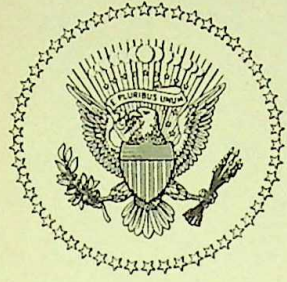


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Why Vietnam

THE ROOTS OF COMMITMENT *implies*
TOWARD PEACE WITH HONOR
THE TASKS OF DIPLOMACY
THE TASKS OF DEFENSE
THE CHALLENGE OF HUMAN NEED

Foreword

It is important that men and women everywhere have a clear understanding of the situation in the Republic of Vietnam, and of America's position in regard to that beleaguered nation.

The central cause of the conflict there is the aggression by North Vietnam against the brave and independent people of South Vietnam. If that aggression is stopped, the people and the government of South Vietnam will be free to settle their own future -- and get on with the great tasks of national development. And the need of supporting American military action will cease.

The people who are suffering from this aggression are Vietnamese. This is no struggle of white men against Asians. It is aggression by Communist totalitarians against their independent neighbors. We Americans have lost hundreds of our own men there in our efforts to aid in the defense of Vietnam, and we mourn them. But the main burden of resistance has fallen on the people of South Vietnam, whose losses are counted in the tens of thousands. The aggressors have lost still more. These are the cruel costs of the assault directed from the north. This is what must be stopped.

To date, the aggressors have given no

sign of any willingness to move in this direction, but as they recognize the costs of their present course, and their own true interest in peace, there may come a change.

In order that people everywhere may understand America's role in the defense of South Vietnam, I have directed that this report be compiled. In its pages you will find statements on Vietnam by two former presidents and three leaders of the United States Government -- by myself by the Secretary of State and by the Secretary of Defense.

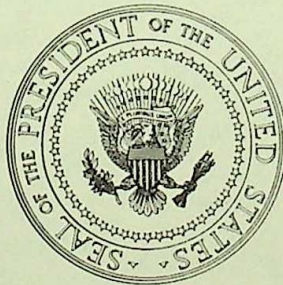
These statements were prepared for different audiences, and they reflect the differing responsibilities of each speaker. The Congressional testimony has been edited to avoid undue repetition and to incorporate the sense of the discussions that ensued.

Together, they construct a clear definition of America's role in the Vietnam conflict:

- The dangers and hopes that Vietnam holds for all free men
- The fulness and limits of America's objectives in a war we did not seek
- The constant effort on our part to bring this war we do not desire to a quick and honorable end.

Lyndon B. Johnson

AUGUST 20, 1965.



Why Vietnam

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The Roots of Commitment

In the historic documents that follow, two American Presidents define and affirm the commitment of the United States to the people of South Vietnam.

In letters to Prime Minister Churchill in 1954 and to President Diem in 1954 and 1960, President Eisenhower describes the issues at stake and pledges United States assistance in South Vietnam's resistance to subversion and aggression.

And in December 1961 President Kennedy reaffirms that pledge.

Extracts From Letter From President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Churchill,
April 1, 1954

(From Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 1953-1956, New York, 1963)

Dear Winston:

I am sure . . . you are following with the deepest interest and anxiety the daily reports of the gallant fight being put up by the French at Dien Bien Phu. Today, the situation there does not seem hopeless.

But regardless of the outcome of this particular battle, I fear that the French cannot alone see the thing through, this despite the very substantial assistance in money and matériel that we are giving them. It is no solution simply to urge the French to intensify their efforts. And if they do not see it through and Indochina passes into the hands of the Communists the ultimate effect on our and your global strategic position with the consequent shift in the power ratios throughout Asia and the Pacific could be disastrous and, I know, unacceptable to you and me . . . This has led us to the hard conclusion that the situation in Southeast Asia requires us urgently to take serious and far-reaching decisions.

Geneva is less than four weeks away. There the possibility of the Communists driving a wedge between us will, given the state of mind in France, be infinitely greater than at Berlin. I can understand the very natural desire of the French to seek an end to this war which has been bleeding them for eight years. But our painstaking search for a way out of the impasse has reluctantly forced us to the conclusion that there is no negotiated solution of the Indochina problem which in its essence would not be either a face-saving device to cover a French surrender or a face-saving device to cover a Communist retirement. The first alternative is too serious

in its broad strategic implications for us and for you to be acceptable. . . .

Somehow we must contrive to bring about the second alternative. The preliminary lines of our thinking were sketched out by Foster [Dulles] in his speech last Monday night when he said that under the conditions of today the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of Communist Russia and its Chinese Communist ally, by whatever means, would be a grave threat to the whole free community, and that in our view this possibility should now be met by united action and not passively accepted. . . .

I believe that the best way to put teeth in this concept and to bring greater moral and material resources to the support of the French effort is through the establishment of a new, ad hoc grouping or coalition composed of nations which have a vital concern in the checking of Communist expansion in the area. I have in mind, in addition to our two countries, France, the Associated States, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and the Philippines. The United States government would expect to play its full part in such a coalition. . . .

The important thing is that the coalition must be strong and it must be willing to join the fight if necessary. I do not envisage the need of any appreciable ground forces on your or our part. . . .

If I may refer again to history; we failed to halt Hirohito, Mussolini and Hitler by not acting in unity and in time. That marked the beginning of many years of stark tragedy and desperate peril. May it not be that our nations have learned something from that lesson? . . .

With warm regard,

IKE.

Letter From President Eisenhower to President Diem, October 1, 1954

Dear Mr. President:

I have been following with great interest the course of developments in Vietnam, particularly since the conclusion of the conference at Geneva. The implications of the agreement concerning Vietnam have caused grave concern regarding the future of a country temporarily divided by an artificial military grouping, weakened by a long and exhausting war and faced with enemies without and by their subversive collaborators within.

Your recent requests for aid to assist in the formidable project of the movement of several hundred thousand loyal Vietnamese citizens away from areas which are passing under a *de facto* rule and political ideology which they abhor, are being fulfilled. I am glad that the United States is able to assist in this humanitarian effort.

We have been exploring ways and means to permit our aid to Vietnam to be more effective and to make a greater contribution to the welfare and stability of the Government of Vietnam. I am, accordingly, instructing the American Ambassador to Vietnam to examine with you in your capacity as Chief of Government, how an intelli-

gent program of American aid given directly to your Government can serve to assist Vietnam in its present hour of trial, provided that your Government is prepared to give assurances as to the standards of performance it would be able to maintain in the event such aid were supplied.

The purpose of this offer is to assist the Government of Vietnam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means. The Government of the United States expects that this aid will be met by performance on the part of the Government of Vietnam in undertaking needed reforms. It hopes that such aid, combined with your own continuing efforts, will contribute effectively toward an independent Vietnam endowed with a strong government. Such a government would, I hope, be so responsive to the nationalist aspirations of its people, so enlightened in purpose and effective in performance, that it will be respected both at home and abroad and discourage any who might wish to impose a foreign ideology on your free people.

Sincerely,

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.

Letter From President Eisenhower to President Diem, October 26, 1960

Dear Mr. President:

My countrymen and I are proud to convey our good wishes to you and to the citizens of Vietnam on the fifth anniversary of the birth of the Republic of Vietnam.

We have watched the courage and daring with which you and the Vietnamese people attained independence in a situation so perilous that many thought it hopeless. We have admired the rapidity with which chaos yielded to order and progress replaced despair.

During the years of your independence it has been refreshing for us to observe how clearly the Government and the citizens of Vietnam have faced the fact that the greatest danger to their independence

was Communism. You and your countrymen have used your strength well in accepting the double challenge of building your country and resisting Communist imperialism. In five short years since the founding of the Republic, the Vietnamese people have developed their country in almost every sector. I was particularly impressed by one example. I am informed that last year over 1,200,000 Vietnamese children were able to go to elementary school; three times as many as were enrolled five years earlier. This is certainly a heartening development for Vietnam's future. At the same time Vietnam's ability to defend itself from the Communists has grown immeasurably since its successful struggle to become an independent Republic.

Vietnam's very success as well as its potential wealth and its strategic location have led the Communists of Hanoi, goaded by the bitterness of their failure to enslave all Vietnam, to use increasing violence in their attempts to destroy your country's freedom.

This grave threat, added to the strains and fatigues of the long struggle to achieve and strengthen independence, must be a burden that would cause moments of tension and concern in almost any human heart. Yet from long observation I sense how deeply the Vietnamese value their country's independence and strength and I know how well you used your boldness when you led your countrymen in winning it. I also know that your determination has been a vital factor in guarding that independ-

ence while steadily advancing the economic development of your country. I am confident that these same qualities of determination and boldness will meet the renewed threat as well as the needs and desires of your countrymen for further progress on all fronts.

Although the main responsibility for guarding that independence will always, as it has in the past, belong to the Vietnamese people and their government, I want to assure you that for so long as our strength can be useful, the United States will continue to assist Vietnam in the difficult yet hopeful struggle ahead.

Sincerely,

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.

Letter From President Kennedy to President Diem, December 14, 1961

Dear Mr. President:

I have received your recent letter in which you described so cogently the dangerous condition caused by North Vietnam'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 Vietnam 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 Vietnam 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 Vietnam, 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 Vietnam will stop their campaign to destroy the Republic of Vietnam, 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.

Toward Peace With Honor

Press Conference Statement by the President, The White House, July 28, 1965

Not long ago I received a letter from a woman in the Midwest. She wrote:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: In my humble way I am writing to you about the crisis in Vietnam. I have a son who is now in Vietnam. My husband served in World War II. Our country was at war, but now, this time, it is just something that I don't understand. Why?

I have tried to answer that question a dozen times and more in practically every State in this Union. I discussed it fully in Baltimore in April; in Washington in May; in San Francisco in June. Let me again, now, discuss it here in the East Room of the White House.

Why must young Americans—born into a land exultant with hope and golden with promise—toil and suffer and sometimes die in such a remote and distant place?

The answer, like the war itself, is not an easy one. But it echoes clearly from the painful lessons of half a century. Three times in my lifetime, in two world wars and in Korea, Americans have gone to far lands to fight for freedom. We have learned at a terrible and brutal cost that retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace.

THE NATURE OF THE WAR

It is this lesson that has brought us to Vietnam. This is a different kind of war. There are no marching armies or solemn declarations. Some citizens of South Vietnam, at times with understandable grievances, have joined in the attack on their own government. But we must not let this mask the central fact that this is really war. It is guided by North Vietnam and spurred by Communist China. Its goal is to conquer the South, to defeat American power, and to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism.

THE STAKES IN VIETNAM

And there are great stakes in the balance.

Most of the non-Communist nations of Asia cannot, by themselves and alone, resist the growing might and grasping ambition of Asian communism. Our power, therefore, is a vital shield. If we are driven from the field in Vietnam, then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise, or in American protection. In each land the forces of independence would be considerably weakened. And an Asia so threatened by Communist domination would imperil the security of the United States itself.

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

Nor would surrender in Vietnam bring peace. We learned from Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite of aggression. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another, bringing with it perhaps even larger and crueler conflict.

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

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

This, then, my fellow Americans, is why we are in Vietnam.

INCREASED EFFORT TO HALT AGGRESSION

What are our goals in that war-stained land?

First: We intend to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power. They are not easily convinced. In recent months they have greatly increased their fighting forces, their attacks, and the number of incidents. I have asked the commanding general, General Westmoreland, what more he needs to meet this mounting aggression. He has told me. We will meet his needs.

I have today ordered to Vietnam the Air Mobile Division and certain other forces which will raise our fighting strength from 75,000 to 125,000 men almost immediately. Additional forces will be needed later, and they will be sent as requested. This will make it necessary to increase our active fighting forces by raising the monthly draft call from 17,000 over a period of time, to 35,000 per month, and stepping up our campaign for voluntary enlistments.

After this past week of deliberations, I have concluded that it is not essential to order Reserve units into service now. If that necessity should later be indicated, I will give the matter most careful consideration. And I will give the country adequate notice before taking such action, but only after full preparations.

We have also discussed with the Government of South Vietnam lately the steps that they will take to substantially increase their own effort—both on the battlefield and toward reform and progress in the villages. Ambassador Lodge is now formulating a new program to be tested upon his return to that area.

I have directed Secretary Rusk and Secretary McNamara to be available immediately to the Congress to review with the appropriate congressional committees our plan in these areas. I have asked them to be available to answer the questions of any Member of Congress.

Secretary McNamara, in addition, will ask the Senate Appropriations Committee to add a limited amount to present legislation to help meet part of this new cost until a supplemental measure is ready and hearings can be held when the Congress assembles in January.

In the meantime, we will use the authority contained in the present Defense appropriations bill now to transfer funds, in addition to the additional money that we will request.

These steps, like our actions in the past, are carefully measured to do what must be done to bring an end to aggression and a peaceful settlement. We do not want an expanding struggle with consequences that no one can foresee. Nor will we bluster or bully or flaunt our power.

But we will not surrender. And we will not retreat.

For behind our American pledge lies the determination and resources of all of the American Nation.

TOWARD A PEACEFUL SOLUTION

Second, once the Communists know, as we know, that a violent solution is impossible, then a peaceful solution is inevitable. We are ready now, as we have always been, to move from the battlefield to the conference table. I have stated publicly, and many times, America's willingness to begin unconditional discussions with any government at any place at any time. Fifteen efforts have been made to start these discussions, with the help of 40 nations throughout the world. But there has been no answer.

But we are going to continue to persist, if persist we must, until death and desolation have led to the same conference table where others could now join us at a much smaller cost.

I have spoken many times of our objectives in Vietnam. So has the Government of South Vietnam. Hanoi has set forth its own proposal. We are ready to discuss their proposals and our proposals and any proposals of any government whose people may be affected. For we fear the meeting room no more than we fear the battlefield.

THE UNITED NATIONS

In this pursuit we welcome, and we ask for, the concern and the assistance of any nation and all nations. If the United Nations and its officials—or any one of its 114 members—can, by deed or word, private initiative or public action, bring us

nearer an honorable peace, then they will have the support and the gratitude of the United States of America.

I have directed Ambassador Goldberg to go to New York today and to present immediately to Secretary-General U Thant a letter from me requesting that all of the resources, energy, and immense prestige of the United Nations be employed to find ways to halt aggression and to bring peace in Vietnam. I made a similar request at San Francisco a few weeks ago.

FREE CHOICE FOR VIETNAM

We do not seek the destruction of any government, nor do we covet a foot of any territory. But we insist, and we will always insist, that the people of South Vietnam shall have the right of choice, the right to shape their own destiny in free elections in the South, or throughout all Vietnam under international supervision. And they shall not have any government imposed upon them by force and terror so long as we can prevent it.

This was the purpose of the 1954 agreements which the Communists have now cruelly shattered. If the machinery of those agreements was tragically weak, its purposes still guide our action.

As battle rages, we will continue as best we can to help the good people of South Vietnam enrich the condition of their life—to feed the hungry, to tend the sick—teach the young, shelter the homeless, and help the farmer to increase his crops, and the worker to find a job.

PROGRESS IN HUMAN WELFARE

It is an ancient, but still terrible, irony that while many leaders of men create division in pursuit of grand ambitions, the children of man are united in the simple elusive desire for a life of fruitful and rewarding toil.

As I said at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, I hope that one day we can help all the people of Asia toward that desire. Eugene Black has made great progress since my appearance in Baltimore in that direction, not as the price of peace—for we are ready always to bear a more painful cost—but

rather as a part of our obligations of justice toward our fellow man.

THE DIFFICULTY OF DECISION

Let me also add a personal note. I do not find it easy to send the flower of our youth, our finest young men, into battle. I have spoken to you today of the divisions and the forces and the battalions and the units. But I know them all, every one. I have seen them in a thousand streets, in a hundred towns, in every State in this Union—working and laughing, building, and filled with hope and life. I think that I know, too, how their mothers weep and how their families sorrow. This is the most agonizing and the most painful duty of your President.

A NATION WHICH BUILDS

There is something else, too. When I was young, poverty was so common that we didn't know it had a name. Education was something you had to fight for. And water was life itself. I have now been in public life 35 years, more than three decades, and in each of those 35 years I have seen good men, and wise leaders, struggle to bring the blessings of this land to all of our people. Now I am the President. It is now my opportunity to help every child get an education, to help every Negro and every American citizen have an equal opportunity, to help every family get a decent home and to help bring healing to the sick and dignity to the old.

As I have said before, that is what I have lived for. That is what I have wanted all my life. And I do not want to see all those hopes and all those dreams of so many people for so many years now drowned in the wasteful ravages of war. I am going to do all I can to see that that never happens.

But I also know, as a realistic public servant, that as long as there are men who hate and destroy we must have the courage to resist, or we will see it all, all that we have built, all that we hope to build, all of our dreams for freedom—all swept away on the flood of conquest.

So this too shall not happen; we will stand in Vietnam.

The Tasks of Diplomacy

*Statement by Secretary of State Dean Rusk before the House Foreign Affairs Committee,
August 3, 1965*

As the President has said, "there are great stakes in the balance" in Vietnam today.

Let us be clear about those stakes. With its archipelagos, Southeast Asia contains rich natural resources and some 200 million people. Geographically, it has great strategic importance—it dominates the gateway between the Pacific and Indian Oceans and flanks the Indian subcontinent on one side, and Australia and New Zealand on the other. The loss of Southeast Asia to the Communists would constitute a serious shift in the balance of power against the interests of the free world. And the loss of South Vietnam would make the defense of the rest of Southeast Asia much more costly and difficult. That is why the SEATO Council has said that the defeat of the aggression against South Vietnam is "essential" to the security of Southeast Asia.

But much more is at stake than preserving the independence of the peoples of Southeast Asia and preventing the vast resources of that area from being swallowed by those hostile to freedom.

THE TEST

The war in Vietnam is a test of a technique of aggression: what the Communists, in their upside-down language, call "wars of national liberation." They use the term to describe any effort by Communists, short of large-scale war, to destroy by force any non-Communist government. Thus the leaders of the Communist terrorists in such an independent democracy as Venezuela are described as leaders of a fight for "national liberation." And a recent editorial in *Pravda* said that "the upsurge of the national liberation movement in Latin American countries has been to a great extent a result of the activities of Communist parties."

Communist leaders know, as the rest of the world knows, that thermonuclear war would be ruinous.

They know that large-scale invasions, such as that launched in Korea 15 years ago, would bring great risks and heavy penalties. So, they have resorted to semi-concealed aggression through the infiltration of arms and trained military personnel across national frontiers. And the Asian Communists themselves regard the war in Vietnam as a critical test of that technique. Recently General Giap, leader of North Vietnam's army, said:

If the special warfare that the U.S. imperialists are testing in South Vietnam is overcome, then it can be defeated everywhere in the world.

In Southeast Asia, the Communists already have publicly designated Thailand as the next target. And if the aggression against South Vietnam were permitted to succeed, the forces of militant communism everywhere would be vastly heartened and we could expect to see a series of so-called "wars of liberation" in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

International law does not restrict internal revolution. But it does restrict what third powers may lawfully do in sending arms and men to bring about insurrection. What North Vietnam is doing in South Vietnam flouts not only the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962 but general international law.

The assault on the Republic of Vietnam is, beyond question, an aggression. It was organized and has been directed by North Vietnam, with the backing of Communist China. The cadres of guerrilla fighters, saboteurs, and assassins who form the backbone of the Viet Cong were specially trained in the North. Initially, many of them were men of South Vietnamese birth who had fought with the Viet Minh against the French and gone North in their military units after Vietnam was divided in 1954. But that reservoir was gradually exhausted. During 1964 and since, most of the military men infiltrated from the North have been

natives of North Vietnam. And near the end of last year they began to include complete units of the regular North Vietnamese army. In addition to trained men and political and military direction, the North has supplied arms and ammunition in increasing quantities—in considerable part of Chinese manufacture.

Between 1959 and the end of 1964, 40,000 trained military personnel came down from the North into South Vietnam, by conservative estimate. More have come this year. Had all these crossed the line at once—as the North Koreans did in invading South Korea 15 years ago—nobody in the free world could have doubted that the assault on Vietnam was an aggression. That the dividing line between North and South Vietnam was intended to be temporary does not make the attack any less of an aggression. The dividing line in Korea also was intended to be temporary.

If there is ever to be peace in this world, aggression must cease. We as a nation are committed to peace and the rule of law. We recognize also the harsh reality that our security is involved.

We are committed to oppose aggression not only through the United Nations Charter but through many defensive alliances. We have 42 allies, not counting the Republic of Vietnam. And many other nations know that their security depends upon us. Our power and our readiness to use it to assist others to resist aggression, the integrity of our commitment, these are the bulwarks of peace in the world.

If we were to fail in Vietnam, serious consequences would ensue. Our adversaries would be encouraged to take greater risks elsewhere. At the same time, the confidence which our allies and other free nations now have in our commitments would be seriously impaired.

THE COMMITMENT

Let us be clear about our commitment in Vietnam.

It began with the Southeast Asia Treaty, which was negotiated and signed after the Geneva agreements and the cease-fire in Indo-China in 1954 and was approved by the United States Senate by a vote of 82 to 1 in February 1955. That Treaty protects against Communist aggression not only its members but any of the three non-Communist states growing

out of former French Indo-China which asks for protection.

Late in 1954 President Eisenhower, with bipartisan support, decided to extend aid to South Vietnam, both economic aid and aid in training its armed forces. His purpose, as he said, was to “assist the Government of Vietnam in developing and maintaining a strong, viable state, capable of resisting attempted subversion or aggression through military means.”

Vietnam became a Republic in 1955, was recognized as an independent nation by 36 nations initially and is so recognized by more than 50 today.

Beginning in 1955, the Congress has each year approved overall economic and military assistance programs in which the continuation of major aid to South Vietnam has been specifically considered.

During the next five years, South Vietnam made remarkable economic and social progress—what some observers described as a “miracle.”

Nearly a million refugees from the North were settled. These were the stout-hearted people of whom the late Dr. Tom Dooley wrote so eloquently in his first book, *Deliver Us From Evil*, and who led him to devote the rest of his all too brief life to helping the people of Vietnam and Laos.

A land reform program was launched. A comprehensive system of agricultural credit was set up. Thousands of new schools and more than 3,500 village health stations were built. Rail transportation was restored and roads were repaired and improved. South Vietnam not only fed itself but resumed rice exports. Production of rubber and sugar rose sharply. New industries were started. Per capita income rose by twenty percent.

By contrast, North Vietnam suffered a drop of ten percent in food production and disappointments in industrial production.

In 1954, Hanoi almost certainly had expected to take over South Vietnam within a few years. But by 1959 its hopes had withered and the South was far outstripping the heralded “Communist paradise.” These almost certainly were the factors which led Hanoi to organize and launch the assault on the South.

I beg leave to quote from a statement I made at a press conference on May 4, 1961:

Since late in 1959 organized Communist activity in the form of guerrilla raids against army and security units

of the Government of Vietnam, terrorist acts against local officials and civilians, and other subversive activities in the Republic of Vietnam have increased to levels unprecedented since the Geneva Agreements of 1954. During this period the organized armed strength of the Viet Cong, the Communist apparatus operating in the Republic of Vietnam, has grown from about 3,000 to over 12,000 personnel. This armed strength has been supplemented by an increase in the numbers of political and propaganda agents in the area.

During 1960 alone, Communist armed units and terrorists assassinated or kidnapped over 3,000 local officials, military personnel, and civilians. Their activities took the form of armed attacks against isolated garrisons, attacks on newly established townships, ambushes on roads and canals, destruction of bridges, and well-planned sabotage against public works and communication lines. Because of Communist guerrilla activity 200 elementary schools had to be closed at various times, affecting over 25,000 students and 800 teachers.

This upsurge of Communist guerrilla activity apparently stemmed from a decision made in May 1959 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of North Vietnam which called for the reunification of Vietnam by all "appropriate means." In July of the same year the Central Committee was reorganized and charged with intelligence duties and the "liberation" of South Vietnam. In retrospect this decision to step up guerrilla activity was made to reverse the remarkable success which the Government of the Republic of Vietnam under President Ngo Dinh Diem had achieved in consolidating its political position and in attaining significant economic recovery in the five years between 1954 and 1959.

Remarkably coincidental with the renewed Communist activity in Laos, the Communist Party of North Vietnam at its Third Congress on September 10, 1960, adopted a resolution which declared that the Vietnamese revolution has as a major strategic task the liberation of the South from the "rule of U.S. imperialists and their henchmen." This resolution called for the direct overthrow of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

Next door to South Vietnam, Laos was threatened by a similar Communist assault. The active agent of attack on both was Communist North Vietnam, with the backing of Peiping and Moscow. In the case of Laos, we were able to negotiate an agreement in 1962 that it should be neutral and that all foreign military personnel should be withdrawn. We complied with that agreement. But North Vietnam never did. In gross violation of its pledge, it left armed units in Laos and continued to use Laos as a corridor to infiltrate arms and trained men into South Vietnam.

There was no new agreement, even on paper, on Vietnam. Late in 1961, President Kennedy there-

fore increased our assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. During that year, the infiltration of arms and military personnel from the North continued to increase. To cope with that escalation, President Kennedy decided to send more American military personnel—to assist with logistics and transportation and communications as well as with training and as advisers to South Vietnamese forces in the field. Likewise we expanded our economic assistance and technical advice, particularly with a view to improving living conditions in the villages.

During 1962 and 1963 Hanoi continued to increase its assistance to the Viet Cong. In response, President Kennedy and later President Johnson increased our aid.

Hanoi kept on escalating the war throughout 1964. And the Viet Cong intensified its drafting and training of men in the areas it controls.

Last August, you will recall, North Vietnamese forces attacked American destroyers in international waters. That attack was met by appropriate air response against North Vietnamese naval installations. And Congress, by a combined vote of 504 to 2, passed a resolution expressing its support for actions by the Executive "including the use of armed force" to meet aggression in Southeast Asia, including specifically aggression against South Vietnam. The resolution and the Congressional debate specifically envisaged that, subject to continuing Congressional consultation, the armed forces of the United States might be committed in the defense of South Vietnam in any way that seemed necessary, including employment in combat.

In summary, our commitment in Vietnam has been set forth in:

- The Southeast Asia Treaty, which was almost unanimously approved by the United States Senate;
- The pledges made with bipartisan support by three successive Presidents of the United States;
- The assistance programs approved annually, beginning in 1955, by bipartisan majorities in both Houses of Congress;
- The declarations which we joined our SEATO and ANZUS allies in making at their Ministerial Council Meetings in 1964 and 1965;

— The joint Congressional resolution of August 1964, which was approved by a combined vote of 504 to 2.

Our commitment is to assist the government and people of South Vietnam to repel this aggression, thus preserving their freedom. This commitment is to the South Vietnamese as a nation and people. It has continued through various changes of government, just as our commitments to our NATO allies and, in various forms, to many other nations remain unaltered by changes in government.

Continued escalation of the aggression by the other side has required continued strengthening of the military defenses of South Vietnam. Whether still more American military personnel will be needed will depend on events, especially on whether the other side continues to escalate the aggression. As the President has made plain, we will provide the South Vietnamese with whatever assistance may be necessary to ensure that the aggression against them is effectively repelled—that is, to make good on our commitment.

THE PURSUIT OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT

As President Johnson and his predecessors have repeatedly emphasized, our objective in Southeast Asia is peace—a peace in which the various peoples of the area can manage their own affairs in their own ways and address themselves to economic and social progress.

We seek no bases or special position for the United States. We do not seek to destroy or overturn the Communist regimes in Hanoi and Peiping. We ask only that they cease their aggressions, that they leave their neighbors alone.

Repeatedly, we and others have sought to achieve a peaceful settlement of the war in Vietnam.

We have had many talks with the Soviet authorities over a period of more than four years. But their influence in Hanoi appears to be limited. Recently, when approached, their response has been, in substance: You have come to the wrong address—nobody has authorized us to negotiate. Talk to Hanoi.

We have had a long series of talks with the Chinese Communists in Warsaw. Although Peiping is more cautious in action than in word, it is un-

bending in its hostility to us and plainly opposed to any negotiated settlement in Vietnam.

There have been repeated contacts with Hanoi. Many channels are open. And many have volunteered to use them. But so far there has been no indication that Hanoi is seriously interested in peace on any terms except those which would assure a Communist take-over of South Vietnam.

We and others have sought to open the way for conferences on the neighboring states of Laos and Cambodia, where progress toward peace might be reflected in Vietnam. These approaches have been blocked by Hanoi and Peiping.

The United Kingdom, as Co-chairman of the Geneva conferences, has repeatedly sought a path to a settlement—first by working toward a new Geneva conference, then by a visit by a senior British statesman. Both efforts were blocked by the Communists—and neither Hanoi nor Peiping would even receive the senior British statesman.

In April, President Johnson offered unconditional discussions with the governments concerned. Hanoi and Peiping called this offer a “hoax.”

Seventeen nonaligned nations appealed for a peaceful solution, by negotiations without preconditions. We accepted the proposal. Hanoi and Red China rejected it with scorn, calling some of its authors “monsters and freaks.”

The President of India made a constructive proposal for an end to hostilities and an Afro-Asian patrol force. We welcomed this proposal with interest and hope. Hanoi and Peiping rejected it as a betrayal.

In May, the United States and South Vietnam suspended air attacks on North Vietnam. This action was made known to the other side to see if there would be a response in kind. But Hanoi denounced the pause as “a worn-out trick” and Peiping denounced it as a “swindle.” Some say the pause was not long enough. But we knew the negative reaction from the other side before we resumed. And we had paused previously for more than four years while thousands of armed men invaded the South and killed thousands of South Vietnamese, including women and children, and deliberately destroyed school houses and playgrounds and hospitals and health centers and other facilities that the South Vietnamese had built to

improve their lives and give their children a chance for a better education and better health.

In late June, the Commonwealth Prime Ministers established a mission of four of their members to explore with all parties concerned the possibilities for a conference leading to a just and lasting peace. Hanoi and Peiping made it plain that they would not receive the mission.

Mr. Harold Davies, a member of the British Parliament, went to Hanoi with the approval of Prime Minister Wilson. But the high officials there would not even talk with him. And the lower-ranking officials who did talk with him made it clear that Hanoi was not yet interested in negotiations, that it was intent on a total victory in South Vietnam. As Prime Minister Wilson reported to the House of Commons, Mr. Davies met with a conviction among the North Vietnamese that their prospects of victory were too imminent for them to forsake the battlefield for the conference table.

We and others have made repeated efforts at discussions through the United Nations. In the Security Council, after the August attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, we supported a Soviet proposal that the Government of North Vietnam be invited to come to the Security Council. But Hanoi refused.

In April, Secretary General U Thant considered visits to Hanoi and Peiping to explore the possibilities of peace. But both those Communist regimes made it plain that they did not regard the United Nations as competent to deal with that matter.

The President's San Francisco speech in June requested help from the United Nations' membership at large in getting peace talks started.

In late July the President sent our new Ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur J. Goldberg, to New York with a letter to Secretary General U Thant requesting that all the resources, energy and immense prestige of the United Nations be employed to find ways to halt aggression and to bring peace in Vietnam. The Secretary General has already accepted this assignment.

We sent a letter to the Security Council calling attention to the special responsibility in this regard of the Security Council and of the nations which happen to be members of the Council. We have

considered from time to time placing the matter formally before the Security Council. But we have been advised by many nations—and by many individuals—who are trying to help to achieve a peaceful settlement that to force debate and a vote in the Security Council might tend to harden positions and make useful explorations and discussions even more difficult.

President Johnson has publicly invited any and all members of the United Nations to do all they can to bring about a peaceful settlement.

By these moves the United States has intended to engage the serious attention and efforts of the United Nations as an institution, and its members as signatories of its Charter, in getting the Communists to talk rather than fight—while continuing with determination an increasing effort to demonstrate that Hanoi and the Viet Cong cannot settle the issue on the battlefield.

We have not only placed the Vietnam issue before the United Nations, but believe that we have done so in the most constructive ways.

THE CONDITIONS FOR PEACE

What are the essential conditions for peace in South Vietnam?

In late June, the Foreign Minister of South Vietnam set forth the fundamental principles of a "just and enduring peace." In summary, those principles are:

- An end to aggression and subversion.
- Freedom for South Vietnam to choose and shape for itself its own destiny "in conformity with democratic principles and without any foreign interference from whatever sources."
- As soon as aggression has ceased, the ending of the military measures now necessary by the Government of South Vietnam and the nations that have come to its aid to defend South Vietnam; and the removal of foreign military forces from South Vietnam.
- And effective guarantees for the freedom of the people of South Vietnam.

We endorse those principles. In essence, they would constitute a return to the basic purpose of the Geneva Accords of 1954. Whether they require reaffirmation of those Accords or new agreements em-

bodying these essential points, but with provision in either case for more effective international machinery and guarantees, could be determined in discussions and negotiations.

Once the basic points set forth by South Vietnam's Foreign Minister were achieved, future relations between North Vietnam and South Vietnam could be worked out by peaceful means. And this would include the question of a free decision by the people of North and South Vietnam on the matter of reunification.

When the aggression has ceased and the freedom of South Vietnam is assured by other means, we will withdraw our forces. Three Presidents of the United States have said many times that we want no permanent bases and no special position there. Our military forces are there because of the North Vietnamese aggression against South Vietnam and for no other reason. When the men and arms infiltrated by the North are withdrawn and Hanoi ceases its support and guidance of the war in the South, whatever remains in the form of indigenous dissent is a matter for the South Vietnamese themselves. As for South Vietnamese fighting in the Viet Cong or under its control or influence, they must in time be integrated into their national society. But that is a process which must be brought about by the people of South Vietnam, not by foreign diplomats.

Apart from the search for a solution in Vietnam itself, the United States Government has hoped that discussions could be held on the problems concerning Cambodia and Laos. We supported the proposal of Prince Sihanouk for a conference on Cambodia, to be attended by the governments that participated in the 1954 conference, and noted the joint statement of the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, in April, to the effect that both favored the convening of conferences on Cambodia and Laos. Subsequently, however, Hanoi appeared to draw back and to impose conditions at variance with the Cambodian proposal.

We look beyond a just and enduring peace for Vietnam and Laos and Cambodia, to the day when Peiping will be ready to join in a general settlement in the Far East—a general settlement that would remove the threat of aggression and make it possible for all the peoples of the area to devote themselves to economic and social progress.

Several of the nations of Asia are densely populated. And high rates of population growth make it difficult for them to increase per capita incomes. The solution to these problems cannot be found through external aggression. They must be achieved internally within each nation.

As President Johnson has said, the United States stands ready to assist and support cooperative programs for economic development in Asia. Already we are making available additional funds for the development of the Mekong Valley. And we are taking the lead in organizing an Asian Development Bank, which we hope will be supported by all the major industrialized nations, including the Soviet Union. We would welcome membership by North Vietnam, when it has ceased its aggression.

Those are our objectives—peace and a better life for all who are willing to live at peace with their neighbors.

THE PRESENT PATH

I turn now to the specific actions we are taking to convince Hanoi that it will not succeed and that it must move toward a peaceful solution.

Secretary McNamara is appearing before the appropriate committees of the Congress to discuss the military situation within South Vietnam in detail. In essence, our present view is that it is crucial to turn the tide in the South, and that for this purpose it is necessary to send substantial numbers of additional American forces.

The primary responsibility for defeating the Viet Cong will remain, however, with the South Vietnamese. They have some 545,000 men in military and paramilitary forces. Despite losses, every branch of the armed forces of South Vietnam has more men under arms than it had six months ago. And they are making systematic efforts to increase their forces still further. The primary missions of American ground forces are to secure the air bases used by the South Vietnamese and ourselves and to provide a strategic reserve, thus releasing South Vietnamese troops for offensive actions against the Viet Cong. In securing the air bases and related military installations, American forces are pushing out into the countryside to prevent build-ups for surprise attacks. And they may be used in emergencies to help the South Vietnamese in combat. But the main task of rooting out the Viet Cong will

continue to be the responsibility of the South Vietnamese. And we have seen no sign that they are about to try to shift that responsibility to us. On the contrary, the presence of increasing numbers of American combat troops seems to have stimulated greater efforts on the part of the fighting men of South Vietnam.

At the same time, on the military side, we shall maintain, with the South Vietnamese, our program of limited air attacks on military targets in North Vietnam. This program is a part of the total strategy. We had never expected that air attacks on North Vietnam alone would bring Hanoi to a quick decision to cease its aggression. Hanoi has been committed to its aggression too long and too deeply to turn around overnight. It must be convinced that it faces not only continuing, and perhaps increased, pressure on the North itself, but also that it simply cannot win in the South.

The air attacks on the North have also had specific military effects in reducing the scale of increased infiltration from the North. Finally, they are important as a warning to all concerned that there are no longer sanctuaries for aggression.

It has been suggested in some quarters that Hanoi would be more disposed to move to negotiations and to cease its aggression if we stopped bombing the North. We do not rule out the possibility of another and longer pause in bombing, but the question remains—and we have repeatedly asked it: What would happen from the North in response? Would Hanoi withdraw the 325th Division of the regular army, which is now deployed in South Vietnam and across the line in Laos? Would it take home the other men it has infiltrated into the South? Would it stop sending arms and ammunition into South Vietnam? Would the campaign of assassination and sabotage in the South cease? We have been trying to find out what would happen if we were to suspend our bombing of the North. We have not been able to get an answer or even a hint.

Those who complain about air attacks on military targets in North Vietnam would carry more weight if they had manifested, or would manifest now, appropriate concern about the infiltrations from the North, the high rate of military activity in the South and the ruthless campaign of terror and assassination which is being conducted in the

South under the direction of Hanoi and with its active support.

THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Let me now underline just a few points about the political and economic situation in South Vietnam. For we know well that, while security is fundamental to turning the tide, it remains vital to do all we can on the political and economic fronts.

All of us have been concerned, of course, by the difficulties of the South Vietnamese in developing an effective and stable government. But this failure should not astonish us. South Vietnam is a highly plural society striving to find its political feet under very adverse conditions. Other nations—new and old—with fewer difficulties and unmolested by determined aggressors have done no better. South Vietnam emerged from the French Indo-China war with many political factions, most of which were firmly anti-Communist. Despite several significant initial successes in establishing a degree of political harmony, the Government of President Diem could not maintain a lasting unity among the many factions. The recent shifting and reshuffling of Vietnamese governments is largely the continuing search for political unity and a viable regime which can overcome these long-evident political divisions.

And we should not forget that the destruction of the fabric of government at all levels has been a primary objective of the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong has assassinated thousands of local officials—and health workers and school teachers and others who were helping to improve the life of the people of the countryside. In the last year and a half, it has killed, wounded, or kidnapped 2,291 village officials and 22,146 other civilians—these on top of its thousands of earlier victims.

Despite the risks to themselves and their families, Vietnamese have continued to come forward to fill these posts. And in the last six years, no political dissenter of any consequence has gone over to the Viet Cong. The Buddhists, the Catholics, the sects, the Cambodians (of whom there are about a million in South Vietnam), the Montagnards—all the principal elements in South Vietnamese political life except the Viet Cong itself, which is a very small

minority—remain overwhelmingly anti-Communist.

The suggestion that Ho Chi Minh probably could win a free election in South Vietnam is directly contrary to all the evidence we have. And we have a great deal of evidence, for we have Americans—in twos and threes and fours and sixes—in the countryside in all parts of Vietnam. In years past Ho Chi Minh was a hero throughout Vietnam. For he had led the fight against the Japanese and then against the French. But his glamor began to fade when he set up a Communist police state in the North—and the South, by contrast, made great progress under a non-Communist nationalist government. Today the North Vietnamese regime is badly discredited. We find the South Vietnamese in the countryside ready to cooperate with their own government when they can do so with reasonable hope of not being assassinated by the Viet Cong the next night.

At the present time, somewhat more than 50 percent of the people of Vietnam live in areas under control of their government. Another 25 percent live in areas of shifting control. And about 25 percent live in areas under varying degree of Viet Cong control. But even where it succeeds in imposing taxes, drafting recruits and commandeering labor, the Viet Cong has not usually been able to organize the area. We have a good deal of evidence that Viet Cong tax exactions and terrorism have increasingly alienated the villagers. And one of the problems with which the South Vietnamese government and we have to deal is the large scale exodus from the Central Highlands to the coastal areas of refugees from the Viet Cong.

It is of the greatest significance that, despite many years of harsh war, despite the political instability of the central government, and despite division of their country since 1954, the people of South Vietnam fight on with uncommon determination. There is no evidence among politicians, the bureaucracy, the military, the major religious groups, the youth, or even the peasantry of a desire for peace at any price. They all oppose surrender or accommodation on a basis which would lead to a Communist take-over. The will to resist the aggression from the North has survived through periods of great stress and remains strong.

The central objective of our foreign policy is a peaceful community of nations, each free to choose its own institutions but cooperating with one another to promote their mutual welfare. It is the kind of world order envisaged in the opening sections of the United Nations Charter. But there have been and still are important forces in the world which seek a different goal—which deny the right of free choice, which seek to expand their influence and empires by every means, including force.

THE BULWARK OF PEACE

In defense of peace and freedom and the right of free choice:

- We and others insisted that the Soviets withdraw their forces from Iran.
- We went to the aid of Turkey and Greece.
- We joined in organizing the European Recovery Program and in forming the North Atlantic Alliance.
- We and our allies have defended the freedom of West Berlin.
- We and 15 other nations joined in repelling the aggression in Korea.
- We have joined defensive alliances with many other nations and have helped them to strengthen their defensive military forces.
- We supported the United Nations in its efforts to preserve the independence of the Congo.
- We insisted that the Soviet Union withdraw strategic weapons from Cuba.

Had we not done these things—and others—the enemies of freedom would now control much of the world and be in a position to destroy us or at least to sap our strength by economic strangulation.

For the same basic reasons that we took all those other measures to deter or to repel aggression, we are determined to assist the people of South Vietnam to defeat this aggression.

In his last public utterance, recorded only half an hour before his death, a great and beloved American, Adlai Stevenson, said:

There has been a great deal of pressure on me in the United States from many sources to take a position—a public position—inconsistent with that of my Government. Actually, I don't agree with those protestants. My hope in

Vietnam is that resistance there may establish the fact that changes in Asia are not to be precipitated by outside forces.

I believe, with the President, that "once the Communists know, as we know, that a violent solution is impossible, then a peaceful solution is inevitable."

The great bulwark of peace for all free men—and therefore of peace for the millions ruled by the adversaries of freedom—has been, and is today, the power of the United States and our readiness to

use that power, in cooperation with other free nations, to deter or to defeat aggression, and to help other free nations to go forward economically, socially, and politically.

We have had to cope with a long series of dangerous crises caused by the aggressive appetites of others. But we are a great nation and people. I am confident that we will meet this test, as we have met others.

The Tasks of Defense

Statement by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara before the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, August 4, 1965

The issue in Vietnam is essentially the same as it was in 1954 when President Eisenhower said:

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

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

THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

What is at stake in Vietnam today is the ability of the free world to block Communist armed aggression and prevent the loss of all of Southeast Asia, a loss which in its ultimate consequences could drastically alter the strategic situation in Asia and the Pacific to the grave detriment of our own security and that of our Allies. While fifteen years ago, in Korea, Communist aggression took the form of an overt armed attack, today in South Vietnam, it has taken the form of a large scale intensive guerrilla operation.

The covert nature of this aggression, which characterized the earlier years of the struggle in South Vietnam, has now all but been stripped away. The control of the Viet Cong effort by the regime in Hanoi, supported and incited by Communist China, has become increasingly apparent.

The struggle there has enormous implications for the security of the United States and the free world, and for that matter, the Soviet Union as well. The North Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists have chosen to make South Vietnam the test case for their particular version of the so-

called "wars of national liberation." The extent to which violence should be used in overthrowing non-Communist governments has been one of the most bitterly contested issues between the Chinese and the Soviet Communists.

Although the former Chairman, Mr. Khrushchev, fully endorsed wars of national liberation as the preferred means of extending the sway of communism, he cautioned that "this does not necessarily mean that the transition to Socialism will everywhere and in all cases be linked with armed uprising and civil war. . . . Revolution by peaceful means accords with the interests of the working class and the masses."

The Chinese Communists, however, insist that:

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

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

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

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

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

It is clear that a Communist success in South Vietnam would be taken as proof that the Chinese Communists' position is correct and they will have made a giant step forward in their efforts to seize control of the world Communist movement.

Furthermore, such a success would greatly increase the prestige of Communist China among the non-aligned nations and strengthen the position of their followers everywhere. In that event we would then have to be prepared to cope with the same kind of aggression in other parts of the world wherever the existing governments are weak and the social structures fragmented. If Communist armed aggression is not stopped in Vietnam, as it was in Korea, the confidence of small nations in America's pledge of support will be weakened and many of them, in widely separated areas of the world, will feel unsafe.

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

CONDITIONS LEADING TO THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Essential to a proper understanding of the present situation in South Vietnam is a recognition of the

fact that the so-called insurgency there is planned, directed, controlled and supported from Hanoi.

True, there is a small dissident minority in South Vietnam, but the Government could cope with it if it were not directed and supplied from the outside. As early as 1960, at the Third Congress of the North Vietnamese Communist Party, both Ho Chi Minh and General Giap spoke of the need to “step up” the “revolution in the South.” In March 1963 the party organ *Hoc Tap* stated that the authorities in South Vietnam “are well aware that North Vietnam is the firm base for the southern revolution and the point on which it leans, and that our party is the steady and experienced vanguard unit of the working class and people and is the brain and factor that decides all victories of the revolution.”

Through most of the past decade the North Vietnamese Government denied and went to great efforts to conceal the scale of its personnel and materiel support, in addition to direction and encouragement, to the Viet Cong.

It had strong reasons to do so. The North Vietnamese regime had no wish to force upon the attention of the world its massive and persistent violations of its Geneva pledges of 1954 and 1962 regarding non-interference in South Vietnam and Laos.

However, in building up the Viet Cong forces for a decisive challenge, the authorities in North Vietnam have increasingly dropped the disguises that gave their earlier support a clandestine character.

Through 1963, the bulk of the arms infiltrated from the North were old French and American models acquired prior to 1954 in Indochina and Korea.

Now, the flow of weapons from North Vietnam consists almost entirely of the latest arms acquired from Communist China; and the flow is large enough to have entirely reequipped the Main Force units, despite the capture this year by government forces of thousands of these weapons and millions of rounds of the new ammunition.

Likewise, through 1963, nearly all the personnel infiltrating through Laos, trained and equipped in the North and ordered South, were former South-erners.

But in the last eighteen months, the great majority of the infiltrators—more than 10,000 of

them—have been ethnic Northerners, mostly draftees ordered into the People's Army of Vietnam for duty in the South. And it now appears that, starting their journey through Laos last December, from one to three regiments of a North Vietnamese regular division, the 325th Division of the North Vietnamese Army, have deployed into the Central Highlands of South Vietnam for combat alongside the Viet Cong.

Thus, despite all its reasons for secrecy, Hanoi's desire for decisive results this summer has forced it to reveal its hand even more openly.

The United States during the last four years has steadily increased its help to the people of South Vietnam in an effort to counter this ever-increasing scale of Communist aggression. These efforts achieved some measure of success during 1962. The South Vietnamese forces in that year made good progress in suppressing the Viet Cong insurrection.

Although combat deaths suffered by these forces in 1962 rose by 11 percent over the 1961 level (from about 4,000 to 4,450), Viet Cong combat deaths increased by 72 percent (from about 12,000 to 21,000). Weapons lost by the South Vietnamese fell from 5,900 in 1961 to 5,200 in 1962, while the number lost by the Viet Cong rose from 2,750 to 4,050. The Government's new strategic hamlet program was just getting underway and was showing promise. The economy was growing and the Government seemed firmly in control. Therefore, in early 1963, I was able to say:

... victory over the Viet Cong will most likely take many years. But now, as a result of the operations of the last year, there is a new feeling of confidence, not only on the part of the Government of South Vietnam but also among the populace, that victory is possible.

But at the same time I also cautioned:

We are not unmindful of the fact that the pressures on South Vietnam may well continue through infiltration via the Laos corridor. Nor are we unmindful of the possibility that the Communists, sensing defeat in their covert efforts, might resort to overt aggression from North Vietnam. Obviously, this latter contingency could require a greater direct participation by the United States. The survival of an independent government in South Vietnam is so important to the security of all of Southeast Asia and to the free world that we must be prepared to take all necessary measures within our capability to prevent a Communist victory.

Unfortunately, the caution voiced in early 1963 proved to be well founded. Late in 1963, the Communists stepped up their efforts, and the military situation began to deteriorate. The Diem Government came under increasing internal pressure, and in November it was overthrown. As I reported in February 1964:

The Viet Cong was quick to take advantage of the growing opposition to the Diem Government and the period of uncertainty following its overthrow. Viet Cong activities were already increasing in September and continued to increase at an accelerated rate in October and November, particularly in the Delta area. And I must report that they have made considerable progress since the coup.

Following the coup, the lack of stability in the central Government and the rapid turnover of key personnel, particularly senior military commanders, began to be reflected in combat operations and throughout the entire fabric of the political and economic structure. And, in 1964, the Communists greatly increased the scope and tempo of their subversive efforts. Larger scale attacks became more frequent and the flow of men and supplies from the North expanded. The incidence of terrorism and sabotage rose rapidly and the pressure on the civilian population was intensified.

The deteriorating military situation was clearly reflected in the statistics. South Vietnamese combat deaths rose from 5,650 in 1963 to 7,450 in 1964 and the number of weapons lost from 8,250 to 14,100. In contrast, Viet Cong combat deaths dropped from 20,600 to 16,800 and, considering the stepped-up tempo of activity, they experienced only a very modest rise in the rate of weapons lost (from 5,400 to 5,900).

At various times in recent months, I have called attention to the continued buildup of Communist forces in South Vietnam. I pointed out that although these forces had not been committed to combat in any significant degree, they probably would be after the start of the monsoon season. It is now clear that these forces are being committed in increasing numbers and that the Communists have decided to make an all-out attempt to bring down the Government of South Vietnam.

The entire economic and social structure is under attack. Bridges, railroads and highways are being destroyed and interdicted. Agricultural products are being barred from the cities. Electric power

plants and communication lines are being sabotaged. Whole villages are being burned and their population driven away, increasing the refugee burden on the South Vietnamese Government.

In addition to the continued infiltration of increasing numbers of individuals and the acceleration of the flow of modern equipment and supplies, organized units of the North Vietnamese Army have been identified in South Vietnam. We now estimate the hard core Viet Cong strength at some 70,000 men, including a recently reported increase in the number of combat battalions. In addition, they have some 90,000 to 100,000 irregulars and some 30,000 in their political cadres, i.e., tax collectors, propagandists, etc. We have also identified at least three battalions of the regular North Vietnamese Army, and there are probably considerably more.

At the same time the Government of South Vietnam has found it increasingly difficult to make a commensurate increase in the size of its own forces, which now stand at about 545,000 men, including the regional and local defense forces but excluding the national police.

Combat deaths on both sides have been mounting—for the South Vietnamese from an average of 143 men a week in 1964 to about 270 a week for the four-week period ending July 24 this year. Viet Cong losses have gone from 322 a week last year to about 680 a week for the four-week period ending July 24.

Most important, the ratio of South Vietnamese to Viet Cong strength has seriously declined in the last six or seven months from about five to one to about three or three-and-a-half to one; the ratio of combat battalions is substantially less. This is far too low a ratio for a guerrilla war even though the greater mobility and firepower provided to the South Vietnamese forces by the United States help to offset that disadvantage.

The South Vietnamese forces have to defend hundreds of cities, towns and hamlets while the Viet Cong are free to choose the time and place of their attack. As a result, the South Vietnamese are stretched thin in defensive positions, leaving only a small central reserve for offensive action against the Viet Cong, while the latter are left free to concentrate their forces and throw them against select-

ed targets. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Viet Cong retains most of the initiative.

Even so, we may not as yet have seen the full weight of the Communist attack. Presently, the situation is particularly acute in the northern part of the country where the Communists have mobilized large military forces which pose a threat to the entire region and its major cities and towns. Our air attack may have helped to keep these forces off balance but the threat remains and it is very real.

Clearly, the time has come when the people of South Vietnam need more help from us and other nations if they are to retain their freedom and independence.

We have already responded to that need with some 75,000 U.S. military personnel, including some combat units. This number will be raised to 125,000 almost immediately with the deployment of the Air Mobile Division and certain other forces. But, more help will be needed in the months ahead and additional U.S. combat forces will be required to back up the hard-pressed Army of South Vietnam. Two other nations have provided combat forces—Australia and New Zealand. We hope that by the end of this year others will join them. In this regard, the Koreans have just recently approved a combat division for deployment to Vietnam, which is scheduled to arrive this fall.

ROLE OF U.S. COMBAT FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM

As I noted earlier, the central reserve of the South Vietnamese Army has been seriously depleted in recent months. The principal role of U.S. ground combat forces will be to supplement this reserve in support of the front line forces of the South Vietnamese Army. The indigenous paramilitary forces will deal with the pacification of areas cleared of organized Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units, a role more appropriate for them than for our forces.

The Government of South Vietnam's strategy, with which we concur, is to achieve the initiative, to expand gradually its area of control by breaking up major concentrations of enemy forces, using to the maximum our preponderance of air power, both land and sea-based. The number of "fixed-

wing" attack sorties by U.S. aircraft in South Vietnam will increase many fold by the end of the year.

Armed helicopter sorties will also increase dramatically over the same period, and extensive use will be made of heavy artillery, both land-based and sea-based. At the same time our Air and Naval forces will continue to interdict the Viet Cong supply lines from North Vietnam, both land and sea.

Although our tactics have changed, our objective remains the same.

We have no desire to widen the war. We have no desire to overthrow the North Vietnamese regime, seize its territory or achieve the unification of North and South Vietnam by force of arms. We have no need for permanent military bases in South Vietnam or for special privileges of any kind.

What we are seeking through the planned military buildup is to block the Viet Cong offensive, to give the people of South Vietnam and their armed forces some relief from the unrelenting Communist pressures—to give them time to strengthen their government, to re-establish law and order, and to revive their economic life which has been seriously disrupted by Viet Cong harassment and attack in recent months. We have no illusions that success will be achieved quickly, but we are confident that it will be achieved much more surely by the plan I have outlined.

INCREASES IN U.S. MILITARY FORCES

Fortunately, we have greatly increased the strength and readiness of our military establishment since 1961, particularly in the kinds of forces which we now require in Southeast Asia. The active Army has been expanded from 11 to 16 combat-ready divisions. Twenty thousand men have been added to the Marine Corps to allow them to fill out their combat structure and at the same time facilitate the mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve. The tactical fighter squadrons of the Air Force have been increased by 51 percent. Our airlift capability has more than doubled. Special Forces trained to deal with insurgency threats have been multiplied elevenfold. General ship construction and conversion has been doubled.

During this same period, procurement for the expanded force has been increased greatly: Air Force tactical aircraft—from \$360 million in 1961

to about \$1.1 billion in the original fiscal year 1966 budget; Navy aircraft—from \$1.8 billion to \$2.2 billion; Army helicopters—from 286 aircraft to over 1,000. Procurement of ordnance, vehicles and related equipment was increased about 150 percent in the fiscal years 1962–1964 period, compared with the preceding three years. The tonnage of modern non-nuclear air-to-ground ordnance in stock tripled between fiscal year 1961 and fiscal year 1965. In brief, the military establishment of the United States, today, is in far better shape than it ever has been in peacetime to face whatever tasks may lie ahead.

Nevertheless, some further increases in forces, military personnel, production and construction will be required if we are to deploy additional forces to Southeast Asia and provide for combat consumption while, at the same time, maintaining our capabilities to deal with crises elsewhere in the world.

To offset the deployments now planned to Southeast Asia, and provide some additional forces for possible new deployments, we propose to increase the presently authorized force levels. These increases will be of three types: (1) Additional units for the active forces, over and above those reflected in the January budget; (2) military personnel augmentations for presently authorized units in the active forces to man new bases, to handle the larger logistics workload, etc.; and (3) additional personnel and extra training for selected reserve component units to increase their readiness for quick deployment. We believe we can achieve this buildup without calling up the reserves or ordering the involuntary extension of tours, except as already authorized by law for the Department of the Navy. Even here the extension of officer tours will be on a selective basis and extensions for enlisted men will be limited, in general, to not more than four months.

The program I have outlined here today and the \$1.7 billion amendment to the fiscal year 1966 Defense Appropriation Bill now before the Committee will, in the collective judgment of my principal military and civilian advisers and myself, provide the men, materiel and facilities required to fulfill the President's pledge to meet the mounting aggression in South Vietnam, while at the same time maintaining the forces required to meet commitments elsewhere in the world.

The Challenge of Human Need

*Address by the President to the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, The White House,
May 13, 1965*

THE THIRD FACE OF THE WAR

The war in Vietnam has many faces.

There is the face of armed conflict—of terror and gunfire—of bomb-heavy planes and campaign-weary soldiers. . . .

The second face of war in Vietnam is the quest for a political solution—the face of diplomacy and politics—of the ambitions and the interests of other nations. . . .

The third face of war in Vietnam is, at once, the most tragic and most hopeful. It is the face of human need. It is the untended sick, the hungry family, and the illiterate child. It is men and women, many without shelter, with rags for clothing, struggling for survival in a very rich and a very fertile land.

It is the most important battle of all in which we are engaged.

For a nation cannot be built by armed power or by political agreement. It will rest on the expectation by individual men and women that their future will be better than their past.

It is not enough to just fight against something. People must fight *for* something, and the people of South Vietnam must know that after the long, brutal journey through the dark tunnel of conflict there breaks the light of a happier day. And only if this is so can they be expected to sustain the enduring will for continued strife. Only in this way can long-run stability and peace come to their land.

And there is another, more profound reason. In Vietnam communism seeks to really impose its will by force of arms. But we would be deeply mistaken to think that this was the only weapon. Here, as other places in the world, they speak to restless people—people rising to shatter the old ways which have imprisoned hope—people fiercely and justly reaching for the material fruits from the tree of modern knowledge.

It is this desire, and not simply lust for conquest, which moves many of the individual fighting men that we must now, sadly, call the enemy.

It is, therefore, our task to show that freedom from the control of other nations offers the surest road to progress, that history and experience testify to this truth. But it is not enough to call upon reason or point to examples. We must show it through action and we must show it through accomplishment, and even were there no war—either hot or cold—we would always be active in humanity's search for progress.

This task is commanded to us by the moral values of our civilization, and it rests on the inescapable nature of the world that we have now entered. For in that world, as long as we can foresee, every threat to man's welfare will be a threat to the welfare of our own people. Those who live in the emerging community of nations will ignore the perils of their neighbors at the risk of their own prospects.

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

This is true not only for Vietnam but for every part of the developing world. This is why, on your behalf, I recently proposed a massive, cooperative development effort for all of Southeast Asia. I named the respected leader, Eugene Black, as my personal representative to inaugurate our participation in these programs.

Since that time rapid progress has been made, I am glad to report. Mr. Black has met with the top officials of the United Nations on several occasions. He has talked to other interested parties. He has found increasing enthusiasm. The United Nations is already setting up new mechanisms to help carry forward the work of development.

In addition, the United States is now prepared to participate in, and to support, an Asian Develop-

ment Bank, to carry out and help finance the economic progress in that area of the world and the development that we desire to see in that area of the world.

So this morning I call on every other industrialized nation, including the Soviet Union, to help create a better life for all of the people of Southeast Asia.

Surely, surely, the works of peace can bring men together in a common effort to abandon forever the works of war.

But, as South Vietnam is the central place of conflict, it is also a principal focus of our work to increase the well-being of people.

It is that effort in South Vietnam, of which I think we are too little informed, which I want to relate to you this morning.

STRENGTHENING VIETNAM'S ECONOMY

We began in 1954, when Vietnam became independent, before the war between the North and the South. Since that time we have spent more than \$2 billion in economic help for the 16 million people of South Vietnam. And despite the ravages of war, we have made steady, continuing gains. We have concentrated on food, and health, and education, and housing, and industry.

Like most developing countries, South Vietnam's economy rests on agriculture. Unlike many, it has large uncrowded areas of very rich and very fertile land. Because of this, it is one of the great rice bowls of the entire world. With our help, since 1954, South Vietnam has already doubled its rice production, providing food for the people as well as providing a vital export for that nation.

We have put our American farm know-how to work on other crops. This year, for instance, several hundred million cuttings of a new variety of sweet potato, that promises a sixfold increase in yield, will be distributed to these Vietnamese farmers. Corn output should rise from 25,000 tons in 1962 to 100,000 tons by 1966. Pig production has more than doubled since 1955. Many animal diseases have been eliminated entirely.

Disease and epidemic brood over every Vietnamese village. In a country of more than 16 mil-

lion people with a life expectancy of only 35 years, there are only 200 civilian doctors. If the Vietnamese had doctors in the same ratio as the United States has doctors, they would have not the 200 that they do have but they would have more than 5,000 doctors.

We have helped vaccinate, already, over 7 million people against cholera, and millions more against other diseases. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese can now receive treatment in the more than 12,000 hamlet health stations that America has built and has stocked. New clinics and surgical suites are scattered throughout that entire country; and the medical school that we are now helping to build will graduate as many doctors in a single year as now serve the entire civilian population of South Vietnam.

Education is the keystone of future development in Vietnam. It takes trained people to man the factories, to conduct the administration, and to form the human foundation for an advancing nation. More than a quarter million young Vietnamese can now learn in more than 4,000 classrooms that America has helped to build in the last 2 years; and 2,000 more schools are going to be built by us in the next 12 months. The number of students in vocational schools has gone up four times. Enrollment was 300,000 in 1955, when we first entered there and started helping with our program. Today it is more than 1,500,000. The 8 million textbooks that we have supplied to Vietnamese children will rise to more than 15 million by 1967.

Agriculture is the foundation. Health, education, and housing are the urgent human needs. But industrial development is the great pathway to their future.

When Vietnam was divided, most of the industry was in the North. The South was barren of manufacturing and the foundations for industry. Today more than 700 new or rehabilitated factories—textiles mills and cement plants, electronics and plastics—are changing the entire face of that nation. New roads and communications, railroad equipment, and electric generators are a spreading base on which this new industry can, and is, growing.

PROGRESS IN THE MIDST OF WAR

All this progress goes on, and it is going to continue to go on, under circumstances of staggering adversity.

Communist terrorists have made aid programs that we administer a very special target of their attack. They fear them, because agricultural stations are being destroyed and medical centers are being burned. More than 100 Vietnamese malaria fighters are dead. Our own AID officials have been wounded and kidnapped. These are not just the accidents of war. They are a part of a deliberate campaign, in the words of the Communists, "to cut the fingers off the hands of the government."

We intend to continue, and we intend to increase our help to Vietnam.

Nor can anyone doubt the determination of the South Vietnamese themselves. They have lost more than 12,000 of their men since I became your President a little over a year ago.

But progress does not come from investment alone, or plans on a desk, or even the directives and the orders that we approve here in Washington. It takes men. Men must take the seed to the farmer. Men must teach the use of fertilizer. Men must help in harvest. Men must build the schools, and men must instruct the students. Men must carry medicine into the jungle, and treat the sick, and shelter the homeless. And men—brave, tireless, filled with love for their fellows—are doing this today. They are doing it through the long, hot, danger-filled Vietnamese days and the sultry nights.

The fullest glory must go, also, to those South Vietnamese that are laboring and dying for their own people and their own nation. In hospitals and schools, along the rice fields and the roads, they continue to labor, never knowing when death or terror may strike.

How incredible it is that there are a few who still say that the South Vietnamese do not want to continue the struggle. They are sacrificing and they are dying by the thousands. Their patient valor in the heavy presence of personal physical danger should be a helpful lesson to those of us who, here in America, only have to read about it, or hear about it on the television or radio.

We have our own heroes who labor at the works of peace in the midst of war. They toil unarmed and out of uniform. They know the humanity of their concern does not exempt them from the horrors of conflict, yet they go on from day to day. They bring food to the hungry over there. They supply the sick with necessary medicine. They help the farmer with his crops, families to find clean water, villages to receive the healing miracles of electricity. These are Americans who have joined our AID program, and we welcome others to their ranks.

A CALL FOR AID

For most Americans this is an easy war. Men fight and men suffer and men die, as they always do in war. But the lives of most of us, at least those of us in this room and those listening to me this morning, are untroubled. Prosperity rises, abundance increases, the nation flourishes.

I will report to the Cabinet when I leave this room that we are in the 51st month of continued prosperity, the longest peacetime prosperity for America since our country was founded. Yet our entire future is at stake.

What a difference it would make if we could only call upon a small fraction of our unmatched private resources—businesses and unions, agricultural groups and builders—if we could call them to the task of peaceful progress in Vietnam. With such a spirit of patriotic sacrifice we might well strike an irresistible blow for freedom there and for freedom throughout the world.

I therefore hope that every person within the sound of my voice in this country this morning will look for ways—and those citizens of other nations who believe in humanity as we do, I hope that they will find ways to help progress in South Vietnam.

This, then, is the third face of our struggle in Vietnam. It was there—the illiterate, the hungry, the sick—before this war began. It will be there when peace comes to us—and so will we—not with soldiers and planes, not with bombs and bullets, but with all the wondrous weapons of peace in the 20th century.

And then, perhaps, together, all of the people of the world can share that gracious task with all the people of Vietnam, North and South alike.