

KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

SUMMARY

The Administration of President Kennedy justified the growing U.S. involvement in Vietnam utilizing much the same rationale that had been employed by the Administrations of President Truman and President Eisenhower. Initially, the situation in Vietnam received less emphasis than the crisis in Laos, although the principles cited for U.S. concern for Laos -- the identification of U.S. interests with its independence; SEATO obligations -- were couched in terms of collective security for Southeast Asia. Thereafter, as insurgency in Vietnam itself came to the fore, the Administration's public statements stressed the following:

a. The struggle against the worldwide communist offensive had to confront the danger that through "subversion, infiltration, and a host of other tactics...our security may be lost piece by piece, country by country, without the firing of a single missile or the crossing of a single border."

b. The "domino principle": the countries of Southeast Asia are interdependent for security, and the independence of each is important to the United States.

c. ICC reports, as well as U.S. and South Vietnamese intelligence, demonstrate that Communist North Vietnam has provided illegally, armed and unarmed personnel, arms, munitions, and other supplies from North Vietnam to insurgents in South Vietnam for the purpose of supporting an organized attempt to overthrow the government there.

d. "Now our great responsibility is to be the chief defender of freedom, in this time of maximum danger. Only the U.S. has the power and the resources and the determination."

e. The United States, although not a party to the Geneva Accords, declared at Geneva in 1954 that it would "view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security." President Kennedy assured President Diem that "in accordance with that declaration, and in response to your request, we are prepared to help the Republic of Vietnam to protect its people and to preserve its independence."

f. The SEATO Pact, by a protocol, extended the protection of the treaty to Vietnam; hence the treaty, in President Kennedy's words, "stated that the United States recognized that aggression by means of armed attack against Vietnam would threaten our own peace and security... the attack on the government by the communist forces, with assistance from the north, became of greater and greater concern to the Government of Vietnam and the Government of the United States."

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

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C. Kennedy Administration

1. Senator John F. Kennedy, Congressional Record, February 29, 1960, p. 3582:

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"But both before and after 1953 events have demonstrated that our nuclear retaliatory power is not enough. It cannot deter Communist aggression which is too limited to justify atomic war. It cannot protect uncommitted nations against a Communist takeover using local or guerrilla forces. It cannot be used in so-called brush-fire peripheral wars. In short, it cannot prevent the Communists from gradually nibbling at the fringe of the free world's territory and strength, until our security has been steadily eroded in piecemeal fashion - each Red advance being too small to justify massive retaliation, with all its risks.

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"In short, we need forces of an entirely different kind to keep the peace against limited aggression, and to fight it, if deterrence fails, without raising the conflict to a disastrous pitch.

"And our capability for conventional war is insufficient to avoid the hopeless dilemma of choosing between launching a nuclear attack and watching aggressors make piecemeal conquests."

2. Senator John F. Kennedy's statement in Congressional Record, June 14, 1960, p. 11631:

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"We must regain the ability to intervene effectively and swiftly in any limited war anywhere in the world -- augmenting, modernizing and providing increased mobility and versatility for the conventional forces and weapons of the Army and Marine Corps. As long as those forces lack the necessary airlift and sealift capacity and versatility of firepower, we cannot protect our commitments around the globe - resist non-nuclear aggressions - or be certain of having enough time to decide on the use of our nuclear power."

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3. Senator John F. Kennedy's statement as quoted in the Washington Daily News, September 22, 1960:

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"The recognition is not really the crux of our foreign policy. The real question is what should be done about the harsh facts that China is a powerful and aggressive nation. The dangerous situation now existing

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can be remedied only by a strong and successful India, a strong and successful Japan, and some kind of regional group over Southeast Asia which gives these smaller countries the feeling that, in spite of their distaste for a military alliance, they will not be left to be picked off one by one at the whim of the Peiping regime."

4. Senator John F. Kennedy Interview as Reported in The Washington Post, October 22, 1960:

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"Cronkite: '...What areas do you see where the United States might take the offensive in a challenge to communism over the next 4 to 8 years?'

"Kennedy: '...the most vulnerable area, I have felt, has been eastern Europe. I have been critical of the Administration's failure to suggest policies which would make it possible for us to establish, for example, closer relations with Poland, particularly after the '55-'56 period and the Hungarian revolution. We indicated at that time that we were not going to intervene militarily. There was a period there when Poland demonstrated a national independence, and even the Polish Government moved some distance away from the Soviet Union.

"...Secondly, the relations between Russia and China. They are now engaged in a debate over whether war is the means of communizing the world, or whether they should use subversion and infiltration, economic struggles and all the rest. No one can say what that course of action will be, but I think the next President of the United States should watch it carefully. If those two years should split, it could have great effects throughout the entire world.

"Thirdly, I believe that India represents a great area for affirmative action by the Free World. India started from about the same place that China did. The Chinese Communists have been moving ahead the last 10 years. India...has been making some progress, but if India does not succeed with her 450 million people, if she can't make freedom work, then people around the world are going to determine, particularly in the underdeveloped world, that the only way they can develop their resources is through the Communist system."

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5. Kennedy Presidential News Conference as Quoted in the New York Times, March 24, 1961. News Conference of March 23, 1961:

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"My fellow Americans, Laos is far away from America, but the world is small. Its 2,000,000 people live in a country three times the size of Austria. The security of all Southeast Asia will be endangered if Laos loses its neutral independence. Its own safety runs with the safety of us all, in real neutrality observed by all.

"I want to make it clear to the American people and to all of the world that all we want in Laos is peace and not war, a truly neutral government and not a cold war pawn, a settlement concluded at the conference table and not on the battlefield.

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"Q. 'Mr. President, there appears to be some national unawareness of the importance of a free Laos to the security of the United States and to the individual American. Could you spell out your views on that a little further?

"A. 'Well, quite obviously geographically Laos borders on Thailand, which is, to which the United States has treaty obligations under the SEATO agreement of 1954, it borders on South Vietnam - it borders on Vietnam - to which the United States has very close ties, and also which is a signatory of the SEATO pact.

"The aggression against Laos itself was referred to in the SEATO agreement, so that given this, the nature of the geography, its location the commitments which the United States and obligations which the United States has assumed towards Laos as well as the surrounding countries - as well as other signatories of the SEATO pact - it's quite obvious that if the Communists were able to move in and dominate this country, it would endanger the security of all, and the peace of all of Southeast Asia.

"And as a member of the United Nations and as a signatory to the SEATO pact, and as a country which is concerned with the strength of the cause of freedom around the world, that quite obviously affects the security of the United States."

6. President Kennedy's Special Message to Congress on the Defense Budget, March 28, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy; 1961, p. 229:

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"The strength and deployment of our forces in combination with those of our allies should be sufficiently powerful and mobile to prevent the steady erosion of the Free World through limited wars; and it is this role that should constitute the primary mission of our overseas forces. Non-nuclear wars, and sub-limited or guerrilla warfare, have since 1945 constituted the most active and constant threat to Free World security. Those units of our forces which are stationed overseas, or designed to fight overseas, can be most usefully oriented toward deterring or confining those conflicts which do not justify and must not lead to a general nuclear attack. In the event of a major aggression that could not be repulsed by conventional forces, we must be prepared to take whatever action with whatever weapons are appropriate. But our objective now is to increase our ability to confine our response to non-nuclear weapons, and to lessen the incentive for

for any limited aggression by making clear what our response will accomplish. In most areas of the world, the main burden of local defense against overt attack, subversion and guerrilla warfare must rest on local populations and forces. But given the great likelihood and seriousness of this threat, we must be prepared to make a substantial contribution in the form of strong, highly mobile forces trained in this type of warfare, some of which must be deployed in forward areas, with a substantial airlift and sealift capacity and prestocked overseas bases.

"In this area of local wars, we must inevitably count on the cooperative efforts of other peoples and nations who share our concern. Indeed, their interests are more often directly engaged in such conflicts. The self-reliant are also those whom it is easiest to help -- and for these reasons we must continue and reshape the Military Assistance Program which I have discussed earlier in my special message on foreign aid.

"Strengthened capacity to meet limited and guerrilla warfare -- limited military adventures and threats to the security of the Free World that are not large enough to justify the label of 'limited war.' We need a greater ability to deal with guerrilla forces, insurrections, and subversion. Much of our effort to create guerrilla and anti-guerrilla capabilities has in the past been aimed at general war. We must be ready now to deal with any size of force, including small externally supported bands of men; and we must help train local forces to be equally effective."

7. President Kennedy's Address to American Society of Newspaper Editors; April 20, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1961, p. 306:

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"...we face a relentless struggle in every corner of the globe that goes far beyond the clash of armies or even nuclear armaments. The armies are there, and in large number. The nuclear armaments are there. But they serve primarily as the shield behind which subversion, infiltration, and a host of other tactics steadily advance, picking off vulnerable areas one by one in situations which do not permit our own armed intervention.

"Power is the hallmark of this offensive -- power and discipline and deceit. The legitimate discontent of yearning people is exploited. The legitimate trappings of self-determination are employed. But once in power, all talk of discontent is repressed, all self-determination disappears, and the promise of a revolution of hope is betrayed, as in Cuba, into a reign of terror. Those who on instruction staged automatic 'riots' in the streets of free nations over the efforts of a small group of young Cubans to regain their freedom should recall the long roll call of refugees who cannot now go back -- to Hungary, to North Korea, to North Viet-Nam, to East Germany, or to Poland, or to any of the other lands from which a steady stream of refugees pours forth, in eloquent testimony to the cruel oppression now holding sway in their homeland.

"We dare not fail to see the insidious nature of this new and deeper struggle. We dare not fail to grasp the new concepts, the new tools, the new sense of urgency we will need to combat it -- whether in Cuba or South Viet-Nam. And we dare not fail to realize that this struggle is taking place every day, without fanfare, in thousands of villages and markets -- day and night -- and in classrooms all over the globe.

"The message of Cuba, of Laos, of the rising din of Communist voices in Asia and Latin America -- these messages are all the same. The complacent, the self-indulgent, the soft societies are about to be swept away with the debris of history. Only the strong, only the industrious, only the determined, only the courageous, only the visionary who determine the real nature of our struggle can possibly survive.

"No greater task faces this country or this administration. No other challenge is more deserving of our every effort and energy. Too long we have fixed our eyes on traditional military needs, on armies prepared to cross borders, on missiles poised for flight. Now it should be clear that this is no longer enough -- that our security may be lost piece by piece, country by country, without the firing of a single missile or the crossing of a single border.

"We intend to profit from this lesson. We intend to re-examine and re-orient our forces of all kinds -- our tactics and our institutions here in this community. We intend to intensify our efforts for a struggle in many ways more difficult than war, where disappointment will often accompany us.

"For I am convinced that we in this country and in the free world possess the necessary resource, and the skill, and the added strength that comes from a belief in the freedom of man. And I am equally convinced that history will record the fact that this bitter struggle reached its climax in the late 1950's and the early 1960's. Let me then make clear as the President of the United States that I am determined upon our system's survival and success, regardless of the cost and regardless of the peril!"

8. President Kennedy's Address, in Chicago to Democratic Party Dinner, April 28, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1961, p. 340:

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"We live in a hazardous and dangerous time. I do not think it's possible to overstate it. We live in a world which has changed tremendously in our lifetime -- history only will secure a full perspective on that change. But here is Africa, which was held by Western European powers for several centuries, now independent -- which holds within its countries masses of people, many of them illiterate, who live on average incomes of 50 or 60 or 75 dollars a year, who want a change, who now are the masters of their own house but who lack the means of building a viable economy, who are impressed by the example of the Soviet Union and the Chinese, who -- not

knowing the meaning of freedom in their own lives -- wonder whether the Communist system holds the secret of organizing the resources of the state in order to bring them a better life.

"And what is true of Africa is true of Asia, and what is true of Africa and Asia is true in some degree of Latin America. The Communists move among them, disciplined, organized, subject to an international discipline, promising under their system that all will be well, knowing that if they can win just once, then the iron grip of the totalitarian state goes upon the population -- those who resist become refugees, or are shot -- and they manage to control the population.

"Tonight, in Viet-Nam, where the President was re-elected recently in the last 2 weeks by a majority of 75 to 80 percent, yet a small army of guerrillas, organized and sustained by the Communist Viet Minh in the north, control most of the countryside in the nighttime -- in the last 12 months have assassinated over four thousand civil officers, two thousand state employees and two thousand police, believing if they can 'spill the wine,' that then they can win control of the population. And when they have won, they do not intend to give way.

"Now our great responsibility is to be the chief defender of freedom, in this time of maximum danger. Only the United States has the power and the resources and the determination. We have committed ourselves to the defense of dozens of countries stretched around the globe who look to us for independence, who look to us for the defense of their freedom.

"We are prepared to meet our obligations, but we can only defend the freedom of those who are determined to be free themselves. We can assist them -- we will bear more than our share of the burden, but we can only help those who are ready to bear their share of the burden themselves.

"The Russians and the Chinese, containing within their borders nearly a billion people, totally mobilized for the advance of the Communist system, operating from narrow, interior lines of communication, pressuring on Southeast Asia with the masses of the Chinese armies potentially ready to move -- of the Russians who hold great power potentially in the Middle East and Western Europe -- the United States stands as the chief defender of freedom.

"I said in my Inaugural Address that no group of people in any generation since democracy was first developed by the ancient Greeks nearly twenty-four or -five hundred years ago, have ever borne a responsibility as great as ours. And I welcome it -- and I welcome it tonight.

"There is no easy answer to the dilemmas that we face. Our great ally is the fact that people do desire to be free, that people will sacrifice everything in their desire to maintain their independence. And as the true nature of the Communist conspiracy becomes better known around the globe, when people come to realize -- as they surely will -- that the Communist advance does not represent a means of liberation but represents a final

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enslavement, then I believe that they will rally to the cause to which we have given our support and our commitment.

"I believe that we must build our country well, also. Senator Douglas described what we are attempting to do. The burdens are heavy upon us. We have to make this society an example to the world, strong enough to serve not only as an example but strong enough to maintain the commitments that we have assumed."

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9. President Kennedy's Presidential News Conference, May 5, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1961, p. 356:

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"Q. 'There have been reports that you would be prepared to send American forces into South Vietnam if that became necessary to prevent Communist domination of that country. Could you tell us whether that is correct and also anything else you have regarding plans for that country?"

"A. 'Well, we have had a group working in the Government and we've had a Security Council meeting about the problems which are faced in Vietnam by guerrillas and by the barrage which the present Government is being subjected to. The problem of troops...the matter of what we're going to do to assist Vietnam to obtain its independence it...a matter still under consideration!..."

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10. Joint Communique Issued at Saigon by the Vice President of the United States and the President of Viet-Nam, May 13, 1961, Department of State Bulletin, June 19, 1961, p. 956:

"The United States, for its part, is conscious of the determination, energy and sacrifices which the Vietnamese people, under the dedicated leadership of President Ngo Dinh Diem, have brought to the defense of freedom in their land.

"The United States is also conscious of its responsibility and duty, in its own self-interest as well as in the interest of other free peoples, to assist a brave country in the defense of its liberties against unprovoked subversion and Communist terror. It has no other motive than the defense of freedom."

11. President Kennedy's Special Message to Congress, May 25, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1961:

"The great battleground for the defense and expansion of freedom today is the whole southern half of the globe -- Asia, Latin America, Africa and

the Middle East -- the lands of the rising peoples. Their revolution is the greatest in human history. They seek an end to injustice, tyranny, and exploitation. More than an end, they seek a beginning.

"And theirs is a revolution which we would support regardless of the Cold War, and regardless of which political or economic route they should choose to freedom.

"For the adversaries of freedom did not create the revolution; nor did they create the conditions which compel it. But they are seeking to ride the crest of its wave -- to capture it for themselves.

"Yet their aggression is more often concealed than open. They have fired no missiles; and their troops are seldom seen. They send arms, agitators, aid, technicians and propaganda to every troubled area. But where fighting is required, it is usually done by others -- by guerrillas striking at night, by assassins striking alone -- assassins who have taken the lives of four thousand civil officers in the last twelve months in Vietnam alone -- by subversive and saboteurs and insurrectionists, who in some cases control whole areas inside of independent nations.

"With these formidable weapons, the adversaries of freedom plan to consolidate their territory -- to exploit, to control, and finally to destroy the hopes of the world's newest nations; and they have ambition to do it before the end of this decade. It is a contest of will and purpose as well as force and violence -- a battle for minds and souls as well as lives and territory. And in that contest, we cannot stand aside.

"We stand, as we have always stood from our earliest beginnings, for the independence and equality of all nations. This nation was born of revolution and raised in freedom. And we do not intend to leave an open road for despotism.

"There is no single simple policy which meets this challenge. Experience has taught us that no one nation has the power or the wisdom to solve all the problems of the world or manage its revolutionary tides -- that extending our commitments does not always increase our security -- that any initiative carries with it the risk of a temporary defeat -- that nuclear weapons cannot prevent subversion -- that no free people can be kept free without will and energy of their own -- "

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12. President Kennedy's Address to the United Nations, September 25, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1961, p. 624:

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"Finally, as President of the United States, I consider it my duty to report to this Assembly on two threats to the peace which are not on your crowded agenda, but which causes us, and most of you, the deepest concern.

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"The first threat on which I wish to report is widely misunderstood: the smoldering coals of war in Southeast Asia. South Vietnam is already under attack -- sometimes by a single assassin, sometimes by a band of guerrillas, recently by full battalions. The peaceful borders of Burma, Cambodia and India have been repeatedly violated. And the peaceful people of Laos are in danger of losing the independence they gained not so long ago.

"No one can call these 'wars of liberation.' For these are free countries living under governments. Nor are these aggressions any less real because men are knifed in their homes and not shot in the fields of battle.

"The very simple question confronting the world community is whether measures can be devised to protect the small and weak from such tactics. For if they are successful in Laos and South Vietnam, the gates will be opened wide.

"The United States seeks for itself no base, no territory, no special position in this area of any kind. We support a truly neutral and independent Laos, its people free from outside interference, living at peace with themselves and with their neighbors, assured that their territory will not be used for attacks on others, and under a government comparable (as Mr. Khrushchev and I agreed at Vienna) to Cambodia and Burma.

"But now the negotiations over Laos are reaching a crucial stage. The ceasefire is at best precarious. The rainy season is coming to an end. Laotian territory is being used to infiltrate South Vietnam. The world community must recognize -- all those who are involved -- that this potent threat to Laotian peace and freedom is indivisible from all other threats to their own."

13. President Kennedy's News Conference, October 11, 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1961, p. 660:

"Troops to Vietnam?"

"Q. Mr. President, in reference to your decision to send General Taylor to Vietnam, there may be some interpretation of that decision as implying confirmation of reports that you intend to send American forces to Vietnam or Thailand or Laos. Can you give us your appraisal of the conditions under which you might find it necessary to send troops?"

"THE PRESIDENT: We are going to wait until General Taylor comes back and brings an up-to-date description of the situation, particularly in Vietnam. As you know, in the last two or three months there has been a large increase in the number of the forces that have been involved. There has been evidence that some of these forces have come from beyond the frontiers. General Taylor will give me and the Joint Chiefs of Staff an educated

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military guess as to what the situation is that the government there faces. Then we can come to conclusions as to what is the best thing to do."

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14. President Kennedy letter to President Diem, December 14, 1961, Department of State Bulletin, January 1, 1962, p. 13:

"Dear Mr. President: I have received your recent letter in which you described so cogently the dangerous condition caused by North Viet-Nam's efforts to take over your country. The situation in your embattled country is well known to me and to the American people. We have been deeply disturbed by the assault on your country. Our indignation has mounted as the deliberate savagery of the Communist program of assassination, kidnapping and wanton violence became clear.

"Your letter underlines what our own information has convincingly shown -- that the campaign of force and terror now being waged against your people and your Government is supported and directed from the outside by the authorities at Hanoi. They have thus violated the provisions of the Geneva Accords designed to ensure peace in Viet-Nam and to which they bound themselves in 1954.

"At that time, the United States, although not a party to the Accords, declared that it 'would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.' We continue to maintain that view.

"In accordance with that declaration, and in response to your request, we are prepared to help the Republic of Viet-Nam to protect its people and to preserve its independence. We shall promptly increase our assistance to your defense effort as well as help relieve the destruction of the floods which you describe. I have already given the orders to get these programs underway.

"The United States, like the Republic of Viet-Nam, remains devoted to the cause of peace and our primary purpose is to help your people maintain their independence. If the Communist authorities in North Viet-Nam will stop their campaign to destroy the Republic of Viet-Nam, the measures we are taking to assist your defense efforts will no longer be necessary. We shall seek to persuade the Communists to give up their attempts of force and subversion. In any case, we are confident that the Vietnamese people will preserve their independence and gain the peace and prosperity for which they have sought so hard and so long.

"JOHN F. KENNEDY

"His Excellency Ngo Dinh Diem
President and Secretary of State for
National Defense
The Republic of Viet-Nam
Saigon, Viet-Nam"

15. President Kennedy's State of the Union Message, January 11, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 12:

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"A satisfactory settlement in Laos would also help to achieve and safeguard the peace in Viet Nam -- where the foe is increasing his tactics of terror -- where our own efforts have been stepped up -- and where the local government has initiated new programs and reforms to broaden the base of resistance. The systematic aggression now bleeding that country is not a 'war of liberation' -- for Viet Nam is already free. It is a war of attempted subjugation -- and it will be resisted.

16. President Kennedy's News Conference, January 15, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 18:

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"Q. In the past it would seem that coalition governments lean towards Communist control. Are we then taking a chance in supporting a coalition-type government in Southeast Asia?

"A. We are taking a chance in all of Southeast Asia and we're taking a chance in other areas.

"Nobody can make any predictions sure for the future really on any matter in which there are powerful interests at stake. I think, however, that we have to consider what our alternatives are and what the prospects for war are in that area if we fail in our present efforts, and the geographic problems which would have to be surmounted in such a military engagement where there is no easy entrance by sea and where the geographic location is extremely -- a long way from us and very close to those who might become involved. So that there is no easy sure answer for Laos.

"But it is my judgment that it is in the best interests of our country to work for a neutral and independent Laos. We are attempting to do that and I can assure you that I recognize the risks that are involved. But I also think we should consider the risks if we fail. And particularly of the possibility of escalation of a military struggle in a place of danger. So we're going to attempt to work out this matter in a way which permits us to try."

17. President Kennedy's News Conference, February 7, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 121:

"The Subterranean War

"Q. Mr. President, there seems to be some doubt, at least on the local level and in the region where this is going on, as to the right of the American people and the rest of the world to know the extent of the battle

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in South Vietnam. Could you tell us, sir, what the situation is there? How deeply are we involved in what seems to be a growing war and what are the rights of the people to know what our forces are doing?

"THE PRESIDENT: There is a war going on in South Vietnam, and I think that last week there were over 500 killings, and assassinations and bombings and the casualties are high. As I said last week, it is a subterranean war, a guerrilla war of increasing ferocity. The United States, since the end of the Geneva Accord, setting up the South Vietnamese government as an independent government, has been assisting Vietnam economically to maintain its independence, viability and also sent training groups out there, which have been expanded in recent weeks, as the attacks on the government and the people of South Vietnam have increased.

"We are out there on training and on transportation, and we are assisting in every way we properly can the people of South Vietnam, who with the greatest courage and under danger are attempting to maintain their freedom.

"Now, this is an area where there is a good deal of danger and it is a matter of information. We don't want to have information which is of assistance to the enemy and it is a matter which I think will have to be worked out with the government of Vietnam which bears the primary responsibility."

18. President Kennedy's News Conference, February 14, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 136:

"Involvement in Vietnam

"Q. Mr. President, the Republican National Committee publication has said that you have been less than candid with the American people as to how deeply we are involved in Vietnam. Could you throw any more light on that?

"THE PRESIDENT: Yes, as you know, the United States for more than a decade has been assisting the government, the people of Vietnam, to maintain their independence. Way back on Dec. 23, 1950, we signed a military assistance agreement with France and with Indo-China which at that time included Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. We also signed in December of 1951 an agreement directly with Vietnam.

"Now in 1954, the Geneva agreements were signed, and while we did not sign those agreements, nevertheless Under Secretary Bedel Smith stated that he would view any renewal of aggression in Vietnam in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern, and as seriously threatening international peace and security. At the time that the SEATO Pact was signed in 1954, Sept. 8, Vietnam was not a signatory, it was a protocol state, and, therefore, this pact which was approved by the Senate with only, I think, two against it, under Article 4, stated that the United States

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recognized that aggression by means of armed attack against Vietnam would threaten our own peace and security. So since that time the United States has been assisting the government of Vietnam to maintain its independence. It has had a military training mission there and extensive economic assistance.

"As you know, in the last two years the war has increased. The Vice President visited there last spring. The war became more intense every month; in fact, every week. The attack on the government by the Communist forces with assistance from the north became of greater and greater concern to the government of Vietnam and the Government of the United States.

"We sent -- I sent General Taylor there to make a review of the situation. The President of Vietnam asked us for additional assistance. We issued, as you remember, a white paper which detailed the support which the Viet Minh in the north were giving to this Communist insurgent movement and we have increased our assistance there. And we are supplying logistic assistance, transportation assistance, training, and we have a number of Americans who are taking part in that effort.

"We have discussed this matter -- we discussed it with the leadership of the Republicans and Democrats when we met in early January and informed them of what we were doing in Vietnam. We -- Mr. Rusk has discussed it with the House and Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. Mr. McNamara has discussed it with the Armed Services Committee. The leadership on both sides, Republicans and Democrats -- we have explained to them our concern about what is happening there, and they have been responsive, I think, to evidence their concern. So that there is a long history of our efforts to prevent Vietnam from falling under control of the Communists. That is what we are now attempting to do. And as the war has increased in scope, our assistance has increased as a result of the request of the government. So that I think we should -- as it is a matter of great importance, a matter of great sensitivity -- my view has always been that the headquarters of both of our parties should really attempt to leave these matters to be discussed by responsible leaders on both sides. In my opinion, we have had a very strong bi-partisan consensus up to now, and I am hopeful that it will continue in regard to the action that we are taking.

"Q. Mr. President, do you feel that you have told the American people as much as can be told, because of the sensitivity of the subject? Is that right?

"THE PRESIDENT: I think I have just indicated what our role is. We have increased our assistance to the government, its logistics, and we have not sent combat troops there, although the training missions that we have there have been instructed that if they are fired upon they are, of course, to fire back, to protect themselves, but we have not sent combat troops, in the generally understood sense of the word. We have increased our training mission, and we have increased our logistics support, and we are attempting to prevent a Communist take-over of Vietnam, which is in

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accordance with a policy which our Government has followed for the last -- certainly since 1954, and even before then as I have indicated. We are attempting to make all of the information available that we can, consistent with our security needs in the area. So I feel that we are being as frank as we can be, and I think what I have said to you is a description of our activity there."

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19. President Kennedy's Speech at University of California, March 23, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 265:

"The leaders of the Communist world are not only confronted by acute internal problems in each Communist country -- the failure of agriculture, the rising discontent of the youth and the intellectuals, the demands of technical and managerial groups for status and security. They are confronted in addition by profound divisions within the Communist world itself -- divisions which have already shattered the image of communism as a universal system guaranteed to abolish all social and international conflicts, the most valuable asset which the Communists had for many years.

"Wisdom requires the long view. And the long view shows us that the revolution of national independence is a fundamental fact of our era. This revolution cannot be stopped.

"As new nations emerge from the oblivion of centuries, their first aspiration is to affirm their national identity. Their deepest hope is for a world where, within a framework of international cooperation, every country can solve its own problems according to its own traditions and ideals.

"It is in the interests of the pursuit of knowledge -- and it is in our own national interest -- that this revolution of national independence succeed. For the Communists rest everything on the idea of a monolithic world -- a world where all knowledge has a single pattern, all societies move toward a single model, all problems have a single solution, and all roads lead to a single destination.

"The pursuit of knowledge, on the other hand, rests everything on the opposite idea -- on the idea of a world based on diversity, self-determination and freedom. And that is the kind of world to which we Americans, as a nation, are committed by the principles on which this republic was formed.

"As men conduct the pursuit of knowledge, they create a world which freely unites national diversity and international partnership. This emerging world is incompatible with the Communist conception of world order.

"It will irresistibly burst the bonds of Communist organization and Communist ideology. And diversity and independence, far from being opposed to the American conception of world order, represent the very essence of our vision of the future.

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"There used to be much talk a few years ago about the inevitable triumph of communism. We hear such talk much less now. No one who examines the modern world can doubt that the great currents of history are carrying the world away from the monolithic idea toward the pluralist idea -- away from communism and toward national independence and freedom.

"No one can doubt that the wave of the future is not the conquest of the world by a single dogmatic creed, but the liberation of the diverse energies of free nations and free men. No one can doubt that cooperation in the pursuit of knowledge must lead to freedom of the mind and of the soul.

"The specter of thermonuclear war will hang over mankind; and we must heed the advice of Oliver Wendell Holmes of 'freedom leaning on her spear' until all nations are wise enough to disarm safely and effectively.

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"We must seize the vision of a free and diverse world -- and shape our policies to speed progress toward a flexible world order.

"This is the unifying spirit of our policies in the world. The purpose of our aid programs must be to help developing countries to move forward as rapidly as possible on the road to genuine national independence.

"Our military policies must assist nations to protect the processes of democratic reform and development against disruption and intervention."

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20. President Kennedy's News Conference, April 11, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 322:

"VIET-NAM

"Q: Sir, what are you going to do about the American soldiers getting killed in Viet-Nam?

"A: ...We are attempting to help Viet-Nam maintain its independence and not fall under the domination of the communists...But we cannot desist in Viet-Nam..."

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21. President Kennedy's News Conference, May 9, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 377:

"THE BROKEN CEASE-FIRE

"Q: Mr. President, last February at a news conference you told us that the cease-fire was becoming frayed in Laos and in the event that it

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was broken, it could lead to a very serious decision. I wonder, Mr. President, now that the cease-fire has been broken, if efforts should fail to re-establish it, would it cause a re-examination on the part of the United States towards its policy there?

"THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are concerned about the break in the cease-fire. As you know, the State Department, the Acting Secretary of State, and the Assistant Secretary of State, met today with Ambassador Dobrynin, this afternoon. We have already indicated to one of the co-chairmen, the British government, our great concern about it. Our ambassador in Moscow met with the foreign secretary of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko.

"We do believe, and have said from the beginning, that the negotiations should move much more quickly than they have. The longer this rather frayed cease-fire continues, the more chance we will have of the kind of incidents we have had in the past few days. That is why we were hopeful, after the meetings at Geneva last summer and fall, that the negotiations between the parties involved would take place last fall, and we could organize a government, rather than trying to continue to hold lines which in some cases are exposed, and which are subject to this kind of pressure. So that has been our view.

"So that has been our view, and the longer it goes on, and the longer there is not an agreement on a government, the longer some groups stand out from these kinds of conversations, then the more hazardous the situation becomes.

"Now, on the particular incident, it is a clear breach of the cease-fire. We have indicated and we hope that the Soviet Union, which is committed to a policy based on the statement at Vienna, in regard to Laos, we are hopeful that we can bring about a restoration of the cease-fire. But we have got to use the time to try to move ahead in our political negotiations.

"I agree it is a very hazardous course, but introducing American forces is the other one -- let's not think there is some great third course. That also is a hazardous course and we want to attempt to see if we can work out a peaceful solution, which has been our object for many months. I believe that these negotiations should take place quickly. This is not a satisfactory situation today."

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22. White House Statement of the President, May 15, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 396:

"Following joint consideration by the governments of the United States and Thailand of the situation in Southeast Asia, the Royal Thai Government has invited, and I have today ordered, additional elements of the United States military forces, both ground and air, to proceed to

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Thailand and to remain there until further orders. These forces are to help ensure the territorial integrity of this peaceful country.

"The dispatch of United States forces to Thailand was considered desirable because of recent attacks in Laos by Communist forces, and the subsequent movement of Communist military units toward the border of Thailand.

"A threat to Thailand is of grave concern to the United States. I have, therefore, ordered certain additional American military forces into Thailand in order that we may be in a position to fulfill speedily our obligations under the Manila Pact of 1954, a defense agreement which was approved overwhelmingly by the U.S. Senate, and to which the Secretary of State and Foreign Minister of Thailand referred in their joint statement of March 6, 1962. We are in consultation with SEATO Governments on the situation.

"I emphasize that this is a defensive act on the part of the United States and wholly consistent with the United Nations Charter which specifically recognizes that nations have an inherent right to take collective measures for self-defense. In the spirit of that Charter, I have directed that the Secretary General of the United Nations be informed of the actions that we are taking.

"There is no change in our policy toward Laos, which continues to be the re-establishment of an effective cease-fire and prompt negotiations for a government of national union."

23. President Kennedy's News Conference, May 17, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 402:

"No Further Breach in Laos

"Q: Mr. President, could you bring us up to date on the Laotian situation since the dispatch of our troops in Thailand? Specifically, do you feel that we have increased the chances of our getting caught in a Communist shooting war in Southeast Asia?

"THE PRESIDENT: We are continuing to hope that there will be a national government or national union, which has been our policy, as you know, for a year. We are going into Thailand, at the decision of the Thai government, our own decision to provide for the defense of Thailand. The latest information indicates no further breach of the cease-fire. We also have indications that the three princes will engage in conversation shortly. I hope they will produce a government. That is our object. I have already indicated the great hazards of a shooting war in Asia. In Asia, it is our object to bring about a diplomatic solution which will make the chances of such a war far less likely.

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"Troops in Thailand

"Q: Mr. President, in light of your answer to this question, sir, could you give us any idea how long the American troops will be needed in Thailand?

"THE PRESIDENT: I cannot at this time.

"Q: Have you any idea under what conditions they might return?

"THE PRESIDENT: I cannot at this time. They have only been in there for a very short while, and we can't tell when they will come out. It will depend a good deal on what conditions are in Thailand and the neighboring countries.

"Restoring the Cease-Fire

"Q: Mr. President, could you tell us, please, what you would consider the restoration of an effective cease-fire? Would this involve the withdrawal of the Communist forces to their position before the attack on Nam Tha, or more or less a quiescence which would permit the talks to go forward on the government?

"THE PRESIDENT: Obviously, we would prefer as great a withdrawal to the line that was in effect a week or so ago as we could get. I would think, however, that the peace along the line which now may exist, of course, is essential.

"Objectives in Laos.

"Q: Mr. President, would you review for us the considerations that you had in mind last weekend when you took this rather swift action to move more American troops into Thailand?

"THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We are concerned about the breach of the cease-fire, the sign of deterioration in Laos, which brought Communist forces to the border of Thailand up in the Mekong River section, up not too far from Nam Tha, and we did not know whether this was an indication of a general breach of the cease-fire which, of course, would immediately imperil Thailand. So in our desire to stabilize the situation, we got in touch with the government, which was already in touch with us, and worked out the proposed course of action.

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"Legality of Thailand Move

"Q: Mr. President, what was the legal basis for our sending troops to Thailand? Was it a bilateral arrangement that we have with the Thai government, or was it possibly secret arrangements?

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"THE PRESIDENT: No, the actual legal basis was to put us in a position to fulfill our obligations under the SEATO Treaty.

"Q: Mr. President, are the other members of the SEATO Treaty organization doing the same?

"THE PRESIDENT: They have been asked to do so, and there have been indications of a favorable response from several of them. This is a decision for them. But we have responded and met our obligations.

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"The Intentions of Pathet Lao

"Q: Mr. President, back on the subject of Southeast Asia, has there been any indication that the Pathet Lao intended to march against Thailand or against the capital of Laos, and, second, under what conditions would the United States send its troops into Laos?

"THE PRESIDENT: In answer to your first question, I don't know what their intentions may be. I am hopeful their intentions will be to maintain a cease-fire. Obviously, as I have said, the breach of the cease-fire in the case of Nam Tha was a blow to the concept of the cease-fire. That is what initiated our action in the case of Thailand. On the second matter, we have to wait and see. I think it is very important that the princes form a government of national union for the preservation of their own country."

24. President Kennedy's Address at Graduation Exercises of the U.S. Military Academy, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 453:

"Korea has not been the only battle ground since the end of the Second World War. Men have fought and died in Malaya, in Greece, in the Philippines, in Algeria and Cuba, and Cyprus and almost continuously on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. No nuclear weapons have been fired. No massive nuclear retaliation has been considered appropriate. This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin -- war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, war by ambush instead of by combat; by infiltration, instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him. It is a form of warfare uniquely adapted to what has been strangely called 'wars of liberation;' to undermine the efforts of new and poor countries to maintain the freedom that they have finally achieved. It preys on economic unrest and ethnic conflicts. It requires in those situations where we must counter it, and these are the kinds of challenges that will be before us in the next decade if freedom is to be saved, a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training."

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25. President Kennedy's News Conference, June 14, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1962, p. 492:

"Mansfield's Criticisms

"Q: Mr. President, Senator Mansfield a few days ago suggested a review of Far Eastern policies because he said they seem to him either marking time, or at least on a collision course.

"Do you think such a review is necessary?

"THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have been reviewing. As you know, we have been attempting in the case of Laos to work out a policy which would prevent either one of those situations, whether we shall be successful or not, only time will tell.

"I know that we have put large sums of money, and the situation there is still hazardous, what is true there of course is true all around the world. This is a period of great tension and change. But if the United States had not played a part in Southeast Asia for many years, I think the whole map of Southeast Asia would be different.

"I am delighted, as you know, I have the highest regard for Senator Mansfield, and I think that we should constantly review, and I think that he suggested we should make judgments between what is essential to our interest and what is marginal. We have been attempting with great difficulty to carry out a policy with Laos which would permit a neutral and independent government there, and in Senator Mansfield's speech he used the examples of Burma and Cambodia. Those were the examples that were also used at the Vienna meeting by Chairman Khrushchev and myself in which we stated the kind of government that we both said we hoped would emerge in Laos. That is the commitment that was made by the Soviet Union, and by the United States.

"Now we have moved to a different plateau, and we are going to see whether that commitment can be maintained. But on the other hand, I am sure and I know Senator Mansfield would not think we should withdraw, because withdrawal in the case of Vietnam and in the case of Thailand might mean a collapse of the entire area."

26. U.S. Comments on Report of Control Commission for Viet-Nam, Department of State Bulletin, July 16, 1962, p. 109:

"Department Statement

"The report just issued by the International Control Commission for Viet-Nam demonstrates that the Communist North Vietnamese are engaged in a campaign of aggression and subversion aimed at the violent overthrow of the Government of South Viet-Nam. It indicates clearly that the hostilities

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in Viet-Nam, which in the first 5 months of this year alone resulted in the death of more than 9,000 people, are planned, caused, and led by the Communist authorities in North Viet-Nam. These are the conclusions of the Commission's Legal Committee:

'...there is evidence to show that armed and unarmed personnel, arms, munitions and other supplies have been sent from the Zone in the North to the Zone in the South with the object of supporting, organizing and carrying out hostile activities, including armed attacks, directed against the Armed Forces and Administration of the Zone in the South... there is evidence to show that the PAVN [People's Army of Viet-Nam] has allowed the Zone in the North to be used for inciting, encouraging and supporting hostile activities in the Zone in the South, aimed at the overthrow of the Administration in the South.'

"The Commission accepted these conclusions of the Legal Committee that there was sufficient evidence to show 'beyond reasonable doubt' that the authorities in Communist North Viet-Nam committed these violations. The Commission also cited the Republic of Viet-Nam for its activities in importing military equipment and personnel above the limits imposed by the 1954 Geneva Accords. The report clearly demonstrates, however, that these actions were taken by South Viet-Nam as part of its effort to defend itself against aggression and subversion from the North. In December of last year President Diem requested increased military assistance from the United States. We have responded to this request.

"President Diem and President Kennedy have both stated that they look forward to the discontinuance of the present level of military assistance when the Communist North Vietnamese halt their campaign to destroy the Republic of Viet-Nam. The report of the International Control Commission takes note of this position. The United States welcomes the Commission's report and recommends it for world attention. We hope that the Commission will continue its efforts to restore peace in Viet-Nam."

27. President Kennedy's Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 14, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 17:

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"Third, what comfort can we take from the increasing strains and tensions within the Communist bloc? Here hope must be tempered with caution. For the Soviet-Chinese disagreement is over means, not ends. A dispute over how best to bury the free world is no grounds for Western rejoicing.

"Nevertheless, while a strain is not a fracture, it is clear that the forces of diversity are at work inside the Communist camp, despite all the iron disciplines of regimentation and all the iron dogmatisms

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of ideology. Marx is proven wrong once again: for it is the closed Communist societies, not the free and open societies which carry within themselves the seeds of internal disintegration.

"The disarray of the Communist empire has been heightened by two other formidable forces. One is the historical force of nationalism -- and the yearning of all men to be free. The other is the gross inefficiency of their economies. For a closed society is not open to ideas of progress -- and a police state finds that it cannot command the grain to grow.

"New nations asked to choose between two competing systems need only compare conditions in East and West Germany, Eastern and Western Europe, North and South Viet-Nam. They need only compare the disillusionment of Communist Cuba with the promise of the Alliance for Progress. And all the world knows that no successful system builds a wall to keep its people in and freedom out -- and the wall of shame dividing Berlin is a symbol of Communist failure.

"Finally, what can we do to move from the present pause toward enduring peace? Again I would counsel caution. I foresee no spectacular reversal in Communist methods or goals. But if all these trends and developments can persuade the Soviet Union to walk the path of peace, then let her know that all free nations will journey with her. But until that choice is made, and until the world can develop a reliable system of international security, the free peoples have no choice but to keep their arms nearby.

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"In short, let our adversaries choose. If they choose peaceful competition, they shall have it. If they come to realize that their ambitions cannot succeed -- if they see their 'wars of liberation' and subversion will ultimately fail -- if they recognize that there is more security in accepting inspection than in permitting new nations to master the black arts of nuclear war -- and if they are willing to turn their energies, as we are, to the great unfinished tasks of our own peoples -- then, surely, the areas of agreement can be very wide indeed: a clear understanding about Berlin, stability in Southeast Asia, an end to nuclear testing, new checks on surprise or accidental attack, and, ultimately, general and complete disarmament.

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"My friends: I close on a note of hope. We are not lulled by the momentary calm of the sea or the somewhat clearer skies above. We know the turbulence that lies below, and the storms that are beyond the horizon this year. But now the winds of change appear to be blowing more strongly than ever, in the world of communism as well as our own...

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28. President Kennedy's Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 14, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 16:

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"Second, what of the developing and non-aligned nations? They were, I believe, shocked by the Soviets sudden and secret attempt to transform Cuba into a nuclear striking base -- and by Communist China's arrogant invasion of India.

"They have been reassured by our prompt assistance to India, by our support through the United Nations of the Congo's unification, by our patient search for disarmament, and by the improvement in our treatment of citizens and visitors, whose skin does not happen to be white. And as the older colonialism recedes, and the neo-colonialism of the Communist powers stands out more starkly than ever, they realize more clearly that the issue in the world struggle is not communism versus capitalism, but coercion versus a free choice.

"They realize that the longing for independence is the same the world over, whether it is the independence of West Berlin or Viet-Nam. They realize that such independence runs athwart all Communist ambitions, but is in keeping with our own -- and that our approach to their needs is resilient and resourceful, while the Communists rely on ancient doctrines and old dogmas.

"Nevertheless, it is hard for any nation to focus on an external or subversive threat to its independence when its energies are drained in daily combat with the forces of poverty and despair. It makes little sense for us to assail in speeches and resolutions the horrors of communism, to spend \$50 billion a year to prevent its military advance -- and then to begrudge spending, largely on American products, less than one-tenth of that amount to help other nations strengthen their independence and cure the social chaos in which communism has always thrived."

29. President Kennedy's News Conference, March 6, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 243:

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"Q: Mr. President, the Mansfield committee, sent at your suggestion to the Far East and Europe, has recommended a thorough security reassessment in the Far East and a clamp down, if not a reduction in our aid to that part of the world. Would you have any comment on this, sir?

"THE PRESIDENT. I don't see how we are going to be able, unless we are going to pull out of Southeast Asia and turn it over to the Communists, how we are going to be able to reduce very much our economic programs and military programs in South Viet-Nam, in Cambodia, in Thailand.

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"I think that unless you want to withdraw from the field and decide that it is in the national interest to permit that area to collapse, I would think that it would be impossible to substantially change it particularly, as we are in a very intensive struggle in those areas.

"So I think we ought to judge the economic burden it places upon us as opposed to having the Communists control all of Southeast Asia with the inevitable effect that this would have on the security of India and, therefore, really begin to run perhaps all the way toward the Middle East. So I think that while we would all like to lighten the burden, I don't see any real prospect of the burden being lightened for the U.S. in Southeast Asia in the next year if we are going to do the job and meet what I think are very clear national needs."

30. U. Alexis Johnson's Address Made Before the Economic Club of Detroit, "The United States and Southeast Asia," April 8, 1963, Department of State Bulletin, April 29, 1963, p. 636:

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"What is the attraction that Southeast Asia has exerted for centuries on the great powers flanking it on all sides? Why is it desirable, and why is it important? First, it provides a lush climate, fertile soil, rich natural resources, a relatively sparse population in most areas, and room to expand. The countries of Southeast Asia produce rich exportable surpluses such as rice, rubber, teak, corn, tin, spices, oil, and many others. It is especially attractive to Communist China, with its burgeoning population and its food shortages.

"Militarily and strategically, Southeast Asia has great assets. It stands astride of east-west trade routes. It stands in a critical, strategic relationship not only to China and India but to Australia, the western Pacific, and Japan. Bearing in mind the implications of the recent Chinese attack on India, Southeast Asia takes on an additional significance, since its domination by the Communist powers would outflank the Asian subcontinent.

"Although still thinly populated for the most part, the human resources of this area are considerable and growing. Taken together, the peoples of Southeast Asia represent an important segment of the free world and a target of prime importance to Communist imperialism.

"There is a rhythm to the tides of history. Just as the pressures on Southeast Asia have in the past come alternately from China in the north, India in the west, and the maritime powers along the sea, so Southeast Asia is again threatened by a resurgence of pressure from the north. But today the danger from this quarter is multiplied a hundredfold by the virulence of the political doctrine which now rides on the backs of the Chinese people.

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"As my colleague Under Secretary Averell Harriman said recently, 'I don't know how you can distinguish between Chinese communism and Chinese imperialism. Chinese communism and all communism is imperialist.'

"Even before World War II, Communist parties of varying strengths existed in all Southeast Asian countries, from Burma to the Philippines. After the war the signal was given for armed Communist-led uprisings, and these occurred in Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, Indochina, and the Philippines. Even Thailand, the one country in Southeast Asia that had not known colonial rule, was threatened. By 1952 the revolts were crushed in all but Malaya and Indochina. It took the British and the new Malay Federation until 1958 to quell Communist guerrilla forces there. This struggle, incidentally, provided valuable lessons which are now being applied in Viet-Nam. We also might note that, except for Japan, Malaya is now the most prosperous country in Asia.

"The efforts of some powers following World War II to restore colonial rule along the pre-war pattern permitted the Communists more effectively to wave the banner of anticolonialism and, for example, through Ho Chi Minh, at that time largely to capture the nationalist movement in Viet-Nam.

"After the Geneva Agreements of 1954 on Indochina we took the lead in the establishment of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, an alliance of the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, France, Great Britain, and ourselves, with the objective of providing security to Southeast Asia through collective military action if the Communists embarked on outright military aggression. The opening of the eighth meeting of ministers of this organization was attended by Secretary Rusk this morning in Paris.

"Whatever may be the criticisms of SEATO, the fact remains that, since its inception, the Communists have not attempted open military action in the area. Instead they have turned to the more subtle tactics of subversion and insurgency, the prime example being the guerrilla warfare in Viet-Nam carried on in the method made classic in China by Mao Tse-tung. Whereas the method employed by the Communists has changed, the objective remains the same -- destruction of the independence of the Southeast Asian countries one by one and return to the days when they bore their tribute to Peiping. While the armed struggle is manifest now only in Viet-Nam, it ceased in Laos through the settlement reached just last year at Geneva, after 14 months of negotiation.

"Implications of Struggle in Viet-Nam

"I have pointed out that Southeast Asia is not a homogeneous region but rather a geographic expression. By this same token of geographic interrelation, the security of the area is not stronger than that of its component countries. All of us who were at Geneva in 1954 recognized that Communist domination of the Red River Delta of North Viet-Nam would make it much more difficult to defend the remaining areas. This has been true.

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However, for the Communists to advance any further in the area would render the defense problem very much more difficult, if not well-nigh impossible. This is why the valiant struggle now being waged in South Viet-Nam has implications far beyond the borders of that troubled country.

"Our massive assistance to free Viet-Nam is designed to avoid just such a catastrophe."

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31. President Kennedy's News Conference, April 24, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 343:

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"'Falling Dominoes'

"Q: Mr. President, on Laos again, several years ago we heard a great deal about the 'falling domino' theory in Southeast Asia.

"Do you look upon Laos in terms of that country alone, or is your concern the effect that its loss would have in Thailand, Vietnam, and so on?

"Would you discuss that?

"THE PRESIDENT: That is correct. The population of Laos is 2 million and it is scattered. It is a very rough country. It is important as a sovereign power. The people desire to be independent, and it is also important because it borders the Mekong River and, quite obviously, if Laos fell into Communist hands it would increase the danger along the northern frontiers of Thailand. It would put additional pressure on Cambodia and would put additional pressure on South Vietnam which in itself would put additional pressure on Malaya.

"So I do accept the view that there is an interrelationship in these countries and that is one of the reasons why we are concerned with maintaining the Geneva Accords as a method of maintaining stability in Southeast Asia. It may be one of the reasons why others do not share that interest.

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32. President Kennedy's News Conference, May 8, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 375:

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"Q: Back on the subject of Vietnam. Could you explain to us, sir, why we have committed ourselves militarily in Vietnam but have not committed

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ourselves militarily in Laos, depending instead upon this neutralist government?

"A: Because the situations are different. That's why the remedy has been different. We have had a commitment for a good many years to the integrity of South Vietnam. We are anxious to maintain the neutrality of Laos. It may not be possible to do so and it may be necessary to seek other remedies. But we have adopted what we considered to be, considering the geography, the history, the nature of the threat and the alternate solution -- we've adopted for each country what we regarded as the best strategy. And we'll have to wait and see what happens on them."

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33. Secretary Rusk's Address Before the Economic Club of New York, at New York, April 22, 1963, "The Stake in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, May 13, 1963, p. 727:

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"Viet-Nam is a narrow strip along the South China Sea, nearly as large as California, with a population of some 30 million people -- about 16 million in the North and 14 million in the South.

"With Cambodia and Laos, Viet-Nam formed what was formerly known as French Indochina. During the Second World War, the Vichy regime yielded control of French Indochina to the Japanese. In the spring of 1945 the Japanese proclaimed the independence of Viet-Nam. And in August of that year they permitted the Communist-oriented Viet Minh to seize rule.

"In the Indian subcontinent and in Burma and the Philippines, Western countries recognized at war's end that national demands for independence would have to be met promptly. But this was not the case with Indochina. Instead, we ourselves were somewhat at a loss for a policy with regard to that particular part of the world. So our people in charge of war plans in 1944 sent a colonel out there who sent a cable back to the Joint Chiefs of Staff saying 'Request policy guidance on American policy toward Indochina, because we are beginning to get military access to that country and we need direction.'

"Well, there ensued a vast silence which lasted for months. We sent staff officers back to try to find the answer. We sent cables out there, and after about 6 months the reply came and it said, 'When asked by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a statement of American policy toward Indochina, the President' -- that was President Roosevelt -- 'replied, I don't want to hear any more about Indochina.'

"Well, now the result of no significant Allied policy at that point was that the French did return and take over where they left off at the time of the Japanese occupation, and they encountered therefore a militant resistance movement. For 8 years, with material help from the United States, they sought to pacify the country. At the same time they granted increasing

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autonomy to non-Communist Vietnamese. But the Viet Minh, reforms in Japan and on Taiwan, was pressed forward -- 123,000 heads of families became small landowners. A comprehensive system of agricultural credit was set up. Thousands of Vietnamese were moved into the highlands to raise industrial crops. Rubber production rose, and new plantings of better varieties promised still higher production for the future. Sugar production doubled in 1958. South Viet-Nam was soon producing enough rice to resume exports on a rising scale. Various small industries were established. Textile production rose from near zero to near self-sufficiency. Electric power nearly doubled. Per capita national income rose by 20 percent.

"Thousands of new schools were built. Between 1956 and 1960, enrollment in the elementary schools rose from 400,000 to 1,500,000. The expansion of health facilities included new hospitals and 3,500 village health stations. Rail transportation was restored. Roads were repaired and improved, and three new major highways were built.

"The Communists were not completely eliminated -- especially along the land and sea frontiers, where they could be supplied -- but most of South Viet-Nam became, for a period, safe for travel.

"Although North Viet-Nam inherited most of the industry of Viet-Nam, and although its population is larger, it fell rapidly behind South Viet-Nam in food production, the number of children in school, and in standards of living. While per capita food production rose 20 percent in the South, it fell 10 percent in the North.

"This was competition which the Communists apparently could not endure. Very likely it was one of the reasons why they decided in 1959 to renew their assault on South Viet-Nam. And in 1960 the Lao Dong Party -- that is, the Communist Party -- ordered the 'liberation' of South Viet-Nam.

"According to Communist propaganda, the war in South Viet-Nam is a civil war, a local uprising. The truth is that it is an aggression organized, directed, and partly supplied from North Viet-Nam. It is conducted by hardened Communist political organizers and guerrilla leaders trained in North Viet-Nam, who, upon their arrival in the South, recruit local assistance. This has been done in a variety of ways, including terror and assassination. Schoolteachers, health workers, malaria eradication teams, local officials loyal to the Republic -- these were the first targets of the assassins. But many ordinary villagers who refused to cooperate with the Communist guerrillas likewise have been ruthlessly killed.

"Strategic Importance of South Viet-Nam

"This assault on South Viet-Nam was a major Communist enterprise, carefully and elaborately prepared, heavily staffed, and relentlessly pursued. It made headway. In 1961 President Diem appealed for further assistance and President Kennedy responded promptly and affirmatively.

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"The strategic importance of South Viet-Nam is plain. It controls the mouth of the Mekong River, the main artery of Southeast Asia. The loss of South Viet-Nam would put the remaining states of Southeast Asia in mortal danger.

"But there are larger reasons why the defense of South Viet-Nam is vital to us and to the whole free world. We cannot be indifferent to the fate of 14 million people who have fought hard against communism -- including nearly 1 million who fled their former homes to avoid living under Communist tyranny. Since we went to the aid of Greece and Turkey 16 years ago, it has been the attitude of the United States to assist peoples who resist Communist aggression. We have seen this form of attack fail in Burma, Malaya, and the Philippines. The South Vietnamese are determined to win their battle, and they deserve our help.

"Critics have complained that South Viet-Nam is not a full constitutional democracy and that our aid has been subject to waste and mismanagement. Let us be clear that these criticisms are not merely alibis for inaction. For in passing judgement, let us recall that we are talking about a nation which has been responsible for its own affairs for less than a decade, about a people who have had no peace since 1941 and little experience in direct participation in political affairs. Their four national elections, their thousands of elected hamlet councils, and their forthcoming village council elections show steady movement toward a constitutional system resting upon popular consent."

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34. Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Roger W. Hilsman, Address Made at 1963 Conference on Cold War Education, Tampa, Florida, June 14, 1963, "The Challenge to Freedom in Asia," Department of State Bulletin, July 8, 1963, p. 44:

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"As to the nature of the danger, the ideology of communism is a threat to the United States today mainly because it is joined with the population, resources, and military strength of the countries of the Soviet Union and Communist China, because it is joined with two bases of power.

"But the fact that ideology has been joined to these two bases of power should not be misinterpreted: the threat is not just military; it is also political. And of the two, the political threat is probably the more pervasive. This is true because this nation and its allies have made sure that their military defenses are adequate and up to date.

"The political threat is also serious because of the Communists' skill in manipulating all the elements of power -- political, economic, and psychological as well as military. They use these instruments with considerable sophistication, playing first one then another according to the

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opportunities open to them in any given situation. Mao Tse-tung has described this alternation of tactics and instruments as 'talk/fight; talk/fight,' and it describes the technique very well. This sudden alternation between talking and fighting is designed also to induce a maximum amount of confusion, instability, and trouble in the free world. One of the latest examples of their use of this tactic occurred last October in the Chinese Communist attack along the Indian border, followed by their withdrawal beginning a month later.

"The immediate goal of the Communists is, of course, to capture the in-between nations, those smaller and weaker nations which today are struggling against odds to remain independent. If the Communists can capture such free nations, turning them against the United States and making them feel that it is the U.S. which poses the danger or forms an obstacle to their goals, then the Communists could win without using military power. Moreover, the Communists have waged an unremitting attack on the foundations of our way of life, just as they are a threat to freedom elsewhere in the world. Although they argue over differences in emphasis as to how the Communist world should carry out its attacks on free men, their common goal is plain enough: to further the destruction of the values all free men cherish.

"In Asia the greatest danger to independent nations comes from Communist China, with its 700 million people forced into the service of an aggressive Communist Party. We can't ignore that problem, and we don't ignore it. Communist China lies in direct contact with, or very close to, a whole series of free nations ranged in an arc from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and Nepal in South Asia; through Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam in Southeast Asia; and on up through the Republic of China, on its island base of Taiwan, to Japan and Korea. Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand are also alive to the threat posed by the Communist Chinese.

"All these free nations must deal with the facts of Communist China and its ambitions. No matter what response each has made, be it non-alignment or alliance with friendly nations, they all are aware that the aim of the Chinese Communists is to gain predominant control in Asia and eventually to secure the establishment of Communist regimes throughout the world. The reaction of each nation is determined by its own material circumstances and, sometimes more importantly, by its own national psychology.

"The United States is determined that communism shall not take over Asia.

"For this reason we do not recognize Communist China and seek in all possible ways to limit the ability of Communist China to implement its threat to obtain hegemony in the Far East. We recognize the Republic of China as the legal government of China and support its position in the United Nations. We are aware that the economic and social progress on

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Taiwan, carried out by free Chinese, stands in stark contrast to the failures of the mainland Communist government. Also the existence on Taiwan of a well-trained and -equipped force of 600,000 men, dedicated to the fight against communism, must have a restraining effect on any expansionist ambitions of the Communist Chinese. Furthermore the spirit of the people of the Republic of China, and of their leader, President Chiang Kai-shek, who have conducted a 40-year struggle against Communist imperialism, is an inspiration to free peoples everywhere.

"We stand ready to help peoples who want to help themselves to maintain their independence. Sometimes this involves outright alliance, as with the Republic of China, Japan, South Korea, and, through the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, with the Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan. If any of these nations is attacked the United States is committed to help defend it. Our contribution to security in the Far East also takes other forms, forms designed to meet threats of varying nature.

"These threats are never simple ones; some are extremely subtle and sophisticated. If we are to meet these threats successfully, certain qualities of mind must be stressed and certain dangers avoided. Governor Bryant, in a recent address, referred to the danger that the 'timid American' poses for our democracy. I think he is quite right. I have often had a similar thought, which I would like to emphasize in what I have to say today.

"What has often occurred to me is that, if the United States is not only going to meet the Communist threat but carry off the difficult task of helping to create a new and stable world in the process, then Americans are going to need very steady nerves.

"By this phrase 'steady nerves,' I mean not only not being timid but two additional qualities: first, the capacity for cold, deliberate analysis in order to know when to act and when to bide one's time; second, the unemotional self-discipline and self-control that enables one to act effectively as a result of that analysis. I mean the kind of self-control that enabled President Kennedy to use United States power with such coolness and skill as he did during the Cuban crisis. In negotiations, also, extraordinary qualities of mind and will are demanded, among which the element of cold calm in dealing with complex situations is increasingly important. President Kennedy was speaking of this in his inaugural address when he said: 'Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.'

"The quality of 'steady nerves' is needed in both of the fundamental tasks before us. For there are two separate tasks.

"One is the meeting of crises; the other is the slower, but more positive, task of nation building, of helping to build a system of stable, strong, and independent states which have solved the problem of both political and economic development."

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"By 1960 the situation had so deteriorated that it seemed possible the Viet Cong would be able to establish a territorial base in South Viet-Nam, the next step in the Mao formula for a successful 'national liberation movement.' At this point, President Kennedy sent General Maxwell Taylor to South Viet-Nam to confer with the Vietnamese Government and to observe the situation for himself. General Taylor reported that the Vietnamese people retained the will to fight communism and that, given more extensive support, had a chance to defeat the Viet Cong.

"While this support has come predominantly from the United States, a number of other countries have provided significant support, moral and material.

"The first requirement of the struggle today is to pull the teeth of the Viet Cong terrorist campaign. This can best be done not so much by killing the terrorists but by depriving them of the opportunity to coerce the farmers into providing supplies and recruits. This can only be done by providing practical protection to the farming population. The technique which has been adopted to achieve this protection is the construction of fortified villages, called strategic hamlets. This technique was used successfully in Malaya against the Communist movement there. The same concept had been applied successfully in the late 1790's by the Manchu dynasty of China against the White Lotus sect, a fanatical group whose use of terror resembled closely the methods of the present-day Viet Cong."

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"The struggle in Viet-Nam gains the headlines in today's newspapers. But throughout Asia, new nations, in varying degrees, are facing the challenge of creating progressive, yet stable, societies in a world of uncertainty. American policy aims to provide our experience, our enthusiasm, and, insofar as our resources permit, our material aid to this great enterprise of nation building."

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"Thirdly, while we are combating Communist imperialism in all its forms, we must remember that it is not enough to be against something and that in the last analysis success depends upon our ability to build, to construct, to contribute to man's spiritual and material welfare. We are cooperating with many free peoples in great efforts at nation building, while the Communists try to tear down, in order to impose their hold and their system on the world.

"Fourthly, there is a larger need for tolerance in international life. Happily there is a growing understanding among us of the diverse ways by which different peoples seek to obtain happiness and security in a troubled world. In passing I also wish to observe that, remembering our own unfinished business in fulfilling the ideals of the American Constitution,

we must be tolerant of the shortcomings we may see in other societies. While we are justifiably proud of our institutions and our freedoms and stand as leaders in the democratic world, our prestige and influence in the world suffer whenever we fall short of our own ideals."

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35. President Kennedy's News Conference, July 17, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 569:

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"Q: Mr. President, there has been a good deal of public concern about the political situation in South Viet-Nam, and I would like to ask you whether the difficulties between the Buddhist population there and the South Vietnamese Government has been an impediment to the effectiveness of American aid in the war against the Viet Cong?

"THE PRESIDENT. Yes, I think it has. I think it is unfortunate that this dispute has arisen at the very time when the military struggle has been going better than it has been going in many months. I would hope that some solution could be reached for this dispute, which certainly began as a religious dispute, and because we have invested a tremendous amount of effort and it is going quite well.

"I do realize of course, and we all have to realize, that Viet-Nam has been in war for 20 years. The Japanese came in, the war with the French, the civil war which has gone on for 10 years, and this is very difficult for any society to stand. It is a country which has got a good many problems and it is divided, and there is guerrilla activity and murder and all of the rest. Compounding this, however, now is a religious dispute. I would hope this would be settled, because we want to see a stable government there, carrying on a struggle to maintain its national independence.

"We believe strongly in 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. We hope with the great effort which is being carried by the Vietnamese themselves, and they have been in this field a lot longer than we have, and with a good deal more deaths and casualties, that behind this military shield put up by the Vietnamese people they can reach an agreement on the civil disturbances and also in respect for the rights of others. That's our hope. That's our effort. That -- we're bringing our influence to bear. And the decision is finally theirs, but I think that before we render too harsh a judgment on the people, we should realize that they are going through a harder time than we have had to go through."

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36. Deputy Director of Viet-Nam Working Group, Theodore J.C. Heavner, Address Made Before National Sec & Leg Committee at the National Convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars, in Seattle, Washington, August 25, 1963, "The Viet-Nam Situation," Department of State Bulletin, September 9, 1963, p. 392:

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"In the light of long-term trends in Communist and free Asia let me now review the elements of U.S. strategy and policy. Our policy in the Far East can be summed up in these four points:

- "1. To stand firmly behind our commitments to the defense of independent nations and to turn back any aggressive thrust from communism;
- "2. To contribute as we are able to the prosperity and development of nations which request our assistance as the surest way of helping to build a system of free, viable, and strong nations in Asia;
- "3. To recognize the value of initiatives by the Pacific nations themselves to develop their own modes of cooperation and communication, and to stand ready to assist when called upon to do so;
- "4. To work patiently for the realization of a Pacific community of nations so prosperous and progressive that its attraction will prove, in the long run, irresistible to those peoples now kept by their rulers from participation in it."

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"The Guerrilla War in Viet-Nam

"To understand why President Kennedy said in his state of the Union message that 'The spearpoint of aggression has been blunted in South Viet-Nam,' we need to consider the situation in the fall of 1961 and early 1962. The Vietnamese were quite plainly losing their fight against the Communist guerrillas then.

"The Communist guerrillas, 1,500 strong, took and held overnight a provincial capital in September of 1961, and, to underline the fact, they publicly beheaded the Chief of Province there. The flow of rice into Saigon, normally a rice export center, was choked off by the guerrillas to the point where the United States sent P.L. 480 rice to Saigon in early 1962. Enemy attacks in January of last year were running at the rate of more than 120 per week. We even feared that the Communist Viet Cong might soon be able to declare 'a liberated area' somewhere in the highlands.

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"Faced with this deteriorating situation, President Diem in December of 1961 sent a letter to President Kennedy in which he outlined the nature of the attack on his government and asked for increased American assistance. The United States considered this request very carefully. Vice President Johnson had visited Viet-Nam in May of 1961, and President Kennedy had sent General Maxwell D. Taylor to Viet-Nam again in the fall of that year. So we were very clear about the nature of the threat.

"We knew that the Viet Cong attack was caused, led, and directed by the Communist authorities in North Viet-Nam. This was a case of Communist aggression, although the Communists made great efforts to conceal the fact, aggression against a friendly people with whom the United States had strong ties. There could be little question about our decision. We promptly agreed to step up our military and economic assistance.

"When we increased our assistance to Viet-Nam we issued a study of the evidence of Communist infiltration into South Viet-Nam and Communist direction of the war against the Government of South Viet-Nam. This was necessary, not just out of a 'decent respect for the opinions of mankind,' but because of the great and continuing Communist effort to portray the Viet Cong as an indigenous and legitimate popular movement against a repressive government. I think it is worth noting in this connection that the international body specifically established in 1954 at the Geneva conference to oversee and keep the peace in Viet-Nam -- the International Control Commission, composed of India, Canada, and Poland -- has confirmed the fact that Communist North Viet-Nam is engaged in an attempt to overthrow by violence the Government of South Viet-Nam. After sifting the evidence for almost a year, the International Control Commission in June of 1962 issued a special report which makes it clear that the Viet Cong are the instruments of Hanoi's deliberate attack on South Viet-Nam.

"If we were losing the war in the fall of 1961 and early 1962, where are we today? I think it is fair to say that the tide has now turned and that the Government of Viet-Nam is with our help slowly overcoming the Communist guerrillas. No more provincial capitals have been taken, the Communists have not 'liberated' any part of South Viet-Nam, and Saigon is once again exporting rice. In fact we anticipate that Saigon will export 300,000 tons of rice this year.

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"The 'Why' of Our Involvement

"I have described the American role in the Vietnamese war -- the 'how' of our involvement. I would like to close by indicating something of the 'why.'

"You can think of Viet-Nam as a piece of strategic real estate. It is on the corner of mainland Asia, across the east-west trade routes, and in a position that would make it an excellent base for further Communist aggression against the rest of free Asia.

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"You can think of our involvement in South Viet-Nam in terms of a moral commitment. The Vietnamese, on the frontier of the free world, are fighting not just for themselves but for all men who wish to remain free. I believe the 300-500 casualties they suffer each week is a precious contribution to the security of the whole free world.

"You can think of the American role in South Viet-Nam in terms of our SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] commitment. You can regard it as a fulfillment of the implied obligation which we as a nation undertook when we said at the Geneva Conference in 1954 that we would regard any renewal of aggression in violation of the Geneva Agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.

"You can think of South Viet-Nam as a test case; there is good reason to believe that this is the view of the Communist bloc. In Viet-Nam we are determining whether or not the free world can help a nation defend itself against the subversion and guerrilla warfare which make up the 'war of national liberation' tactics. I think it is fair to say that we have largely stopped the Communist thrust all around the world in conventional and nuclear terms. We are now confronted by a new kind of threat, and we have to a degree invented a new kind of response to meet it. All of the underdeveloped nations of the world are watching the event. If South Viet-Nam falls, their will to resist this kind of aggression will be weakened and the whole fabric of free-world strength and determination damaged thereby.

"Perhaps, in more human terms, you may want to think of our support to Viet-Nam as American help to the nearly 1 million Vietnamese refugees who fled North Viet-Nam in 1954 and 1955 to avoid living under a Communist regime."

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37. President Kennedy's TV Interview, September 2, 1963, Department of State Bulletin, September 30, 1963, p. 499:

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"Mr. Cronkite: Hasn't every indication from Saigon been that President Diem has no intention of changing his pattern?

"President Kennedy: If he does not change it, of course, that is his decision. He has been there 10 years, and, as I say, he has carried this burden when he has been counted out on a number of occasions.

"Our best judgment is that he can't be successful on this basis. We hope that he comes to see that; but in the final analysis it is the people and the Government itself who have to win or lose this struggle. All we can do is help, and we are making it very clear. But I don't agree

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with those who say we should withdraw. That would be a great mistake. That would be a great mistake. I know people don't like Americans to be engaged in this kind of an effort. Forty-seven Americans have been killed in combat with the enemy, but this is a very important struggle even though it is far away.

"We took all this -- made this effort to defend Europe. Now Europe is quite secure. We also have to participate -- we may not like it -- in the defense of Asia."

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38. President Kennedy's NBC Interview, September 9, 1963, Department of State Bulletin, September 30, 1963, p. 499:

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"Mr. Huntley: Mr. President, in respect to our difficulties in South Viet-Nam, could it be that our Government tends occasionally to get locked into a policy or an attitude and then finds it difficult to alter or shift that policy?

"The President: Yes, that is true. I think in the case of South Viet-Nam we have been dealing with a Government which is in control, has been in control for 10 years. In addition, we have felt for the last 2 years that the struggle against the Communists was going better. Since June, however -- the difficulties with the Buddhists -- we have been concerned about a deterioration, particularly in the Saigon area, which hasn't been felt greatly in the outlying areas but may spread. So we are faced with the problem of wanting to protect the area against the Communists. On the other hand, we have to deal with the Government there. That produces a kind of ambivalence in our efforts which exposes us to some criticism. We are using our influence to persuade the Government there to take those steps which will win back support. That takes some time, and we must be patient, we must persist.

"Mr. Huntley: Are we likely to reduce our aid to South Viet-Nam now?

"The President: I don't think we think that would be helpful at this time. If you reduce your aid, it is possible you could have some effect upon the government structure there. On the other hand, you might have a situation which could bring about a collapse. Strongly in our mind is what happened in the case of China at the end of World War II, where China was lost -- a weak government became increasingly unable to control events. We don't want that.

"Mr. Brinkley: Mr. President, have you had any reason to doubt this so-called 'domino theory,' that if South Viet-Nam falls, the rest of Southeast Asia will go behind it?

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"The President: No, I believe it. I believe it. I think that the struggle is close enough. China is so large, looms so high just beyond the frontiers, that if South Viet-Nam went, it would not only give them an improved geographic position for a guerrilla assault on Malaya but would also give the impression that the wave of the future in Southeast Asia was China and the Communists. So I believe it."

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39. President Kennedy's News Conference, September 12, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 673:

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"Q. Mr. President, in view of the prevailing confusion, is it possible to state today just what this Government's policy is toward the current government of South Viet-Nam?

"THE PRESIDENT. I think I have stated what my view is and we are for those things and those policies which help win the war there. That is why some 25,000 Americans have traveled 10,000 miles to participate in that struggle. What helps to win the war, we support; what interferes with the war effort, we oppose. I have already made it clear that any action by either government which may handicap the winning of the war is inconsistent with our policy or our objectives. This is the test which I think every agency and official of the United States Government must apply to all of our actions; and we shall be applying that test in various ways in the coming months, although I do not think it desirable to state all of our views at this time. I think they will be made more clear as time goes on.

"But we have a very simple policy in that area, I think. In some ways I think the Vietnamese people and ourselves agree; we want the war to be won, the Communists to be contained, and the Americans to go home. That is our policy. I am sure it is the policy of the people of Viet-Nam. 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."

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40. President Kennedy's Remarks at the Yellowstone County Fairgrounds, Billings, Montana, September 25, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 724:

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"... Countries which we had never heard of before, Viet-Nam, Laos, the Congo, and the others, countries which were distant names in our geographies, have now become matters of the greatest concern, where the interests of the United States are vitally involved, and where we have, for example, in Viet-Nam, over 25,000 of your sons and brothers bearing arms.

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"So this is a difficult and complex world. I am sure a citizen in this community and in this country must wonder what we are doing. I think what we are trying to do is comparatively simple, and that is, with our own power and might -- and the only country which has that power and might -- and, I believe, the long-range determination and perseverance, we are trying to assist the hundred-odd countries which are now independent to maintain their independence. We do that not only because we wish them to be free, but because it serves our own national interest. As long as there are all of these countries separate, free, and independent, and not part of one great monolithic bloc which threatens us, so long we are free and independent.

"When it appeared at the end of the fifties that there would be over a billion people organized in the Communist movement, Russia and China and Eastern Europe working closely together, that represented a danger to us which could turn the balance of power against us. As there has been a division within the bloc, as there has been a fragmentation behind the Iron Curtain, as the long-range interests of geography and nationalism play a part even behind the Iron Curtain, as it does on this side of the Iron Curtain, we have made progress, not toward an easier existence, but, I think, toward a chance for a more secure existence.

"In 1961 the United States and the Soviet Union came face to face over Berlin. The United States called up more than 150,000 troops. At the meeting in Vienna, of 1961, Mr. Khrushchev informed me that he was going to sign a peace treaty in Berlin by the end of the year, and if the United States continued to supply its forces in Berlin it would be regarded as a possible act of war. In 1962 we came face to face with the same great challenge in Cuba, in October. So we have lived, even in the short space of the last 3 years, on two occasions when we were threatened with a direct military confrontation. We wish to lessen that prospect. We know that the struggle between the Communist system and ourselves will go on. We know it will go on in economics, in productivity, in ideology, in Latin America and Africa, in the Middle East and Asia."

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41. President Kennedy's Remarks at the High School Memorial Stadium, Great Falls, Montana, September 26, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 727:

"I know that there are many of you who sit here and wonder what it is that causes the United States to go so far away, that causes you to wonder why so many of your sons should be stationed so far away from our own territory, who wonder why it is since 1945 that the United States has assisted so many countries. You must wonder when it is all going to end and when we can come back home. Well, it isn't going to end, and this generation of Americans has to make up its mind for our security and for

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our peace, because what happens in Europe or Latin America or Africa or Asia directly affects the security of the people who live in this city, and particularly those who are coming after.

"I make no apologies for the effort that we make to assist these other countries to maintain their freedom, because I know full well that every time a country, regardless of how far away it may be from our own borders -- every time that country passes behind the Iron Curtain the security of the United States is thereby endangered. So all those who suggest we withdraw, all those who suggest we should no longer ship our surplus food abroad or assist other countries, I could not disagree with them more. This country is stronger now than it has ever been. Our chances for peace are stronger than they have been in years. The nuclear test ban which was strongly led in the Senate of the United States by Mike Mansfield and Lee Metcalf is, I believe, a step toward peace and a step toward security, and gives us an additional chance that all of the weapons of Montana will never be fired. That is the object of our policy.

"So we need your support. These are complicated problems which face a citizenry. Most of us grew up in a relative period of isolation, and neutrality, and unalignment which was our policy from the time of George Washington to the Second World War, and suddenly, in an act almost unknown in the history of the world, we were shoved onto the center of the stage. We are the keystone in the arch of freedom. If the United States were to falter, the whole world, in my opinion, would inevitably begin to move toward the Communist bloc.

"It is the United States, this country, your country, which in 15 to 18 years has almost singlehandedly protected the freedom of dozens of countries who, in turn, by being free, protect our freedom. So when you ask why are we in Laos, or Viet-Nam, or the Congo, or why do we support the Alliance for Progress in Latin America, we do so because we believe that our freedom is tied up with theirs, and if we can develop a world in which all the countries are free, then the threat to the security of the United States is lessened. So we have to stay at it. We must not be fatigued."

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42. U.S. Policy on Viet-Nam: White House Statement, October 2, 1963, Department of State Bulletin, October 21, 1963, p. 623:

"1. The security of South Viet-Nam is a major interest of the United States as other free nations. We will adhere to our policy of working with the people and Government of South Viet-Nam to deny this country to communism and to suppress the externally stimulated and supported insurgency of the Viet Cong as promptly as possible. Effective performance in this undertaking is the central objective of our policy in South Viet-Nam."

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"5. It remains the policy of the United States in South Viet-Nam as in other parts of the world, to support the efforts of the people of that country to defeat aggression and to build a peaceful and free society."

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43. President Kennedy's Remarks Prepared for Delivery at the Trade Mart in Dallas, November 22, 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents, Kennedy, 1963, p. 890:

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"I want to discuss with you today the status of our strength and our security because this question clearly calls for the most responsible qualities of leadership and the most enlightened products of scholarship. For this Nation's strength and security are not easily or cheaply obtained, nor are they quickly and simply explained. There are many kinds of strength and no one kind will suffice. Overwhelming nuclear strength cannot stop a guerrilla war. Formal pacts of alliance cannot stop internal subversion. Displays of material wealth cannot stop the disillusionment of diplomats subjected to discrimination.

"Above all, words alone are not enough. The United States is a peaceful nation. And where our strength and determination are clear, our words need merely to convey conviction, not belligerence. If we are strong, our strength will speak for itself. If we are weak, words will be of no help.

"I realize that this Nation often tends to identify turning-points in world affairs with the major addresses which preceded them. But it was not the Monroe Doctrine that kept all Europe away from this hemisphere -- it was the strength of the British fleet and the width of the Atlantic Ocean. It was not General Marshall's speech at Harvard which kept communism out of Western Europe -- it was the strength and stability made possible by our military and economic assistance.

"In this administration also it has been necessary at times to issue specific warnings -- warnings that we could not stand by and watch the Communists conquer Laos by force, or intervene in the Congo, or swallow West Berlin, or maintain offensive missiles on Cuba.. But while our goals were at least temporarily obtained in these and other instances, our successful defense of freedom was due not to the words we used, but to the strength we stood ready to use on behalf of the principles we stand ready to defend."

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"But American military might should not and need not stand alone against the ambitions of international communism. Our security and strength, in the last analysis, directly depend on the security and

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strength of others, and that is why our military and economic assistance plays such a key role in enabling those who live on the periphery of the Communist world to maintain their independence of choice. Our assistance to these nations can be painful, risky and costly, as is true in Southeast Asia today. But we dare not weary of the task. For our assistance makes possible the stationing of 3-5 million allied troops along the Communist frontier at one-tenth the cost of maintaining a comparable number of American soldiers. A successful Communist breakthrough in these areas, necessitating direct United States intervention, would cost us several times as much as our entire foreign aid program, and might cost us heavily in American lives as well."

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