam held the key to the political and economic future of free Asia. The stakes of the struggle grew correspondingly.

"It became clear that if we were prepared to stay the course in Viet-Nam, we could help to lay the cornerstone for a diverse and independent Asia, full of promise and resolute in the cause of peaceful economic development for her long-suffering peoples.

"But if we faltered, the forces of chaos would scent victory and decades of strife and aggression would stretch endlessly before us."

* * *

"The first answer is that Viet-Nam is aggression in a new guise, as far removed from trench warfare as the rifle from the longbow. This is a war of infiltration, of subversion, of ambush. Pitched battles are very rare, and even more rarely are they decisive."

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70. Address by William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, before the National Executive Committee of the American Legion at Indianapolis, Indiana on May 3, 1967; "Seventeen Years in East Asia," Department of State Bulletin, May 22, 1967, p. 790.

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"This group hardly needs to be told why we are acting as we are in South Viet-Nam. We are acting to preserve South Viet-Nam's right to work out its own future without external interference, including its right to make a free choice on unification with the North. We are acting to fulfill a commitment that evolved through the actions of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson and that was originally stated in the SEATO treaty, overwhelmingly ratified by the Senate in 1954. And we are acting to demonstrate to the world that the Communist technique of 'people's wars' or 'wars of national liberation'--in essence,

imported subversion, armed terror, guerrilla action, and ultimately conventional military action--can be defeated even in a situation where the Communist side had the greatest possible advantages through an unfortunate colonial heritage, political difficulty, and the inherent weaknesses to which so many of the new nations of the world are subject."

* * *

"Our policies have been guided essentially by two propositions rooted deeply in our own national interest:

"First, that the extension of hostile control over other nations or wide areas of Asia, specifically by Communist China, North Korea, and North Viet-Nam, would in a very short time create a situation that would menace all the countries of the area and present a direct and major threat to the most concrete national interests of this country.

"Second, and directly related to the first proposition, is the belief that an East Asian and Pacific region comprised of free and independent states working effectively for the welfare of their people is in the long run essential to preventing the extension of hostile power and also essential to the regional and world peace in which the United States as we know it can survive and prosper."

* * *

"But, of course, the situation in Viet-Nam in 1965 stood, alongside the trend in Indonesia, as the major dark spot in the area. And in early 1965 it became clear that unless the United States and other nations introduced major combat forces and took military action against the North, South Viet-Nam would be taken over by Communist force. If that had happened, there can be no doubt whatever that, by the sheer dynamics of aggression, Communist Chinese and North Vietnamese subversive efforts against the rest of Southeast Asia would have been increased and encouraged, and the will and capacity of the remaining nations of Southeast Asia to resist these pressures would have been drastically and probably fatally reduced.

"So our actions in Viet-Nam were not only important in themselves or in fulfillment of our commitment but were vital in the wider context of the fate of the free nations of Asia. The leaders of free Asia are fully aware of the relationship between our stand in Viet-Nam and the continued independence of their nations. The Prime Minister of Malaysia has emphasized that if South Viet-Nam were to fall before the Communists, his nation could not survive. The Prime Minister of Singapore has stated that our presence in Viet-Nam has bought time for the rest of the area. The Japanese Government has made known its conviction that we are contributing to the security of the area.

"Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Australia, and Thailand have

shown their convictions by sending military units to assist the South Vietnamese. Their efforts, joined with ours and with the South Vietnamese, have ended the threat of a Communist military takeover."

* * *

"In the broad picture what is the role of Viet-Nam? Behind the great and emerging changes I have sketched lies an atmosphere of growing confidence, a sensing by the peoples of free Asia that progress is possible and that security can be maintained. Our action in Viet-Nam has been vital in helping to bring about that confidence. For, as virtually all non-Communist governments in the area realize, their security requires a continuing United States ability to act, not necessarily an American presence, although that, too, may be required in individual cases, but an ability to act for a long time. And that we must--and, I think, shall--provide.

"That increasing confidence also depends deeply on the belief that essential economic assistance will continue to be provided. Without what we have done in Viet-Nam and the assistance we have provided throughout the region, I doubt very much if a considerable number of the favorable developments I have spoken of would have occurred, and certainly they would not have come so rapidly. I think that responsible people in East Asia would agree strongly with this judgment.

"I cannot too strongly stress this 'confidence factor.' It is an intangible, the significance of which is difficult to perceive unless one has visited the countries of Asia recently or, better still, periodically over an interval.

"Today, the increase in confidence among the non-Communist nations of Asia is palpable. Communist Chinese past failures and present difficulties play a part, but our own role in Viet-Nam is a major element even as the war goes on."

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71. Secretary Rusk Interview by Paul Niven, Televised from the Department of State to 75 Affiliated Stations of National Educational Television on May 5, 1967; "A Conversation with Dean Rusk," Department of State Bulletin, May 22, 1967, p. 774.

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"Secretary Rusk: ....They have no business being there. They have no right to try to seize South Viet-Nam by force. We are entitled under the SEATO treaty as well as under the individual and collective security-self-defense arrangements of the U.N. Charter, to come to the assistance of South Viet-Nam upon their request when they are subjected to this kind of aggression."

* * *

"In Southeast Asia we have treaty commitments that obligate us to take action to meet the common danger if there is an aggression by means of armed attack. That aggression is under way.

"If these questions can be decided by people in free elections, perhaps we could all relax. I don't know anyone who through free elections, any great nation--we have a particular State in India--that brought Communists to power with free elections. They are not monolithic--they are not monolithic.

"But all branches of the Communist Party that I know of are committed to what they call the world revolution. And their picture of that world revolution is quite contrary to the kind of world organization sketched out in the Charter of the United Nations.

"Now, they have important differences among themselves about how you best get on with that world revolution. And there is a contest within the Communist world between those who think that peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition is the better way to do it and the militants, primarily in Peking, who believe that you back this world revolution by force.

"But I think the Communist commitment to world revolution is pretty general throughout the Communist movement.

"Now, if they want to compete peacefully, all right, let's do that. But when they start moving by force to impose this upon other people by force, then you have a very serious question about where it leads and how you organize a world peace on that basis."

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"Mr. Niven: But some of our former diplomats and some of the critics are forever contending that the Viet-Nam war places strings upon our alliances, it complicates and exacerbates other problems.

"Secretary Rusk: I think that is nonsense--because if you want to put some strain on our other alliances, just let it become apparent that our commitment under an alliance is not worth very much. Then you will see some strain on our alliances.

"Mr. Niven: You are suggesting if we don't uphold this commitment other people will lose faith in our commitments all over the world.

"Secretary Rusk: And more importantly, our adversaries or prospective adversaries may make some gross miscalculations about what we would do with respect to those commitments."

* * *

"Secretary Rusk:

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"But I think that the end of the aggression in Viet-Nam would put us a very long step forward toward this organization of a durable peace. I think there is a general recognition in the world that a nuclear exchange does not make sense, that sending massed divisions across national frontiers is pretty reckless today. If we get this problem of these 'wars of national liberation' under reasonable control, then maybe we can look forward to a period of relative peace, although there will continue to be quarrels and neighborhood disputes and plenty of business for the Security Council of the United Nations."

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72. Address by Secretary Rusk before the National Conference of the U.S. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service at Washington, D.C., May 18, 1967; "Our Foreign Policy Commitments To Assure a Peaceful Future," Department of State Bulletin, June 12, 1967, p. 874.

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"Secondly, I hear it said that Viet-Nam is just a civil war, therefore we should forget about it, that it is only a family affair among Vietnamese. Well, it's quite true that among the Viet Cong and the National Liberation Front there is a large component of authentic Southerners who are in rebellion against the several authorities who have been organized in Saigon.

"But those are not the people who explain the presence of American combat forces in South Viet-Nam. Because beginning in 1960 the authorities in the North activated the Communist cadres which had been left behind at the time of the division of the country. Then from 1960 onward they sent in substantial numbers of Southerners who had gone North, were trained in the North, and were sent back as cadres and armed elements to join in seizing the country. And by 1964 they had run out of authentic Southerners and were sending Northerners in increasing numbers, and late that year they began to send regular units of the North Vietnamese Regular Army. Today there are more than 20 regiments of the North Vietnamese Regular Forces in South Viet-Nam and substantial forces in and just north of the demilitarized zone in direct contact with our Marines.

"It was what the North is doing to the South that caused us to send combat forces there, because we felt we had an obligation to do so under the SEATO treaty, a treaty which calls upon us to take steps to meet the common danger. And if the North would decide to hold its hand and not persist in its effort to seize South Viet-Nam by force, this situation could be resolved peacefully, literally in a matter of hours."

* * *

"The commitment of the United States to its 40 or more allies is a very important element in the building of a durable peace. And if those who would be our adversaries should ever suppose that our commitments are not worth anything, then we shall see dangers we have not yet dreamed of."

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73. Address by William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, before the 20th Annual Congress of the National Student Association at College Park, Maryland, August 15, 1967; "The Path to Viet-Nam: A Lesson in Involvement," Department of State Publication 8295, East Asian and Pacific Series 166, September 1967.

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"The fifth set of American decisions came in this setting and indeed overlapped the period of the Geneva Conference. The first aspect of these decisions was our leading role in the formation of the SEATO treaty, signed at Manila in September of 1954 and ratified by our Senate in February 1955 by a vote of 82 to 1. In the SEATO treaty South Viet-Nam and its territory were specifically included as a 'protocol state'; and the signatories specifically accepted the obligation, if asked by the Government of South Viet-Nam, to take action in response to armed attack against South Viet-Nam and to consult on appropriate measures if South Viet-Nam were subjected to subversive actions. The Geneva accords had, of course, already expressly forbidden aggressive acts from either half of Viet-Nam against the other half, but there had been no obligation for action by the Geneva participating nations. SEATO created a new and serious obligation extending to South Viet-Nam and aimed more widely at the security of the Southeast Asian signatories and the successor states of Indochina.

"The second aspect of our decisions at this period was an evolving one. In late 1954 President Eisenhower committed us to furnish economic support for the new regime, in which Diem was already showing himself tougher and more able than anyone had supposed possible. And in early 1955, without any formal statement, we began to take over the job of military assistance to South Viet-Nam, acting within the numerical and equipment limitations stated in the Geneva accords for foreign military aid.

"In short, in the 1954-55 period we moved into a major supporting role and undertook a major treaty commitment involving South Viet-Nam.

"These decisions, I repeat, are not mine to defend. In the mood of the period, still deeply affected by a not unjustified view of monolithic communism, they were accepted with very wide support in the United States, as the vote and the debate in the Senate abundantly proved. And the

Senate documents prove conclusively that there was full understanding of the grave implications of the SEATO obligations, particularly as they related to aggression by means of armed attack.

"The important point about these decisions--and a point fervently debated within the administration at the time, according to many participants--is that they reflected a policy not merely toward Viet-Nam but toward the whole of Southeast Asia. In essence, the underlying basic issue was felt, and I think rightly, to be whether the United States should involve itself much more directly in the security of Southeast Asia and the preservation of the largely new nations that had come into being there since World War II.

"There could not be the kind of clear-cut policy for Southeast Asia that had by then evolved in Northeast Asia, where we had entered into mutual security treaties individually with Japan, Korea, and the Republic of China. Some of the Southeast Asian countries wished no association with an outside power; others--Malaya, Singapore, and the northern areas of Borneo, which were not then independent--continued to rely on the British and the Commonwealth. So the directly affected area in which policy could operate comprised only Thailand, the Philippines, and the non-Communist successor states of Indochina--South Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia.

"Yet it was felt at the time that unless the United States participated in a major way in preserving the independence and security of these nations, they would be subject to progressive pressures by the parallel efforts of North Viet-Nam and Communist China.

"The judgment that this threat of aggression was real and valid was the first basis of the policy adopted. Two other judgments that lay behind the policy were:

"(a) That a successful takeover by North Viet-Nam or Communist China of any of the directly affected nations would not only be serious in itself but would drastically weaken and in a short time destroy the capacity of the other nations of Southeast Asia, whatever their international postures, to maintain their own independence.

"(b) That while we ourselves had no wish for a special position in Southeast Asia, the transfer of the area, or large parts of it, to Communist control achieved by subversion and aggression would mean a major addition to the power status of hostile and aggressive Communist Chinese and North Vietnamese regimes. It was believed that such a situation would not only doom the peoples of the area to conditions of domination and virtual servitude over an indefinite period but would create the very kind of aggressive domination of much of Asia that we had already fought the militarist leaders of Japan to prevent. It was widely and deeply believed that such a situation was profoundly contrary to our national interests.

"But there was still a third supporting judgment that, like the others, ran through the calculations of the period. This was that the largely new nations of Southeast Asia were in fact valid national entities and that while their progress might be halting and imperfect both politically and economically, this progress was worth backing. To put it another way, there was a constructive vision of the kind of Southeast Asia that could evolve and a sense that this constructive purpose was worth pursuing as a matter of our own ideals, as a matter of our national interest, and as a realistic hope of the possibilities of progress if external aggression and subversion could be held at bay.

"These I believe to have been the bedrock reasons for the position we took in Viet-Nam and Southeast Asia at this time. They were overlaid by what may appear to have been emotional factors in our attitude toward communism in China and Asia. But the degree of support that this major policy undertaking received at the time went far beyond those who held these emotions. And this is why I for one believe that the bedrock reasons I have given were the true and decisive ones."

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"....Despite all that romantics like /Jean/ Lacouture may say, what happened was that Hanoi moved in, from at least 1959 onward (Bernard Fall would say from 1957), and provided a cutting edge of direction, trained men from the North, and supplies that transformed internal discontent into a massive subversive effort guided and supported from the outside in crucial ways."

* * *

"....But those who believe that serious mistakes were made, or even that the basic policy was wrong, cannot escape the fact that by 1961 we were, as a practical matter, deeply engaged in Southeast Asia and specifically in the preservation of the independence of South Viet-Nam.

"President Kennedy came to office with a subversive effort against South Viet-Nam well underway and with the situation in Laos deteriorating rapidly. And for a time the decisions on Laos overshadowed Viet-Nam, although of course the two were always intimately related.

"In Laos, President Kennedy in the spring of 1961 rejected the idea of strong military action in favor of seeking a settlement that would install a neutralist government under Souvanna Phouma, a solution uniquely appropriate to Laos. Under Governor /W. Averell/ Harriman's astute handling, the negotiations finally led to the Geneva accords of 1962 for Laos; and the process--a point not adequately noticed--led the United States to a much more explicit and affirmative endorsement of the Geneva accords of 1954, a position we have since consistently maintained as the best basis for peace in Viet-Nam.

"In Viet-Nam, the situation at first appeared less critical, and the initial actions of the Kennedy administration were confined to an increase in our military aid and a small increase of a few hundred men in our military training personnel, a breach--it may be argued--to this extent of the limits of the Geneva accords but fully justified in response to the scale of North Vietnamese violation of the basic non-interference provisions.

"Although the details somewhat obscured the broad pattern, I think any fair historian of the future must conclude that as early as the spring of 1961 President Kennedy had in effect taken a seventh United States policy decision: that we would continue to be deeply engaged in Southeast Asia, in South Viet-Nam and under new ground rules, in Laos as well."

* * *

"No, neither President Kennedy nor any senior policymaker, then or later, believed the Soviet Union was still united with Communist China and North Viet-Nam in a single sweeping Communist threat to the world. But President Kennedy did believe two other things that had, and still have, a vital bearing on our policy.

"First, he believed that a weakening in our basic resolve to help in Southeast Asia would tend to encourage separate Soviet pressures in other areas.

"James Reston has stated, on the basis of contemporary conversations with the President, that this concern specifically related to Khrushchev's aggressive designs on Berlin, which were pushed hard all through 1961 and not laid to rest till after the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. At any rate, President Kennedy clearly did believe that failure to keep the high degree of commitment we had in Viet-Nam and Southeast Asia had a bearing on the validity of our commitments elsewhere. As Theodore Sorensen has summarized it...: '...this nation's commitment (in South Viet-Nam) in January, 1961...was not one that President Kennedy felt he could abandon without undesirable consequences throughout Asia and the world.'

"Secondly, President Kennedy believed that the Communist Chinese <u>were</u> a major threat to dominate Southeast Asia and specifically that a United States 'withdrawal in the case of Viet-Nam and in the case of Thailand might mean a collapse in the entire area.' Indeed, President Kennedy in one statement expressly supported the 'domino theory.'

"My own view, based on participation and subsequent discussion with others, is that the underlying view of the relation between Viet-Nam and the threat to Southeast Asia was clear and strongly believed throughout the top levels of the Kennedy administration. We knew, as we have always known, that the action against South Viet-Nam reflected deeply held ambitions by Hanoi to unify Viet-Nam under Communist control and that

Hanoi needed and wanted only Chinese aid to this end and wished to be its own master. And we knew, as again we always have, that North Viet-Nam would resist any Communist Chinese trespassing on areas it controlled. But these two propositions were not then, as they are not now, inconsistent with the belief that the aggressive ambitions of Communist China and North Viet-Nam--largely North Vietnamese in old Indochina, overlapping in Thailand, Chinese in the rest of Southeast Asia--would surely feed on each other. In the eyes of the rest of Southeast Asia, certainly, they were part of a common and parallel threat.

"So, in effect, the policy of 1954-61 was reaffirmed in the early months of 1961 by the Kennedy administration. Let me say right here I do not mean to make this a personal analysis of President Kennedy nor to imply any view whatever as to what he might or might not have done had he lived beyond November of 1963. But some untrue things have been said about the 1961 period, and I believe the record totally supports the account of policy, and the reasons for it, that I have given.

"STEMMING THE NORTH VIETNAMESE THREAT

"We then come to the eighth period of decision--the fall of 1961. By then, the 'guerrilla aggression' (Hilsman's phrase) had assumed truly serious proportions, and morale in South Viet-Nam had been shaken. It seemed highly doubtful that without major additional United States actions the North Vietnamese threat could be stemmed.

"President Kennedy took the decision to raise the ante, through a system of advisers, pilots, and supporting military personnel that rose gradually to the level of 25,000 in the next 3 years.

"I do not think it is appropriate for me to go into the detail of the discussions that accompanied this decision. Fairly full, but still incomplete, accounts have been given in various of the books on the period. What can be seen, without going into such detail, is that the course of action that was chosen considered and rejected, at least for the time being, the direct introduction of ground combat troops or the bombing of North Viet-Nam, although there was no doubt even then--as Hilsman again makes clear--that the bombing of North Viet-Nam could have been sustained under any reasonable legal view in the face of what North Viet-Nam was doing. Rather, the course of action which was adopted rightly stressed that the South Vietnamese role must remain crucial and primary.

"In effect, it was decided that the United States would take those additional actions that appeared clearly required to meet the situation, not knowing for sure whether these actions would in fact prove to be adequate, trying--despite the obvious and always recognized effect of momentum and inertia--not to cross the bridge of still further action, and hoping strongly that what was being undertaken would prove sufficient.

"POLITICAL CHANGE IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

"This was the policy followed from early 1962 right up to February of 1965. Within this period, however, political deterioration in South Viet-Nam compelled, in the fall of 1963, decisions that I think must be counted as the ninth critical point of United States policymaking. It was decided at that time that while the United States would do everything necessary to support the war, it would no longer adhere to its posture of all-out support of the Diem regime unless that regime made sweeping changes in its method of operation. The record of this period has been described by Robert Shaplen and now by Hilsman. Undoubtedly, our new posture contributed to the overthrow of Diem in November 1963."

* * *

"In early 1964 President Johnson expressly reaffirmed all the essential elements of the Kennedy administration policies publicly through every action and through firm internal directives. It is simply not true to say that there was any change in policy in this period toward greater military emphasis, much less major new military actions. Further actions were not excluded--as they had not been in 1954 or 1961--but President Johnson's firm object right up to February 1965 was to make the policy adopted in late 1961 work if it could possibly be done, including the fullest possible emphasis on pacification and the whole political and civilian aspect.

"The summer of 1964 did bring a new phase, though not a change in policy. The situation was continuing to decline, and North Viet-Nam may have been emboldened by the trend. Certainly, infiltration was rising steadily and, as we now know more clearly, began to include substantial numbers of native North Vietnamese. But, more dramatically, American naval ships on patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin were attacked, and there were two responding United States attacks on North Vietnamese naval bases.

"This led President Johnson to seek, and the Congress to approve overwhelmingly on August 7, 1964, a resolution--drafted in collaboration with congressional leaders--that not only approved such retaliatory attacks but added that:

'The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.'"

* * *

"From late November onward, these choices were intensively examined, even as the military threat grew, the political confusion in Saigon deepened, and all the indicators recorded increasingly shaky morale and confidence not only in South Viet-Nam but throughout the deeply concerned countries of Southeast Asia. By late January, it was the clear judgment of all those concerned with policy and familiar with the situation that the first choice was rapidly becoming no choice at all--and not, to use the phrase of one commentator, a 'constructive alternative.' To 'muddle through' (that commentator's phrase) was almost certainly to muddle out and to accept that South Viet-Nam would be turned over the Communist control achieved through externally backed subversion and aggression.

"This was a straight practical judgment. It ran against the grain of every desire of the President and his advisers. But I myself am sure it was right judgment--accepted at the time by most sophisticated observers and, in the light of reflective examination, now accepted, I believe, by virtually everyone who knows the situation at all at first hand.

"There were, in short, only two choices: to move toward withdrawal or to do a lot more, both for its military impact and, at the outset, to prevent a collapse of South Vietnamese morale and will to continue.

"And as the deliberations continued within the administration, the matter was brought to a head by a series of sharp attacks on American installations in particular. These attacks were serious in themselves, but above all, they confirmed the overall analysis that North Viet-Nam was supremely confident and was moving for the kill. And as they thus moved, it seemed clear that they would in fact succeed and perhaps in a matter of months.

"Let me pause here to clear up another current historical inaccuracy. The basis for the successive decisions--in February to start bombing; in March to introduce small numbers of combat forces; and in July to move to major United States combat forces--was as I have stated it. It depended on an overall view of the situation and on an overall view that what had been going on for years was for all practical purposes aggression--and indeed this term dates from late 1961 or early 1962 in the statements of senior administration spokesmen."

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"But this historical point is less important than the fundamental elements of the situation as it stood at the time. On the one hand, all of what I have earlier described as the bedrock elements still remained: a strong Chinese Communist and North Vietnamese threat to Southeast Asia, a crucial link between the defense of South Viet-Nam and the realization of that threat, and the validity of non-Communist nationalism, whatever its imperfections, in South Viet-Nam and in the other nations of Southeast Asia.

"Moreover, the wider implications for our commitments elsewhere appeared no less valid than they had ever been. Viet-Nam still constituted a major, perhaps even a decisive, test case of whether the Communist strategy of 'wars of national liberation' or 'people's wars' could be met and countered even in the extraordinarily difficult circumstances of South Viet-Nam. Then as now, it has been, I think, rightly judged that a success for Hanoi in South Viet-Nam could only encourage the use of this technique by Hanoi, and over time by the Communist Chinese, and might well have the effect of drawing the Soviets into competition with Peking and Hanoi and away from the otherwise promising trends that have developed in Soviet policy in the past 10 years.

"Finally, it was judged from the outset that stronger action by us in Viet-Nam would not operate to bring the Soviet Union and Communist China closer together and that the possibility of major Chinese Communist intervention could be kept to a minimum so long as we made it clear at all times, both by word and deed, that our objective was confined solely to freeing South Viet-Nam from external interference and that we did not threaten Communist China but rather looked to the ultimate hope of what the Manila Declaration, of last fall, called 'reconciliation and peace throughout Asia.'"

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"INDEPENDENCE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

"Other factors enter in, as I have tried to summarize, and despite their variations from time to time remain of major general importance. But it is primarily from the standpoint of Southeast Asia that I would like to close my remarks today. How do the bets I have described look today?

"Southeast Asia surely matters more than ever. A region which may have held as few as 30 million inhabitants in 1800--and which is carried under the heading of 'peripheral areas' in some textbooks on East Asia--now holds more than 250 million people, more than Latin America and almost as much as the population of Western Europe. The resources of this area are large, and its people, while not yet capable of the kind of dramatic progress we have seen in the northern parts of Asia, have great talent, intelligence, and industry. Its geographical location, while it should not be in the path of great-power collisions, is crucial for trade routes and in other respects.

"From the standpoint of our own security and the kind of world in which we wish to live, I believe we must continue to be deeply concerned to do what we can to keep Southeast Asia from falling under external domination and aggression that would contribute to such domination....

"The second part of our bet is that the independence of South Viet-Nam critically affects Southeast Asia. South Viet-Nam and its 15 million

people are important in themselves, but they assume an additional importance if the judgment is accepted that a success for aggression there would drastically weaken the situation in Southeast Asia and indeed beyond. That judgment cannot be defended solely by reference to the dynamics of major aggressive powers and their prospective victims in the past. I myself believe that those parallels have validity, but the question is always what Justice Holmes called 'concrete cases.' In this concrete case I think the underlying judgment has been valid and remains valid today.

"None of us can say categorically that the Communist Chinese would in due course move--if opportunity offered--to dominate wide areas of Southeast Asia through pressure and subversion. But that is what the Chinese and their maps say, and their Communist doctrine appears to add vital additional emphasis. It is what they are doing in Thailand today and, through local Communist allies, in Burma, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Singapore. And it is what they would like to do in Indonesia again."

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74. Remarks by President Johnson to the National Legislative Conference at San Antonio, Texas on September 29, 1967; "Answering Aggression In Viet-Nam," Department of State Publication 8305, East Asian and Pacific Series 167, Released October 1967.

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"Viet-Nam is also the scene of a powerful aggression that is spurred by an appetite for conquest.

"It is the arena where Communist expansionism is most aggressively at work in the world today--where it is crossing international frontiers in violation of international agreements; where it is killing and kidnaping; where it is ruthlessly attempting to bend free people to its will.

"Into this mixture of subversion and war, of terror and hope, America has entered--with its material power and with its moral commitment.

"Why?

"Why should three Presidents and the elected representatives of our people have chosen to defend this Asian nation more than 10,000 miles from American shores?

"We cherish freedom--yes. We cherish self-determination for all people--yes. We abhor the political murder of any state by another and the bodily murder of any people by gangsters of whatever ideology. And for 27 years--since the days of lend-lease--we have sought to strengthen free people against domination by aggressive foreign powers.

"But the key to all we have done is really our own security. At times of crisis, before asking Americans to fight and die to resist aggression in a foreign land, every American President has finally had to answer this question:

"Is the aggression a threat not only to the immediate victim but to the United States of America and to the peace and security of the entire world of which we in America are a very vital part?

"That is the question which Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson had to answer in facing the issue in Viet-Nam.

"That is the question that the Senate of the United States answered by a vote of 82 to 1 when it ratified and approved the SEATO treaty in 1955, and to which the members of the United States Congress responded in a resolution that it passed in 1964 by a vote of 504 to 2:

'...the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.'

"Those who tell us now that we should abandon our commitment, that securing South Viet-Nam from armed domination is not worth the price we are paying, must also answer this question. And the test they must meet is this: What would be the consequence of letting armed aggression against South Viet-Nam succeed? What would follow in the time ahead? What kind of world are they prepared to live in 5 months or 5 years from tonight?

"THREAT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

"For those who have borne the responsibility for decision during these past 10 years, the stakes to us have seemed clear--and have seemed high.

"President Dwight Eisenhower said in 1959:

'Strategically South Viet-Nam's capture by the Communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries in Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement. The freedom of 12 million people would be lost immediately and that of 150 million in adjacent lands would be seriously endangered. The loss of South Viet-Nam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us and for freedom.'

"And President John F. Kennedy said in 1962:

'...withdrawal in the case of Viet-Nam and in the case of Thailand might mean a collapse of the entire area.'

"A year later, he reaffirmed that:

'We are not going to withdraw from that effort. In my opinion, for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Viet-Nam, but Southeast Asia. So we are going to stay there.'

"This is not simply an American viewpoint, I would have you legislative leaders know. I am going to call the roll now of those who live in that part of the world--in the great arc of Asian and Pacific nations--and who bear the responsibility for leading their people and the responsibility for the fate of their people.

"The President of the Philippines had this to say:

'Viet-Nam is the focus of attention now....It may happen to Thailand or the Philippines, or anywhere, wherever there is misery, disease, ignorance....For you to renounce your position of leadership in Asia is to allow the Red Chinese to gobble up all of Asia.'

"The Foreign Minister of Thailand said:

'[The American] decision will go down in history as the move that prevented the world from having to face another major conflagration.'

"The Prime Minister of Australia said:

'We are there because while Communist aggression persists the whole of Southeast Asia is threatened.'

"President Park of Korea said:

'For the first time in our history, we decided to dispatch our combat troops overseas...because in our belief any aggression against the Republic of Viet-Nam represented a direct and grave menace against the security and peace of free Asia, and therefore directly jeopardized the very security and freedom of our own people.'

"The Prime Minister of Malaysia warned his people that if the United States pulled out of South Viet-Nam, it would go to the Communists, and after that, it would only be a matter of time until they moved against neighboring states.

"The Prime Minister of New Zealand said:

'We can thank God that America at least regards aggression in Asia with the same concern as it regards aggression in Europe--and is prepared to back up its concern with action.'

"The Prime Minister of Singapore said:

'I feel the fate of Asia--South and Southeast Asia--will be decided in the next few years by what happens out in Viet-Nam.'

"I cannot tell you tonight as your President--with certainty--that a Communist conquest of South Viet-Nam would be followed by a Communist conquest of Southeast Asia. But I do know there are North Vietnamese troops in Laos. I do know that there are North Vietnamese-trained guerrillas tonight in northeast Thailand. I do know that there are Communist-supported guerrilla forces operating in Burma. And a Communist coup was barely averted in Indonesia, the fifth largest nation in the world.

"So your American President cannot tell you--with certainty--that a Southeast Asia dominated by Communist power would bring a third world war much closer to terrible reality. One could hope that this would not be so.

"But all that we have learned in this tragic century strongly suggests to me that it would be so. As President of the United States, I am not prepared to gamble on the chance that it is not so. I am not prepared to risk the security--indeed, the survival--of this American Nation on mere hope and wishful thinking. I am convinced that by seeing this struggle through now we are greatly reducing the chances of a much larger war--perhaps a nuclear war. I would rather stand in Viet-Nam in our time, and by meeting this danger now and facing up to it, thereby reduce the danger for our children and for our grandchildren."

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75. Secretary Rusk's News Conference of October 12, 1967; Department of State Press Release No. 227, October 12, 1967.

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"Our commitment is clear and our national interest is real. The SEATO Treaty, approved with only one dissenting vote by our Senate, declares that 'Each party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area...would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger....' The Treaty says 'each party' will act. The fidelity of the United States is not subject to the veto of some other signatory -- and five signatories have engaged their forces alongside Korean and South Vietnamese troops. Indeed, the proportion of non-U.S. forces in South Viet-Nam is greater than non-U.S. forces in Korea.

"In August 1964 the Congress by joint resolution declared, with only two dissenting votes, that 'The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international

peace and security in Southeast Asia.' This was not a new idea in 1964. It was the basis for the SEATO Treaty a decade earlier. It is no less valid in 1967. Our several alliances in the Pacific reflect our profound interest in peace in the Pacific, and in Asia where two-thirds of the world's people live, no less vital to us as a nation than is peace in our own hemisphere or in the NATO area.

"I have heard the word 'credibility' injected into our domestic debate. Let me say, as solemnly as I can, that those who would place in question the credibility of the pledged word of the United States under our mutual security treaties would subject this nation to mortal danger. If any who would be our adversary should suppose that our treaties are a bluff, or will be abandoned if the going gets tough, the result could be catastrophe for all mankind."

* * *

"....I have never subscribed to the domino theory; it's much too esoteric. There are North Vietnamese regiments today fighting in South Viet-Nam. There are North Vietnamese armed forces in Laos being opposed by Laotian forces. There are North Vietnamese-trained guerrillas operating in Northeast Thailand. There are Communist dissident elements in Burma who are being aided, encouraged, and helped from outside Burma across the Chinese frontier.

"There was a major Communist effort in 1965 to pull off a coup d'etat against Indonesia. You don't need the domino theory. Look at their proclaimed doctrine and look at what they're doing about it."

* * *

"Q. Mr. Secretary, one of the questions -- basic questions -- that seems to be emerging in this Senate debate is whether our national security is really at stake in Viet-Nam, and whether Viet-Nam represents an integral part of our defense perimeter in the Pacific.

"Your earlier statement indicates that you think our security is at stake in Viet-Nam. I think it would help in this debate if you would perhaps elaborate and explain why you think our security is at stake in Viet-Nam.

"A. Within the next decade or two, there will be a billion Chinese on the Mainland, armed with nuclear weapons, with no certainty about what their attitude toward the rest of Asia will be.

"Now the free nations of Asia will make up at least a billion people. They don't want China to overrun them on the basis of a doctrine of the world revolution. The militancy of China has isolated China, even within the Communist World, but they have not drawn back from it. They have

reaffirmed it, as recently as their reception of their great and good friend, Albania, two days ago.

"Now we believe that the free nations of Asia must brace themselves, get themselves set; with secure, progressive, stable institutions of their own, with co-operation among the free nations of Asia -- stretching from Korea and Japan right around to the subcontinent -- if there is to be peace in Asia over the next 10 or 20 years. We would hope that in China there would emerge a generation of leadership that would think seriously about what is called 'peaceful co-existence,' that would recognize the pragmatic necessity for human beings to live together in peace, rather than on a basis of continuing warfare.

"Now from a strategic point of view, it is not very attractive to think of the world cut in two by Asian Communism, reaching out through Southeast Asia and Indonesia, which we know has been their objective; and that these hundreds of millions of people in the free nations of Asia should be under the deadly and constant pressure of the authorities in Peking, so that their future is circumscribed by fear.

"Now these are vitally important matters to us, who are both a Pacific and an Atlantic power. After all, World War II hit us from the Pacific, and Asia is where two-thirds of the world's people live. So we have a tremendous stake in the ability of the Free Nations of Asia to live in peace; and to turn the interests of people in Mainland China to the pragmatic requirements of their own people, and away from a doctrinaire and ideological adventurism abroad.

"Q. Could I ask just one follow-up question on that, sir:

"Do you think you can fulfill this very large commitment of containment and still meet the commitment of the Manila Conference -- to withdraw within six months after a peace agreement has been reached?

"A. Oh, yes, I think so.

"That does not mean that we ourselves have nominated ourselves to be the policemen for all of Asia. We have, for good reasons, formed alliances with Korea and Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of China, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand; and South Viet-Nam is covered by the Southeast Asia Treaty.

"That doesn't mean that we are the general policemen. Today, the Laotian forces are carrying the burden in Laos on the ground. The Thais are carrying the burden in Thailand; the Burmese are carrying the burden in Burma; the Indians are carrying the burden upon their northeastern frontier -- the Sikkim border -- and whatever other threat there might be in that direction.

"But we have our part; we have accepted a share, and we have accepted that share as a part of the vital national interest of the United States."

"Q. Mr. Secretary, would you describe the net objective here then as the containment of Chinese Communist militancy?

"A. No. The central objective is an organized and reliable peace.

"Now if China pushes out against those with whom we have alliances, then we have a problem, but so does China. If China pushes out against the Soviet Union, both China and the Soviet Union have a problem.

"We are not picking out ourselves -- we are not picking out Peking as some sort of special enemy. Peking has nominated itself by proclaiming a militant doctrine of the world revolution, and doing something about it. This is not a theoretical debate; they are doing something about it.

"Now we can live at peace -- we have not had a war with the Soviet Union, in 50 years of co-existence, since their revolution. We are not ourselves embarked upon an ideological campaign to destroy anybody who calls themselves Communist...."

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76. Interview with Secretary Rusk, Videotaped at USIA Studios in Washington, D.C. on October 16, 1967 and Later Broadcast Abroad; "Secretary Rusk Discusses Viet-Nam in Interview for Foreign Television," Department of State Bulletin, November 6, 1967, p. 595.

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"Secretary Rusk:

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"But in my press conference I pointed the finger at what I called Asian communism because the doctrine of communism as announced and declared in Peking has a special quality of militancy, a militancy which has largely isolated Peking within the Communist world, quite apart from the problem it has created with many other countries....

"Mr. Barnett: Mr. Secretary, since your last press conference, some of your critics have accused you of using the threat of 'yellow peril' to justify the allied forces' presence in South Viet-Nam. And, related to that also is the fact that many people have seen what they consider a shade different emphasis in your approach to this, that at one time American forces were there to justify the self-determination of South Viet-Nam, and now you're talking more in terms of giving strength to the non-Communist nations in Asia as a defense against Peking. Could you clarify this?

"Secretary Rusk: Yes. In the first place, I put out a statement [on October 16] in which I rejected categorically any effort to put into

my mouth the concept of 'the yellow peril,' which was a racial concept of 60 or 70 years ago fostered by extreme journalism of those days. This is not in my mind.

"I pointed out that other Asian nations, ranging from Korea and Japan on the one side around to the subcontinent of India on the other, are concerned about their own safety over against the things which are being said and done in Peking and by Peking. These free nations of Asia also are of Asian races. So that to me, this has nothing whatever to do with the sense of 'yellow peril' that was built upon a racial fear and hostility 60 or 70 years ago in which the hordes of Asia were going to overrun the white race as a racial matter.

"Now, as far as the difference in emphasis is concerned, one of our problems is that people tend to listen to what we say on only one point at a time. We have spoken about our treaty commitments to Viet-Nam. We've talked about our interest in organizing a peace in the Pacific, because of our other alliances in the Pacific as with Korea, Japan, the Republic of China, the Philippines, the SEATO Treaty, and our ANZUS Treaty with Australia and New Zealand.

"So we have a great stake in the integrity of the alliances which we have in the Pacific Ocean area.

"Now, we have also talked about our own national interest, our own security interests in Southeast Asia, and in these alliances. Now, we haven't shifted from one to the other; we speak about all of these things and have for 6 or 7 years. At times people seem to think we emphasize one, some the other. I think this is more based upon the way people listen, rather than the way in which we state these underlying elements in our policy."

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"Mr. De Segonzac: But by injecting the Chinese question in the whole affair of Viet-Nam as you have in your last press conference, aren't you making it more difficult to come to some form of solution, because you're giving the impression now that the whole question of Viet-Nam is not so much to help a small power, as was explained previously, to come to its self-decisions, but now you're putting it as a problem of China and the dangers of China in the Far East?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, this is not something that is an opinion solely of my own. There are many countries in Asia who are concerned about Peking and their attitude. I have no doubt that if Peking were strongly to support the reconvening of a Geneva conference that there might well be a Geneva conference, for example. At the present time, they bitterly oppose such a conference.

"This is a question that affects many countries. There are more than

20 regiments of North Vietnamese in South Viet-Nam. There are North Vietnamese regiments in Laos, opposed there by Laotian forces. There are North Vietnamese-trained guerrillas now operating in the northeast of Thailand. We hear reports of Chinese assistance going to the guerrillas in Burma. The Indonesians charge that the Chinese were deeply involved in that attempted coup d'etat in 1965. We know the shooting that occurred recently along the Sikkim border between Indian and Chinese forces.

"So that these are--and we also have heard from Prince Sihanouk in the last 2 or 3 weeks that he himself is not very happy about what he thinks the Chinese are doing in Cambodia. The Chinese are even quarreling with Switzerland. They reach out to places like Kenya and Ceylon and other places.

"It's not just their difficulties with the Soviet Union, India, the United States, United Kingdom. They find it difficult to get along with almost anyone, except their great and good friend Albania.

"So I don't think that we can pretend that the policies of China and some of the actions being taken by China are a contribution toward peace in Asia. At least our Asian friends don't think so."

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"Mr. Ruge: Mr. Secretary, if the aim of U.S. policy is now mainly containment of China, how do you envision the future of Asia? Do you expect to have all the other Asian countries armed to the point where they're strong enough to resist China, or is that a permanent role for the United States in the Pacific as the gendarmes for a couple of billions?

"Secretary Rusk: Well, I myself have not used that term 'containment of China.' It is true that at the present time we have an alliance with Korea, Japan, the Republic of China on Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand. Now, does that system of alliances add up to containment? That is something one can judge.

"Would the determination of India not to permit Chinese intrusions across its long frontier be containment? That is to judge. My guess is that none of the countries of free Asia want to see themselves overrun by mainland China, and in the case of some of those countries we have an alliance. Now, we have not ourselves undertaken to be the world's policeman, for all purposes, all around the globe. But we do have some alliances and those alliances are very serious to us and unless we take them seriously, my guess is that some very serious dangers will erupt not only in Asia but in other places."

* * *

"Secretary Rusk: Back in 1964, in August 1964, our Congress with only two dissenting votes, declared that it was in the vital interest of

the United States and of world peace that there be peace in Southeast Asia. Ten years earlier the Senate had approved our SEATO Treaty with only one dissenting vote in the Senate.

"Now, the basis for these alliances that we made in the Pacific was that the security of those areas was vital to the security of the United States. We did not go into these alliances as a matter of altruism, to do someone else a favor. We went into them because we felt that the security of Australia and the United States, New Zealand and the United States, was so interlinked that we and they ought to have an alliance with each other, and similarly with the other alliances we have in the Pacific, as with the alliance in NATO. So that these alliances themselves rest upon a sense of the national security interests of the United States and not just on a fellow feeling for friends in some other part of the world."

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77. Address by Under Secretary of State Katzenbach before the Fairfield University Progress Dinner at Fairfield, Connecticut, October 17, 1967; "The Complex and Difficult Problems in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, November 6, 1967, p. 602.

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"These commitments--both legal and moral--are so solidly founded that I cannot see how anyone can rightly argue that we should renege on them.

"They are rooted in the Geneva Accords of 1954, at the conclusion of which the United States formally stated that we 'would view any renewal of the aggression...with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security'; rooted in the SEATO treaty, which applies to South Viet-Nam through a protocol annexed to it; and rooted in numerous other assurances, including President Kennedy's statement of August 2, 1961, that 'the United States is determined that the Republic of Viet-Nam shall not be lost to the Communists for lack of any support which the United States Government can render.'

"Our commitments to South Viet-Nam are far better grounded than were those to South Korea at the time of the aggression there. For this reason, I am puzzled as to why so many liberals who supported President Truman in a policy of limited war in Korea now oppose a parallel policy in Viet-Nam. The objectives of such a policy have seldom been as clearly and precisely stated as they were by Richard Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger ('The General and the President,' Farrar, Straus & Young) in 1951. They said:

'The objective is not to destroy communism everywhere, a goal which would involve an unlimited ideological crusade, or even to destroy

the Soviet Union, a goal which could not be briefly attained without an atomic holocaust, the objective is to punish aggression by lowering the boom on individual experiments in aggression, while at the same time refusing to generalize from the individual case to the total war. Korea had to remain a limited war: limited in its investment of American forces, limited in its goal.'

"What Rovere and Schlesinger wrote about Korea in 1951, it seems to me, is no less valid for Viet-Nam today...."

* * *

"One such irrelevancy--one of the sillier ones--has been the assertion made in the press in the last few days that the administration was evoking 'the yellow peril.' In discussing our interests in Southeast Asia at his press conference last week, Secretary Rusk pointed out that the free nations of the area fully share our determination to prevent aggression. He said what everyone knows, that these nations--which are also oriental--are deeply concerned about their long-term security in the face of a militant, hostile, and rigidly ideological Communist China."

* * *

"Now is our starting point. Now is from where we must go on. But while our current action is delimited by responsibilities and decisions carried over from the past, it also gains by past experience. Significant to that experience, the experience of all of us who lived through the period between World Wars I and II, is the finding that armed aggression cannot be met simply by appeals to reason and virtue. Armed aggression is not deterred by rhetoric or wishful thinking."

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78. Address by Eugene V. Rostow, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, before the Regional Foreign Policy Conference at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, October 17, 1967; "Another Round in the Great Debate: American Security in an Unstable World," Department of State Bulletin, November 6, 1967, p. 605.

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"VIETNAM AND THE U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST

"Let me take up first the more specific arguments about Viet-Nam before returning to the broader problem.

"In the view of our Government, the war in Viet-Nam is like the attack on South Korea and earlier threats to Greece, Iran, and Berlin.

It constitutes a clear aggression by a Communist regime supported both by China and the Soviet Union--attempting to take over another country by force. Whatever view one takes of the origins of the war--whether it is considered an insurrection against the authority of the South Vietnamese state aided by North Viet-Nam or, as we believe, an infiltration and invasion from North Viet-Nam--the issue in international law and politics is the same. In either view, North Viet-Nam is waging war against South Viet-Nam. And South Viet-Nam has the right to ask for the help of the international community in resisting an attack mounted from beyond its borders.

"Neither South Viet-Nam nor the United States wants to conquer North Viet-Nam or to overturn its Communist regime. The central issue of the war is whether North Viet-Nam will be allowed to conquer South Viet-Nam.

"What is America's national interest in South Viet-Nam? Why are we there?

"There are several answers.

"We are in Viet-Nam because we are obliged to be there specifically by the SEATO treaty and generally by the U.N. Charter itself.

"The obligations of the United Nations Charter are not suspended when permanent members of the Security Council disagree or the Assembly cannot act. The principles of the charter condemn the attack of North Viet-Nam on South Viet-Nam and authorize the members of the organization to offer South Viet-Nam assistance in its efforts of self-defense.

"Honoring these commitments is dictated by the most hardheaded assessment of our national interest. Three Presidents have concluded that the fate of Southeast Asia as a whole is directly related to the preservation of South Viet-Nam's independence. And Congress has repeatedly affirmed their judgment. If South Viet-Nam were to be taken over, the expansionist forces of Communist China and North Viet-Nam would be encouraged, and resistance to them and to aggression generally throughout the world would be seriously weakened.

"The United States is no less a Pacific than an Atlantic power. Our security demands an equilibrium of power in the Far East as much as it does in Europe and in the Middle East. That equilibrium depends on Viet-Nam and the system of alliances it symbolizes.

"Responsible opinion throughout Southeast Asia believes that the outcome in Viet-Nam will determine the future alinement of the whole region. Present events in Laos, Thailand, and Burma confirm this widespread judgment.

"Viet-Nam is the test for a new technique of revolution. As nuclear warfare is unthinkable and massed frontal attacks of the Korean type are too dangerous to be tried, Communist leaders are drawn to 'wars of national liberation.' Indeed, they have developed an elaborate doctrine explaining the place of these ventures in their overall strategy. On their present scale, the hostilities in Viet-Nam could hardly continue for any length of time without large-scale aid from China and the Soviet Union. Deescalation of the fighting should follow logically if that aid were to be reduced.

"But the Soviet Union has not so far responded to proposals of this kind. Indeed, the Soviet Union still declines to join with the United Kingdom in reconvening the Control Commissions either for Laos or for Viet-Nam.

"In summary, we are bound to Viet-Nam by specific and general commitments and by our own national interest.

"Above all, at this stage, whether one believes we were right or wrong in getting into Viet-Nam in the first place, the hostilities in Viet-Nam have been made the test of America's resolve to maintain that network of security arrangements upon which the equilibrium of world power has come to depend. There would be little security to protect our interests anywhere in the world if America's promise faltered or failed when the going got rough. As President Kennedy once said:

'The 1930's taught us a clear lesson: Aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war. We are also true to our word.'"

* * *

"What principle of ethics makes it immoral to protect the safety of the nation through methods which have the sanction of international law and the United Nations Charter? In what way do we lessen our capacity to seek social justice at home by defending the cause of peace, stability, and social progress abroad?"

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79. Address by Secretary Rusk (Excerpt) made at Columbus, Indiana, October 30, 1967; "Firmness and Restraint in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, November 27, 1967, p. 703.

"We're in Viet-Nam today for several reasons. These reasons cannot be summarized in a single phrase or catchword. They are not reasons which shift from time to time but are always present.

"The first is that the peace and security of Southeast Asia are, as the Congress has put it, 'vital' to our own national interest.

"That conclusion was first reached by President Truman before the attack on Korea, after thorough analysis in the highest councils of the Government. The question was reexamined after the Korean war began and again in the early months of President Eisenhower's administration. The conclusion was always essentially the same: that we had a vital national interest in the peace and security of Southeast Asia. That conclusion was based on such factors as the population of the area--more than 200 million--its natural resources, and its strategic location athwart the gateway between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, with the Indian subcontinent on one flank and Australia and New Zealand on the other. The loss of Southeast Asia to a hostile power or powers would be a weighty shift of the balance of power to the disadvantage of the free world and would affect adversely the world situation as a whole.

"That fundamental conclusion led the United States to join with others in signing the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, which the United States Senate approved with only one dissenting vote. Article IV of that treaty says that 'Each party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area...would endanger its own peace and safety' and, in that event, would 'act to meet the common danger.' By a protocol signed and approved with the treaty, the protection was extended to the non-Communist states of former French Indochina:

"So we are fighting in Viet-Nam:

--because the peace and security of Southeast Asia are vital to our national interest;

--because we made a solemn commitment 'to act to meet the common danger' if South Viet-Nam were subjected to 'aggression by means of armed attack';

--because if those who would be our enemies should come to think that the defensive commitments of the United States--to more than 40 allies--are just bluffs, we would be on the slippery slope to general war;

--because Asian Communist leaders have proclaimed the struggle in Viet-Nam to be a critical test of a special technique for achieving Communist domination of the world: through whay they, in their upside-down language, call 'wars of national liberation.'

"We are in Viet-Nam because we believe that the people of South Viet-Nam should have a chance to determine their own government and their own future by their own choice and not through force imposed by Hanoi. The idea of self-determination is fundamental to a nation which was founded

upon the notion that governments derive 'their just powers from the consent of the governed.' This does not mean that we are the world's policemen, but it does mean that we take this factor into full account when we make treaties and undertake commitments beyond our borders.

"And we are fighting in Viet-Nam because we are resolved not to repeat the blunders which led to the Second World War."

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80. President Johnson's News Conference, November 17, 1967; Department of State Bulletin, December 11, 1967, p. 779.

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"Q. Mr. President, is your aim in Viet-Nam to win the war or to seek a compromised, negotiated solution?

"The President: I think our aims in Viet-Nam have been very clear from the beginning. They are consistent with the SEATO treaty, with the Atlantic Charter, and with the many statements that we have made to the Congress in connection with the Tonkin Gulf resolution. The Secretary of State has made this clear dozens and dozens of times--and I made it enough that I thought even all the preachers in the country had heard about it.

"That is, namely, to protect the security of the United States. We think the security of the United States is definitely tied in with the security of Southeast Asia.

"Secondly, to resist aggression. When we are a party to a treaty that says we will do it, then we carry it out."

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