

Thomas J. Dodd

SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

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SENATOR DODD ASSAILS PROPOSALS FOR VIETNAM PULLOUT AS MANIFESTATION OF "NEW ISOLATIONISM." SAYS VIETNAM WAR CAN BE WON WITHOUT MAJOR ESCALATION.

WASHINGTON, February 23 -- Senator Thomas J. Dodd (D.-Conn.), in a speech on the Floor of the Senate today assailed the various proposals that have been made for disengagement in Vietnam as a manifestation of what he called "the new isolationism." The Senator warned that the abandonment of Vietnam might "result in the early disintegration of all of our alliances and the total eclipse of America as a great power." He outlined proposals, essentially in the non-military field, which he said, could help to win the Vietnamese war without major escalation. Addressing himself to the Administration, Senator Dodd said: "Give us the plan that will do the job, and we will support you."

"The scareword of the new isolationism" said the Senator "is 'escalation'. Its cure-all is 'neutralization'. The basic premise of the new isolationism is that the United States is 'over-extended' in its attempt to resist Communist aggression around the world, 'over-committed' to the defense of distant outposts, and 'over-involved' in the murky and unintelligible affairs of remote areas."

"The corollaries of the new isolationism are many" continued Senator Dodd. "It is contended that we should de-emphasize the cold war and reverse our national priorities in favor of domestic improvements; that we should withdraw from South Vietnam; that we should cease involvement in the Congo; that we should relax the so-called rigidity of our Berlin policy; that foreign aid has outlived its usefulness and should be severely cut back; that our military establishment and our CIA, organizations that seem particularly suspect because they are symbols of worldwide involvement, should be humbled and 'cut down to size' and stripped of their influence in foreign policy questions."

"I reject the assumption that the United States is over-extended, or over-committed, or over-involved" said Senator Dodd. "We are not even straining ourselves! We are actually pursuing today a policy not only of both guns and butter, but of less guns and more butter...Our power is at its peak and we have the capacity to increase it vastly if necessary. It is our spirit, apparently, that needs shoring up...More effort, more sacrifice -- not less -- is the need of our time...If we are not strong enough to honor our commitments today, then we should solve the problem, not by reducing our commitments, but by becoming stronger, and by aiding our allies to become stronger."

Senator Dodd said that Vietnam had become "the favorite target of those who urged withdrawal and retrenchment." The Senator said: "We are in Vietnam because our own security and the security of the entire free world demands that a firm line be drawn against the further advance of Communist imperialism -- in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America and in Europe."

While not closing the door on all possibility of negotiation, Senator Dodd said that "The demand that we negotiate now over Vietnam is akin to asking Churchill to negotiate with the Germans at the time of Dunkirk, or asking Truman to negotiate with the Communists when we stood with our backs to the sea in the Pusan perimeter. In either case, the free world could have negotiated nothing but total capitulation."

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Senator Dodd said that in his opinion "the consequences of an American defeat in Vietnam would be so catastrophic that we simply cannot permit ourselves to think of it". . . "For the Vietnamese people, the first consequence would be a bloodletting on a genocidal scale. . . . "What will happen to the more than 1,000,000 refugees from North Vietnam? What will happen to the millions of peasants who resisted or bore arms against the Viet Cong? I shudder to think about it." Senator Dodd pointed out that according to students of communism Chinese communism and Russian communism has each cost the lives of from 25 to 50 million people.

"Our withdrawal from Vietnam would immediately confront us with an agonizing choice," said Senator Dodd. "If we decide to try to defend what is left of Southeast Asia against the advance of communism, it will require far more money, far more men, and far more American blood than we are today investing in the defense of Vietnam. What is more, it would involve a far greater risk of the major escalation which we seek to avoid."

"If, on the other hand," continued the Senator, "we decide to abandon the whole of Southeast Asia to communism, as some of the proponents of withdrawal have frankly proposed, it would result in the early disintegration of all our alliances, and in the total eclipse of America as a great nation. Because no nation can remain great when its assurances are considered worthless even by its friends."

Senator Dodd warned that "the loss of Vietnam will result in a dozen more Vietnams in different parts of the world." He pointed out that insurrections on the Viet Cong model are now under way in the Congo, in the Philippines and in Venezuela; that incipient guerrilla movements already exist in at least half a dozen other Latin American countries; and that the Chinese Communists have just announced the formation of a so-called "Patriotic Front" in Thailand.

"The situation in Vietnam today bears many resemblances to the situation just before Munich," said Senator Dodd. "Chamberlain wanted peace. Churchill wanted peace. . . Chamberlain's policy won out, because nobody wanted war. . . Churchill remained a voice crying in the wilderness. But who was right -- Churchill or Chamberlain? Who was the true man of peace?"

Senator Dodd said that there was conclusive proof "that the war in South Vietnam is not a civil war, that Hanoi has provided the leadership for the Viet Cong insurrection, that it has supplied them massively, and that it has served as the real command headquarters for the Viet Cong."

He said that Hanoi had launched the war because "the contrast between the growing prosperity of the South and the growing misery in the North confronted the Vietnamese Communists with a challenge they could not tolerate."

Senator Dodd strongly challenged the assertion by Senator Church that the Asian peoples historically do not know the meaning of freedom and are therefore disposed to welcome communism. "Communism has never been freely accepted by any people, anywhere, no matter how primitive," said Senator Dodd. "It has never been accepted for the simple reason that even primitive peoples do not enjoy being pushed around and brutalized and terrorized, and told what to do and what not to do, and having their every activity ordered and supervised by political commissars. This is why communism must govern by means of ruthless dictatorship wherever it takes power. . . This is why there are almost 8 million refugees from communist rule in Asia today."

"The people of South Vietnam," said the Senator, "are one of the most anti-communist peoples in the world. Among them are more than one million refugees who sacrificed everything they possessed to flee from North Vietnam to South Vietnam after the country was divided by the Geneva agreement of 1954. . . In addition, there are several million peasants and workers and students who have at one time or another borne arms against the Communists, some of them in the Vietnamese army, the majority in village self-defense units."

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"It is simply not true," said Senator Dodd, "that the Vietnamese army has shown no willingness to fight. They have fought bravely in thousands of engagements. In support of his statement, Senator Dodd quoted the following figures which he said he had received from an official source."

"In 1962 the Vietnamese army lost 4,400 killed in action against 21,000 Viet Cong killed, and 1,300 prisoners against 5,500 captives taken from the Viet Cong. In 1963 the figures were 5,700 Vietnamese soldiers killed in action against 21,000 Viet Cong, and 3,300 missing or captured against 4,000 Viet Cong captured. And even last year, when the fortunes of war turned against the Vietnamese government, the Vietnamese army killed 17,000 Viet Cong against a loss of 7,000 men and took 4,200 communists captives against 5,800 captives lost to them."

Senator Dodd set forth a number of recommendations for improving the performance of our side in the Vietnamese war. "One of the most obvious and most serious weaknesses of the American position in Vietnam," said the Senator, "is the lack of adequate liaison with the leaders of the various sectors of the Vietnamese community. Because of this lack of communication, we have frequently been caught unawares by developments; we have remained without serious ability to influence them; and we have not been able to effectively assist the Vietnamese in communicating with each other and in stabilizing the political situation in Saigon."

The Senator said that there were some 10 or 12 Americans "who have spent five years or more in Vietnam, have built up personal friendships with leaders of every sector of the Vietnamese community, enjoy the confidence of the Vietnamese because of their understanding and dedication, and who would jump at the opportunity to return to Vietnam for the purpose of helping it in this critical hour"... "I have proposed in a letter to the President," said the Senator, "that these Americans be constituted into a liaison group and that they be dispatched to Saigon immediately for the purpose of helping the Embassy to establish the broadest and most effective possible liaison with the army leaders, with the Buddhists, with the intellectual community, and with the Vietnamese political leaders."

Senator Dodd called for an intensification of our effort in the field of political warfare. Our effort in this field, said the Senator, "has been limited, and halting, and amateurish, and, in fact, sadly ineffective. . . the slogans we have are inadequate. Our propaganda program is dismally weak compared with that of the Communists. And according to my information, we still have not assisted the Vietnamese to set up an intensive training program in Communist cold war methods and how to counter them."

The Senator said that "The Charter of SEATO will have to be modified so that one nation cannot veto collective action by all the other nations." Recognizing the delay that such modification might entail, however, Senator Dodd suggested that in the interim we should "encourage collective action by the free nations in the area outside the framework of SEATO." He said that he was "most encouraged by news that South Korea has decided to send a contingent of several thousand military engineers to South Vietnam, and the Philippines have decided to do likewise. It is infinitely better from every standpoint to have Asian troops supporting the Vietnamese forces against the Viet Cong on the ground, than it is to have American troops actively involved."

Senator Dodd closed his statement by quoting Sir Winston Churchill's advice in 1941 to the boys of Harrow School, his old alma mater: "Never give in. Never, never, never, never! Never yield to force and the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy. Never yield in any way, great or small, large or petty, except to convictions of honor and good sense". . . "Let us resolve to nail this message to the mast-head of our Ship of State in this year of decision." said the Senator.

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VIETNAM AND THE NEW ISOLATIONISM

REMARKS OF SENATOR THOMAS J. DODD
DELIVERED ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1965

The New Isolationism

There has been developing in this country in recent years a brand of thinking about foreign affairs which, I believe, can aptly be described as "the new isolationism." This internal phenomenon is, in my opinion, potentially more disastrous in terms of its consequences than the major external problems that confront us.

Its background is a growing national weariness with cold war burdens we have been so long carrying, a rising frustration with situations that are going against us in many places, a long-simmering indignation over the fact that our generosity and sacrifice have too often been met abroad, not just with indifference and ingratitude, but even with hostility and contempt.

Its political base seems to be to the left of center, although it forms as yet a distinct minority there.

Its scareword is "escalation"; its cure-all is "neutralization."

Its prophets include some of my colleagues in the Congress, influential spokesmen in the press, and leading figures in the academic world. Some are new volunteers in this cause of retrenchment; they regard themselves as pragmatists. Others are old hands at Pollyanna-ism, those unshakeable romantics who were disillusioned by Moscow at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact, disillusioned by Mao when they discovered that he was not really an "agrarian reformer," disillusioned by Castro when they learned that he was not a cross between Thomas Jefferson and Robin Hood -- and who, having again dusted themselves off, now look for new vistas of adventure.

If I may digress, let me say that I have always admired their durability. The manner in which they have survived, unchastened, a whole series of intellectual Dunkirks is, if nothing else, a tribute to man's invincible confidence in himself; and their adeptness in avoiding discreditation, in the face of repeated catastrophes and evacuations, must be acknowledged as one of the marvels of modern history -- a triumph of self-rectitude over reason.

The basic premise of the new isolationism is that the United States is "over-extended" in its attempt to resist Communist aggression around the world, "over-committed" to the defense of distant outposts, and "over-involved" in the murky and unintelligible affairs of remote areas.

The corollaries of the new isolationism are many. It is contended that we should de-emphasize the cold war and reverse our national priorities in favor of domestic improvements; that we should withdraw from South Vietnam; that we should cease involvement in the Congo; that we should relax the so-called rigidity of our Berlin policy; that foreign aid has outlived its usefulness and should be severely cut back; that our military establishment and our CIA, organizations that seem particularly suspect because they are symbols of worldwide involvement, should be humbled and "cut down to size" and stripped of their influence in foreign policy questions.

In my judgement all of these propositions have one thing in common. Each of them would strike at the heart of our national effort to preserve our freedom and our security; and collectively they add up to a policy which I can describe by no other name than appeasement, subtle appeasement, unintentional appeasement, to be sure, but appeasement nonetheless.

My purpose, then, is to oppose these propositions and to enlist your opposition against them -- for the new isolationism is as bankrupt as the old.

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First of all--to tackle the main premise--I reject the assumption that the United States is over-extended, or over-committed, or over-involved.

We are enjoying a spectacular growth in every index of national strength. Our population, our wealth, our industrial capacity, our scientific potential, our agricultural output, all are enjoying great upward surges. We were informed that our gross national product was again up in January, and the trend seems ever upwards.

Far from over-extending ourselves in the cold war, we are actually in a period of declining defense budgets, of steadily lowered draft calls, of sharply reduced foreign aid, of one tax cut after another.

Let me emphasize this: In every basic resource, we have greater capacity today than during the past five years; by every military or economic standard, we are stronger; and by every physical measurement, the percentage of our resources going into the cold war is lower. Why then should we talk of weariness or over-commitment?

We are not even straining ourselves! We are actually pursuing today a policy not only of both guns and butter, but of less guns and more butter.

So far as our resources go, we are capable of indefinite continuation and even intensification of our present efforts, if need be. It is only our mental, and perhaps our moral, resources which seem to be feeling the strain.

We would, of course, prefer to live in a world in which it were possible for us to have no commitments, a world in which we could devote all of our energies to the task of perfecting our society at home and enriching the lives of our people.

But we must face the world as it is. And the basic fact of our world is that Western Civilization, itself terribly rent and divided, both politically and philosophically, has been forced into a twilight war of survival by a relentless and remorseless enemy.

It is incontestable, in terms of peoples enslaved and nations gobbled up over the past twenty years, that we have not been holding our own. And each year, the world communist movement is committing more and more of its resources to the task of subjugating our allies, all around the perimeter of freedom.

Against this background it is preposterous to maintain that we should reduce our effort and lessen our commitment to the great struggle of our **century**.

Yet, according to "Time" magazine, it is the widespread sentiment of the academic world that we have over-reached ourselves and ought to pull back. Walter Lippmann says that "the American tide will have to recede."

It has been argued that we would be in a "precarious situation" if we were attacked on several fronts. But does anyone believe that we can solve the problem by abandoning our commitments and defensive alliances? Would the loss of these countries be any the less disastrous because they were given up undefended?

On the contrary, if we are not strong enough to honor our commitments today, then we should solve the problem, not by reducing our commitments, but by becoming stronger, and by aiding our allies to become stronger.

The defense of the Free World rests on a very delicate balance. The key elements in that balance are American power and American determination. If we lack the power to maintain that balance then certainly all is lost. If we reveal that we lack the determination, if we, for instance, allow ourselves to be pushed out of Vietnam, such a humiliation may indeed be the second shot heard around the world; and a dozen nations might soon throw in the sponge and make whatever accommodation they could with an enemy that would then seem assured of victory.

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Fortunately, at the present time we do not lack the power to carry on the defense of freedom. Our power is at its peak and we have the capacity to increase it vastly if necessary. It is our spirit, apparently, that needs shoring up.

Four years ago after a visit to Southeast Asia, I said on the Floor of the Senate:

"If the United States, with its unrivaled might, with its unparalleled wealth, with its dominion over sea and air, with its heritage as the champion of freedom -- if this United States and its Free World allies have so diminished in spirit that they can be laid in the dust by a few thousand primitive guerrillas, then we are far down the road from which there is no return.

"In right and in might, we are able to work our will on this question. Southeast Asia cannot be lost unless we will it to be lost; it cannot be saved unless we will it to be saved.

"This problem, seemingly so remote and distant, will in fact be resolved here in the United States, in the Congress, in the Administration and in the minds and hearts of the American people."

The passage of four years has not diminished my belief in this course.

If the main premise of the new isolationism is erroneous, then surely the lesser premises are fraught with terrible danger.

It is argued that we should de-emphasize the cold war and turn more of our resources to domestic welfare.

The annual Congressional revolt against the foreign aid bill grows more violent and successful each year, and the Administration, forced to yield, now sends foreign aid requests 40 per cent below what it solemnly declared two years ago to be the minimum figure tolerable for Free World survival.

And a small but growing band of Senators have begun offering each year amendments making across-the-board percentage cuts in our defense budget, cuts not directed to any specific economy, but rather to a principle -- the principle that we should be spending less on defense and more on welfare!

Here, in my judgment, are sure-fire formulas for defeat.

Where are the victories in the cold war that would justify such a reversal of priorities? In what global trouble spots are there lessened tensions or improved postures that would make this plausible? I can see a lot of cold war areas where things are looking worse -- but very few where things are getting better.

More effort, more sacrifice -- not less -- is the need of our time. And I speak as one who does not disparage the need or the importance of domestic improvements. As a credential of this I recommend to you my scorecard, compiled last year by the ultra-conservative Americans for Constitutional Action, which asserts that I voted right only 13 per cent of the time -- one of the worst records, alas, in the Congress!

But I say to you that if our foreign affairs are going badly, no aspect of internal welfare is secure or stable. And if we cope successfully with the great problem, the cold war, no internal problem can long defy solution.

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Our first national priority is and must ever be the survival of our country and our freedom -- and if the 20th century has taught men anything, it is that survival and freedom cannot be purchased on the cheap, in a discount store or a bargain basement.

But our situation is such that we can meet our needs both at home and abroad -- not as handsomely as we would prefer, but well enough. This I take to be the objective of the Johnson Administration. The war on poverty and the struggle against tyranny can go hand in hand, if our vision be broad.

Twenty-five years ago, our country, comparatively new and untried among the great nations of the earth, through passage of the Lend-Lease Act, described by Churchill as "the most unsordid act of recorded history," embarked irrevocably upon the path that has brought us to our present posture in history. Through that act, we affirmed the preservation and expansion of liberty as our highest goal, we acknowledged that freedom was insecure everywhere so long as tyranny existed anywhere, and we assumed the burden, and the glory, of being the champion and defender of man's highest aspirations.

Since that embattled hour, when the light of freedom was but a flicker in the dark, our journey across the pages of history has been fantastic and unprecedented: tragic, to be sure, in its mistakes and naiveties, but heroic in its innovations and commitments, prodigious in its energy and power, gigantic in its generosity and good will, noble in its restraint and patience, and sublime in its purpose and in its historic role.

We have not realized the high goals we set for ourselves in World War II.

But we have preserved freedom and national independence in more than half the earth; we have prevented the nuclear holocaust; we have restored western Europe; we have helped friend and foe to achieve prosperity, freedom and stability; we have launched a world peace organization and have kept it alive; we have offered the hand of friendship and help to the impoverished and backwards peoples of the world if they will but take it.

It may be said of our country today as of no other in history, that wherever people are willing to stand up in defense of their liberty, Americans stand with them.

We cannot know at this hour whether our journey has just begun or is nearing its climax; whether the task ahead is the work of a generation or of a century. President Kennedy said, in his Inaugural Address, that the conflict would not be resolved in our lifetime.

The Chief of Staff of the Army recently told the Congress that it might well take ten years to decide the issue in Vietnam alone. And Vietnam is only one symptom of the disease, the epidemic, we are resisting.

Against this somber background, how foolish it is to talk of de-emphasizing the cold war, of pulling out of Vietnam, of abandoning the Congo to communist intrigue, of slashing the defense budget by ten per cent, or any of the other irresponsibilities of the new isolationism.

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VIETNAM

It is against this background that I take up today the question of Vietnam, which has been the favorite target of those who urge withdrawal and retrenchment.

Over the past several months, a number of my most respected colleagues have taken the floor to urge that we get out of Vietnam or that we enter into negotiations over Vietnam.

The propriety of our presence in Vietnam and the validity of our position has been challenged. It has even been suggested that we are the real aggressors in Vietnam. The war has been called "McNamara's war." It has been suggested that we more or less ignore Asia and Africa and concentrate on Europe and the Americas.

I have listened with growing dismay to these presentations -- and with all the more dismay because of the respect and affection I have for the Senators who made them.

If I have not risen to reply to my colleagues before now, it was not because Vietnam was a new subject to me, but because I felt that their arguments required the most carefully considered and most painstakingly prepared reply.

I had visited most of the countries of Southeast Asia in early 1961, and I have spoken a number of times on the floor of the Senate on the subject of Vietnam and Laos and Indonesia since my return. And I have endeavored to keep up with the situation in that part of the world as best one can do by reading the press and official publications. But I realized that there were important gaps in my information because the press coverage of Vietnam was, with a few outstanding exceptions, weak and in some cases completely misleading. I have, therefore, sought to fill these gaps by correspondence with friends in Vietnam, both Vietnamese and American, and by conversations with Americans who have served in Vietnam in various capacities, some of them for long periods of time.

The senior Senator from Wyoming (McGee) and the senior Senator from Oklahoma (Monroney) on the one side, and the distinguished Minority Leader (Dirksen) and the senior Senator from Massachusetts (Saltonstall) have already spoken eloquently on the need for standing fast in Vietnam.

A debate has been joined which is worthy of the best traditions of the Senate.

I hope that the remarks I make today will contribute at least in some measure, to the further unfolding of this debate. Out of this debate, let us hope, will ultimately emerge the kind of assistance and guidance that every President must have in dealing with vital issues of our foreign policy.

What we say here may help to guide the President. But in the final analysis the terrible responsibility of decision is his and his alone. He must listen to the exchanges which take place in this Chamber. He must endure a hundred conflicting pressures from public sources, seeking to push him in this direction or that. He must also endure the impatience of those who demand answers to complex questions today, and who accuse him of not having made the American position clear when he has in fact made our position abundantly clear on repeated occasions.

And finally, when all the voices have been heard, when he has examined all the facts, when he has discussed all aspects of the situation with his most trusted advisers, the President must alone decide--for all Americans and for the entire Free World -- what to do about Vietnam.

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No President has ever inherited a more difficult situation on coming to office. No President has ever been called upon to make a decision of greater moment. At stake may be the survival of freedom. At stake may be the peace of the world.

I believe the United States can count itself fortunate that it has found a President of the stature of Lyndon B. Johnson to meet this crisis in its history; and I also believe that, whatever differences we in this Chamber may have on the question of Vietnam, our feelings to a man are with the President in the ordeal of decision through which he is now passing.

I have said that I have been dismayed by the rising clamor for a negotiated settlement. In the type of war which the Communists are now waging against us, I fear that, although those who urge negotiation would be among the first to oppose an outright capitulation, their attitude may not be construed in this way by the Communists.

The Vietnamese war, in the Communist lexicon, is described as a "war of national liberation;" and its strategy is based on the concept of what the Communists call "the long war." This strategy is premised upon the belief that the free world lacks the patience, the stamina, the fanatical determination to persist, which inspires the adherents of Communism. It is based on the conviction that if they keep on attacking and attacking and attacking in any given situation, they will ultimately be able to destroy the morale and the will to resist of those who oppose them in the name of freedom.

China affords the classic example of the long war. It took 20 years for Mao Tse Tung to prevail. There were several times during this period when his entire movement seemed on the verge of collapse. But even in his blackest days Mao Tse Tung remained confident that, if he persevered, ultimately his enemies would crack and he would emerge as China's undisputed ruler.

There is no more cruel test of courage and staying power than "the long war" as it is waged by the Communists. Five years, ten years, twenty years, means nothing to them. And if they detect any sign that those opposed to them are flagging, that their patience is growing thin or that their will to resist has weakened, the Communists can be relied upon to re-double their efforts, in the belief that victory is within their grasp.

I disagree strongly with my colleagues who have spoken up to urge negotiations.

But if there is any way in which my voice could reach to Peiping and to Moscow, I would warn the Communist leaders that they should not construe the debate that is now taking place in this Chamber as a sign of weakness; it is, on the contrary, a testimony to our strength.

Nor should they believe that those who speak up in favor of negotiations are the forerunners of a larger host of Americans who are prepared to accept surrender. Because there is no one here who believes in surrender or believes in capitulation. I believe the Senior Senator from Idaho made this abundantly clear in his own presentation, in which he underscored his complete support for the retaliatory air strikes against North Vietnam.

Why Are We In Vietnam?

I have been amazed by a number of letters I have received asking the question, "Why are we in Vietnam?" or "What is our policy in Vietnam?" I have been even more amazed to have the same questions put to me by sophisticated members of the press.

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To me the reasons for our presence in Vietnam are so crystal clear that I find it difficult to comprehend the confusion which now appears to exist on this subject.

We are in Vietnam because our own security and the security of the entire free world demands that a firm line be drawn against the further advance of Communist imperialism -- in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America and in Europe.

We are in Vietnam because it is in our national interest to assist every nation, large and small, which is seeking to defend itself against Communist subversion, infiltration and aggression. There is nothing new about this policy; it is a policy, in fact, to which every administration has adhered since the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine.

We are in Vietnam because our assistance was invited by the legitimate government of that country.

We are in Vietnam because, as Senator Mansfield pointed out in his 1963 report, Chinese Communist hostility to the United States threatens "the whole structure of our own security in the Pacific."

We are in Vietnam not merely to help the 14 million South Vietnamese defend themselves against Communism, but because what is at stake is the independence and freedom of 240 million people in Southeast Asia and the future of freedom throughout the Western Pacific.

These are the reasons why we are in Vietnam. There is nothing new about them and nothing very complex. Indeed, it is all brutally simple.

Is There a Possibility of a Negotiated Settlement?

The senior Senator from Idaho and several other Senators who spoke last Wednesday, repeated the proposal that we should seek negotiations for the purpose of terminating the bloodshed in Vietnam and of avoiding an enlargement of the war. We are told by some people that negotiations are the way of diplomacy and that if we reject negotiations now, we are in effect rejecting diplomacy.

The proposal that we negotiate now overlooks the fact that there does exist a negotiated agreement on Vietnam, approved by the participants of the Geneva Conference of 1954. The final declaration of this agreement read:

"Each member...undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity and the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned states and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs."

Since there is no point in negotiating if it simply means reiterating the Geneva Agreement, I cannot help wondering whether those who urge negotiations envisage rewriting the agreement so that it does not "guarantee the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned states."

The history of negotiated agreements with the Communists underscores the fact that their promises are worthless and that only those agreements have validity which are self-enforcing or which we have the power to enforce. A report issued by the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security establishes that the Soviet Union has since its inception violated more than 1,000 treaties and agreements. The Communists have repeatedly violated the terms of the Korean armistice, of the Geneva agreement on Vietnam, and of the Laotian armistice.

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The Senator from Idaho has held up the Laotian armistice as an example of a rational agreement with the Communists that has served our interests. He could not possibly have picked a worse illustration for his argument.

I can think of no more dramatic proof than the Laotian armistice that agreements with the Communists are worthless, and that every time we try to escape from today's unpleasantness by entering into a new covenant with an implacable aggressor, we are always confronted on the morrow by unpleasantness compounded ten times over.

I traveled through Southeast Asia just before the conclusion of the Laotian armistice. It is true that the armistice was favored by our Ambassador in Laos, and it obviously must have had the support of important members of the State Department hierarchy. But the personnel of our Embassies in Saigon and in Bangkok did not conceal from me their grave apprehensions over the consequences of such an armistice for Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

At that time, the Saigon government still controlled the situation throughout most of the countryside, although the 15,000 Viet Cong guerrillas were giving it increasing difficulty. Our Embassy personnel in Saigon expressed the fear that the conclusion of the Laotian armistice would enable the Communists to infiltrate men and material on a much larger scale and would result at an early date in a marked intensification of the Viet Cong insurgency. Needless to say, the apprehensions which they expressed to me have been completely borne out by subsequent developments.

The Laotian armistice has served Laos itself as poorly as it has served the cause of freedom in Vietnam. The Communists have continued to nibble away at what is left of free Laos, in one aggressive act after another, so that by now they firmly control more than half the country, while their infiltrators and guerrillas are gnawing relentlessly at government authority in the rest of the country.

In mid-1964, I asked the Library of Congress to prepare for me a study of Communist violations of the Laotian armistice agreement. The study which they submitted to me listed 14 specific violations up until that time. There have been many more since then.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the Record at the conclusion of my remarks a copy of the survey of Communist violations of the Laotian armistice prepared for me by the Library of Congress. I earnestly hope the Senator from Idaho will take the time to study this before he once again holds up the Laotian armistice as a model for Vietnam.

I would also like to quote from a statement made on March 30, 1963, by General Kong Le, the neutralist military commander who, as is common knowledge, had favored the conclusion of the Laotian armistice. Kong Le's statement is significant because it illustrates how Communists will deal tomorrow with non-Communist elements that they are prepared to "accept" into coalition governments today.

Referring to certain Communist stooges, General Kong Le said:

"Despite their continual defeats, however, these people learned their lessons from their Communist bosses.....When the Prime Minister went abroad, they moved rapidly to destroy the neutralist forces. They used tricks to provoke the soldiers and people to overthrow Colonel Ketsana. When these did not succeed, on February 12 they used an assassin to murder Ketsana. They also savagely killed or arrested all neutralist party members, and their bloody hands caused the death of many people."

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Finally, I do not think the Laotian armistice has served the interests of the other peoples of Southeast Asia. I have in my possession a map of northern Laos showing areas where the Chinese Communists have been building roads that would give China direct access to the borders of Burma and Thailand. The construction of these roads bodes ill for the future peace of Southeast Asia. That they are intended for future military use is taken for granted by everyone in the area.

So much for the example of the Laotian armistice.

All this does not mean to say that we must not under any circumstances enter into negotiations with the Communists. It simply means that when we do so, we must do so with our eyes open and with a clear understanding of the ingredients required to enforce compliance with the agreement.

The demand that we negotiate now over Vietnam is akin to asking Churchill to negotiate with the Germans at the time of Dunkirk, or asking Truman to negotiate with the Communists when we stood with our backs to the sea in the Pusan perimeter. In either case, the free world could have negotiated nothing but "its" total capitulation.

The situation in Vietnam is probably not as desperate, and certainly no more desperate, than Britain's plight at the time of Dunkirk or our own plight at the time of Pusan. And if we are of good heart, if we refuse to listen to the counsels of despair, if we again resolve that "we will never give in," there is every reason to be confident that a time will arrive when we can negotiate with honor and for a more acceptable objective than a diplomatic surrender.

There are those who say that the whole of Southeast Asia will, whether we like it or not, go Communist. These people are at least consistent in urging negotiations now. But anyone who believes that we can negotiate now and not lose Vietnam to Communism is deluding himself in the worst possible way.

The Consequences of Defeat in Vietnam

It is very human to oppose the cost of staying on in Vietnam when American boys are dying in a faraway land about which we understand very little. But I am convinced that the great majority of those who advocate that we abandon Vietnam to Communism, either by pulling out or by "negotiating" a settlement, have not taken the time to weigh the consequences of defeat.

In my opinion, the consequences of an American defeat in Vietnam would be so catastrophic that we simply cannot permit ourselves to think of it. This is truly an "unthinkable thought."

Genocide

For the Vietnamese people, the first consequence would be a bloodletting on a genocidal scale.

In the Soviet Union and in Red China, tens of millions of "class enemies" were eliminated by the victorious Communists. While it is true that there are some slightly more moderate Communist regimes in certain countries, Vietnamese Communism is characterized by the utter disregard for human life of Stalinism and Maoism. What will happen to the more than 1,000,000 refugees from North Vietnam? What will happen to the millions of peasants who resisted or bore arms against the Viet Cong? I shudder to think about it. And, the massacre of innocents in Vietnam will be repeated in every Southeast Asian country that falls to Communism in its wake, in a gigantic bloodletting that will dwarf the agony and suffering of the war in Vietnam.

(more)

Those who urge our withdrawal from Vietnam in the name of saving human lives have the duty to consider the record of Communist terror in every country that has fallen under the sway of this merciless ideology, with its total disregard for human life.

The total number of victims of Communism will probably never be known. Students who have followed the Chinese Communist press closely claim that it can be demonstrated that Chinese Communism has cost the lives of at least 25 million and more probably 50 million people, while students of Soviet Communism put the over-all figure for the Soviet Union at approximately the same level. They point out that, entirely apart from the purges and mass killings at periodic intervals and the forced starvation of 5 million Ukrainian peasants, the reported death rate in the Soviet forced labor camps ran approximately 25 percent per annum in bad years and 15 to 20 percent in good years. If one accepts the average population of the camps as 10 million over the 20 odd years of Stalin's undisputed rule, this would mean that approximately 2 million slave laborers died annually in Stalin's camps, or 40 million for the 20 year period.

According to the Polish Government in exile in London the Soviets deported 1½ million Poles to Siberia after they had occupied Eastern Poland in the wake of the Hitler-Stalin pact. Approximately 150 thousand were returned through Teheran after the Nazi invasion of Russia. Another 300 thousand drifted back after the war. More than 1 million never came back. Such was the mortality in the Soviet camps.

All of this seems incredible to the western mind. Even after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin confirmed all the essential charges that had been made against the Soviet regime, men of good will in the western world refused to believe that the Communist regime can be so evil. They refused to believe, because it is difficult for them to conceive of horror and brutality on such a mass scale.

To those who refuse to believe, I would like to read the eloquent words penned by Dr. Julius Margolin, a prominent Jewish leader in pre-war Lithuania, one of the scores of thousands of Lithuanians deported to Soviet slave labor camps after the Soviet occupation of his country. When he was released after seven years in the camps, Dr. Margolin wrote:

"Until the fall of 1939, I had assumed a position of 'benevolent neutrality' toward the USSR...The last seven years have made me a convinced and ardent foe of the Soviet system. I hate this system with all the strength of my heart and all the power of my mind. Everything I have seen there has filled me with horror and disgust which will last until the end of my days. I feel that the struggle against this system of slavery, terrorism and cruelty which prevails there constitutes the primary obligation of every man in this world. Tolerance or support of such an international shame is not permissible for people who are on this side of the Soviet border and who live under normal conditions...

"Millions of men are perishing in the camps of the Soviet Union...Since they came into being, the Soviet camps have swallowed more people, have executed more victims, than all the other camps - Hitler's included - together; and this lethal engine continues to operate full blast.

"And those who in reply only shrug their shoulders and try to dismiss the issue with vague and meaningless generalities, I consider moral abettors and accomplices of banditry."

(more)

Let those who talk of getting out of Vietnam for the ostensible purpose of saving human lives weigh the words of Dr. Julius Margolin -- a man who, like themselves, refused to believe that communism could be so inhuman until he saw its punitive machinery at work with his own eyes.

And if the Administration should ever succumb to their pressure and negotiate the surrender of Vietnam, and if the Vietnamese communists then embark on the orgy of bloodletting which has always accompanied the establishment of communist power, let those who are pressuring for negotiations not be heard to say, "But we didn't intend it this way." Because there is today no excuse for ignorance about communism.

(b) The Further Choice: Complete Withdrawal or Major Escalation

Our withdrawal from Vietnam would immediately confront us with an agonizing choice.

If we decide to try to defend what is left of Southeast Asia against the advance of communism, it will require far more money, far more men, and far more American blood than we are today investing in the defense of Vietnam. What is more, it would involve a far greater risk of the major escalation which we seek to avoid.

If, on the other hand, we decide to abandon the whole of Southeast Asia to communism, as some of the proponents of withdrawal have frankly proposed, it would result in the early disintegration of all our alliances, and in the total eclipse of America as a great nation. Because no nation can remain great when its assurances are considered worthless even by its friends.

(c) More Vietnams

Whether we decide to abandon Southeast Asia or to try to draw another line outside Vietnam, the loss of Vietnam will result in a dozen more Vietnams in different parts of the world. If we cannot cope with this type of warfare in Vietnam, the Chinese Communists will be encouraged in the belief that we cannot cope with it anywhere else.

In the Congo, the Chinese Communists have launched their first attempt at applying the Vietnamese strategy to Africa.

In the Philippines, the Huk guerrillas, after being decisively defeated in the early 50's, have now staged a dramatic comeback. According to The New York Times, the Huks are now active again in considerable strength, control large areas of Central Luzon, and are assassinating scores of village heads and local administrators on the Viet Cong pattern.

In Thailand, Red China has already announced the formation of a "Patriotic Front" to overthrow the government and eradicate American influence. This almost certainly presages the early launching of a Thai Communist insurrection, also patterned after the Viet Cong.

An article in the Washington Post on January 16, pointed out that the Venezuelan Communists now have 5,000 men under arms in the cities and in the countryside, and that the Venezuelan Communist Party is openly committed to "the strategy of a 'long war', as developed in China, Cuba, Algeria and Vietnam."

And there are at least half a dozen other Latin American countries where the communists are fielding guerrilla forces, which may be small today, but which would be encouraged by a communist victory in Vietnam to believe that the West has no defense against the "long war."

(more)

(d) What New Defense Line?

It has been suggested that if we abandon Southeast Asia, our seapower would make it possible for us to fall back on Japan and the Philippines and the other Pacific islands, and constitute a more realistic defense line there. This is nonsense. American seapower and American nuclear power have thus far proved impotent to cope with communist political warfare. Cuba is the best proof of this.

If we abandon Southeast Asia, the Philippines may prove impossible to hold against a greatly stepped-up Huk insurgency. Japan, even if it remains non-communist, would probably, by force of circumstances, be compelled to come to terms with Red China, adding the enormous strength of its economy to communist strategic resources.

Okinawa, where our political position is already difficult, would become politically impossible to hold.

If we fail to draw the line in Vietnam, in short, we may find ourselves compelled to draw a defense line as far back as Seattle and Alaska, with Hawaii our solitary outpost in mid-Pacific.

(e) The Eclipse of American Prestige

To all those who agree that we must carefully weigh the consequences of withdrawal before we commit ourselves to withdrawal, I would refer the recent words of the well-known Filipino political commentator, Vincente Villamin. The abandonment of Vietnam, wrote Mr. Villamin, "would be an indelible blemish on America's honor. It would reduce America in the estimation of mankind to a dismal third-rate power, despite her wealth, her culture and her nuclear arsenal. It would make every American ashamed of his government and would make every individual American distrusted everywhere on earth."

This is strong language. But from conversations with many Asians, I know that it is an attitude shared by most of our best friends in Asia.

Vietnam and Munich

The situation in Vietnam today bears many resemblances to the situation just before Munich.

Chamberlain wanted peace. Churchill wanted peace.

Churchill said that if the Free World failed to draw the line against Hitler at an early stage, it would be compelled to draw the line under much more difficult circumstances at a later date.

Chamberlain held that a confrontation with Hitler might result in war, and that the interests of peace demanded some concessions to Hitler. Czechoslovakia, he said, was a faraway land about which we knew very little.

Chamberlain held that a durable agreement could be negotiated with Hitler that would guarantee "peace in our time."

Churchill held that the appeasement of a compulsive aggressor simply whetted his appetite for further expansion and made war more likely.

Chamberlain's policy won out, because nobody wanted war. When he came back from Munich, he was hailed not only by the Tories, but by the Liberals and the Labor Party people, including left-wingers like James Maxton and Fenner Brockway.

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Churchill remained a voice crying in the wilderness.

But who was right -- Churchill or Chamberlain?

Who was the true man of peace?

In Vietnam today, we are again dealing "with a faraway land, about which we know very little."

In Vietnam today, we are again confronted by an incorrigible aggressor, fanatically committed to the destruction of the free world, whose agreements are as worthless as Hitler's. Indeed, even while the Communist propaganda apparatus is pulling out all the stops to pressure us into a diplomatic surrender in Vietnam the Chinese Communists are openly encouraging a new Huk insurgency in the Philippines and have taken the first step in opening a Viet Cong type insurgency in Thailand through the creation of their quisling Thai "Patriotic Front."

In signing the Munich Agreement, it was not Chamberlain's intention to surrender the whole of Czechoslovakia to Hitler. The agreement was limited to the transfer of the German-speaking Sudetenland to German sovereignty. And no one was more indignant than Chamberlain when Hitler, having deprived Czechoslovakia of her mountain defenses, proceeded to take over the entire country.

While there are some proponents of a diplomatic solution who are willing to face up to the fact that negotiations at this juncture mean surrender, there are others who apparently quite honestly believe that we can arrive at a settlement that will both end the war and preserve the freedom of the South Vietnamese people. If such negotiations should ever come to pass, I am certain that the story of Czechoslovakia would be repeated. Having deprived South Vietnam of the political and military capability to resist, the North Vietnamese Communists would not tarry long before they completely communized the country.

And, before very long, those who urge a diplomatic solution for the sake of preventing war, may find themselves compelled to fight the very war that they were seeking to avoid, on a bigger and bloodier scale, and from a much more difficult line of defense.

I take it for granted that no one in this Chamber and no loyal American citizen believes that we should stand by indifferently while Communism takes over the rest of the world.

I take it for granted that every intelligent person realizes that America could not long survive as a free nation in a world that was completely Communist.

I take it for granted that everyone agrees that somewhere, somehow, we must draw the line against further Communist expansion.

The question that separates us, therefore, is not whether such a line should be drawn, but where such a line should be drawn.

I believe that we have been right in drawing the line in Vietnam and that President Johnson is right in trying to hold the line in Vietnam, despite the setbacks we have suffered over the past year. Because, if this line falls, let us have no illusions about the difficulty of drawing a realistic line of defense anywhere in the western Pacific.

Neither Surrender Nor Escalation

We have been told in many statements and articles that the only alternative to withdrawal from Vietnam, with or without negotiations, is a dramatic escalation of the war against the North. And we have been warned that such an escalation might bring in both Red China and the Soviet Union and might bring about the thermo-nuclear holocaust that no one wants.

(more)

These are supposed to be the choices before us.

It is my belief, however, that the tide of war in Vietnam can be reversed and that this war can ultimately be won without an invasion of the North and without a significant intensification of our military effort. It is my belief that there are many measures we can take, primarily in the non-military field, to strengthen our posture and the posture of South Vietnamese forces in the fight against the Viet Cong insurgency.

Before outlining some of the measures which I believe can and must be taken, I wish to deal with a number of widely believed fallacies and misconceptions about the situation in Vietnam, because one cannot intelligently approach the problem of what to do about Vietnam without first establishing the essential facts about the present situation in that country.

The Fallacy that the Vietnamese War is a Civil War

The belief that the Vietnamese war is a civil war is one of the most widespread misconceptions about Vietnam. This is frequently associated with the charge that it is the United States, and not North Vietnam or Red China, which is intervening in South Vietnam.

The war in South Vietnam is not a civil war. It was instigated in the first place by the North Vietnamese Communists, with the material and moral support of both Peiping and Moscow. There is overwhelming proof that Hanoi has provided the leadership for the Viet Cong insurrection, that it has supplied them massively, and that it has served as the real command headquarters for the Viet Cong.

The present insurrection in South Vietnam goes back to the third Communist Party Congress in Hanoi in September of 1960. At this Congress it was decided "to liberate South Vietnam from the ruling yoke of the U. S. imperialists and their henchmen in order to achieve national unity and complete independence...." The Congress also called for the creation of a "broad national front" in South Vietnam directed against the "U. S. - Diem clique." Several months later the formation of the "Front for the Liberation of the South" was announced.

I understand that there is an official report, according to which, the United States Military Assistants Command in Vietnam is in possession of reliable evidence indicating that probably as many as 34,000 Viet Cong infiltrators have entered South Vietnam from the North between January, 1959 and August, 1964.

The report indicates that the majority of hard-core Viet Cong officers and the bulk of specialized personnel such as communications and heavy weapons specialists have been provided through infiltration. Infiltrators, moreover, apparently make up the major part of Viet Cong regulars in the northern half of South Vietnam.

The infiltration from the North supplies the Viet Cong with much of its leadership, specialist personnel, key supplies such as heavy ordnance and communications equipment, and, in some cases, elite troops.

This information is derived from the interrogation of many thousands of Viet Cong captives and defectors and from captured documents.

It is this "hard core" that has come down from the North that has provided the leadership cadres in all major insurgent actions, including the series of sensational attacks on American installations.

Finally, we would do well to consider the fact that the general offensive launched by the communist forces in Vietnam two weeks ago was preceded by an open call by Hanoi radio for assaults throughout the country on Vietnamese and American positions.

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In order to understand the war in Vietnam, we have to get away from traditional concepts in which armies with their own insignias cross clearly marked national demarcation lines after their governments have duly declared war.

Communist guerrilla warfare is waged without any declaration of war.

In the case of Vietnam, it is waged from external sanctuaries which claim immunity to attack because the state which harbors them has not formally declared war.

It blends military cadres who have infiltrated into the country with native dissidents and conscripts, in a manner which conceals the foreign instigation of the insurgency, and which enables the Communists to pretend that it is just a civil war.

It is time that we nail the civil war lie for what it is. It is time that we recognized it as a form of aggression as intolerable as open aggression across marked frontiers.

Why did Ho Chi Minh decide to launch the current war for the "liberation" of South Vietnam? The answer to this question is really very simple.

After the Geneva agreement, it had been the expectation of the Communists that South Vietnam would collapse in administrative and political chaos before many months had passed, and that it would fall into their hands like an over-ripe plum. And, indeed, when Ngo Dinh Diem took office as Premier after the surrender of North Vietnam to the Communists, 99 percent of the Western press viewed the situation in South Vietnam as hopeless and predicted an early takeover by the Communist guerrillas.

Cut off from the mineral and industrial riches of the north; swamped by an influx of 1,000,000 refugees; without an adequate army or administration of its own; with three major sects, each with private armies, openly challenging its authority -- confronted with this combination of burdens and handicaps, it seemed that nothing could save the new-born South Vietnamese government.

But then there took place something that has properly come to be called "the Diem miracle"; this term was used at different times by President Kennedy and Secretary McNamara prior to Diem's overthrow, which most people, I believe, now realize was a tragic mistake.

Diem first of all moved to destroy the power of the infamous Binh Xyuen, a sect of river pirates who, under the French, were given a simultaneous monopoly on the metropolitan police force of Saigon and on the thousands of opium dens and houses of prostitution and gambling that flourished there.

So powerful was the Binh Xyuen and so weak were the Diem forces at the time that even the American Ambassador urged Diem not to attack them.

Diem, however, did attack them and drove them out of Saigon.

Having defeated the military sects and integrated them into the armed forces of the republic, Diem within a few years was able to resettle the 1,000,000 refugees and to create a stable unified state where none had previously existed.

I could not help feeling indignant over an article on Vietnam which appeared some time ago in the Washington Star. The author, Professor Bernard Fall, who wrote the article in ill-concealed admiration of what the Communists had done in their area of Vietnam, mentioned the fact that they had built schools for the people. What he did not mention was that from 1955 to 1963 President Diem has doubled the number of students in elementary schools, while at the secondary school level the increase has been fivefold.

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The remarkable progress in the field of education was no exception. The entire South Vietnamese society scored remarkable advances in every field of economic and social endeavor, so that in 1963 South Vietnam for the first time had a sizable rice surplus for export. There were significant increases in all sectors of industry and agriculture, and a 20 percent rise in per capita income.

Meanwhile, in North Vietnam, things were going from bad to worse. As in every other Communist country the collectivization of the peasants resulted in a dramatic reduction of food output and in chronic food shortages throughout the country. The resentment of the peasants was compounded by the brutal and indiscriminate punishment of hundreds of thousands of peasant farmers who were haled before so-called "people's courts" and charged with being "bourgeois elements" or exploiting landlords. During the course of 1955 peasant revolts broke out in several areas. There was even a revolt in Ho Chi Minh's own village. And there was some evidence that the troops sent to suppress these revolts sometimes sympathized with the peasants. Shortages increased year by year. The people became increasingly apathetic.

The contrast between the growing prosperity of the South and the growing misery in the North confronted the Vietnamese Communists with a challenge they could not tolerate. That is why they decided that they had to put an end to freedom in South Vietnam. And while they have scored some sensational victories in their war of subversion against the South Vietnamese government, I think it important to point out that this war has gravely complicated the already serious internal difficulties of the North, so that in 1963, for example, the per capita output of rice was 20 percent lower than in 1960.

And I also consider it important to understand the significance of the fact that the Viet Cong insurgency was directed not against a government that had failed to improve the lot of its people but against a government which, over a short period of time, had scored some of the most dramatic economic and social advances recorded anywhere in Asia.

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Escalation: Fact and Fallacy

There has been a good deal of talk about the United States escalating the war in South Vietnam. Several of my colleagues who spoke last week warned that if we escalate the war by means of air strikes against North Vietnam, the escalation may get out of hand and wind up as a war with Red China or perhaps even a world war.

But it is not we who have escalated the war; it is the Communists. Peiping and Hanoi have been busy escalating the war in South Vietnam for several years now. They have sent in tens of thousands of soldiers of the North Vietnamese army; they have trained additional tens of thousands of dissident South Vietnamese; they have supplied them with massive quantities of equipment; and they have stepped up the tempo of their attacks against the Vietnamese people.

Now we are told that if we take any action against the territory of North Vietnam, which has mounted and directed the entire attack on South Vietnam, it will entail the risk of world war.

If the Communists are always to be permitted the privilege of escalating their attempts to take over new countries, while we shrink from retaliation for fear of further escalation, we might as well throw in the sponge now and tell the Communists the world is theirs for the taking.

I find it difficult to conceive of Red China sending in her armies in response to air strikes against carefully selected military targets. After all, if they did so, they would be risking retaliation against their highly vulnerable coastal cities, where most of Red China's industry is concentrated. They would be risking setting back their economy 10 or 20 years.

Moreover, both the Chinese Communists and the Hanoi Communists are aware that the massive introduction of Chinese troops would create serious popular resentment because of the traditional Vietnamese suspicion of Chinese imperialism.

That there will be no invasion of the North by Vietnamese and American forces can, I believe, be taken as axiomatic. Nor do I believe that there will be any large-scale involvement of American troops on the Korean model. We will have to continue to provide the Vietnamese with logistical support and air support, as we are now doing. But on the ground, the fighting can most effectively be done by the Vietnamese armed forces, supported, I believe, by military contingents from the other free Asian countries.

The Fallacy that the Asian Peoples Do Not Know the Meaning of Freedom

It has been stated by the Senior Senator from Idaho and by other critics of our foreign policy in Vietnam that it is pointless to talk about fighting for freedom in Asia because the Asian people historically do not know the meaning of freedom. It has even been implied that, because of their ignorance of freedom and their indifference to it, Communism exercises a genuine attraction for the peoples of Asia.

I am sure that most Asians would consider this analysis condescending and offensive, and I myself would be disposed to agree with them. It is an analysis which, in my opinion, is false on almost every score.

We have grown accustomed to equating "freedom" with the full range of freedoms that we in the United States today enjoy. But, in the world in which we live, the word "freedom" has three separate and perhaps equally important connotations.

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First, there is national freedom, or independence from foreign control.

Second, there is freedom of speech and press and the other freedoms inherent in parliamentary democracy.

And third, there is the type of "natural" freedom that is enjoyed by primitive peasants and tribesmen in many backward countries, even under political autocracies.

It is true that most Asian governments are autocratic; and it is probably true that the Vietnamese people do not understand or appreciate freedom in the sense of parliamentary democracy. But they certainly understand the meaning of "freedom" when the word is used to mean independence from foreign rule. They are, in fact, a people with a long and proud history and a strong sense of national identity. Every Vietnamese schoolboy knows that his people fought and triumphed over the hordes of Genghis Khan in defense of their freedom and he also knows that his country was free for five centuries before the French occupation. Finally, he knows and takes pride in the fact that his people drove out the French colonialists despite their army of 400 thousand men.

To the Westernized Saigonese intellectuals, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are certainly very real issues; and even though they may have not mastered the processes, they would unquestionably like to see some kind of parliamentary democracy in their country. It is completely understandable that they should have chafed under the political controls that existed under the Diem government, and that have existed, in one degree or another, under succeeding governments.

But in the countryside, where the great mass of the people reside, the political controls that exist in the city are meaningless. The peasant is free to own his own land, to dispose of his produce, to worship according to his beliefs, to guide the upbringing of his children, and to elect his local village officials. To him, these freedoms that touch on his every-day life are the freedoms that really count, not the abstract and remote freedoms of constitutional and federal government.

And, if on top of granting him these "natural freedoms," the government assists him by building schools and dispensaries and by providing seed and fertilizer, then, from the standpoint of the Southeast Asian peasant, his life is full and he is prepared to fight to defend it against the communists.

It is, in short, completely untrue that the Vietnamese people and the other peoples of Asia do not know the meaning of freedom. And it is equally untrue that communism is acceptable to the Asian peasant because of his indifference to freedom.

Communism has never been freely accepted by any people, anywhere, no matter how primitive.

It has never been accepted for the simple reason that even primitive peoples do not enjoy being pushed around and brutalized and terrorized, and told what to do and what not to do, and having their every activity ordered and supervised by political commissars.

This is why communism must govern by means of ruthless dictatorship wherever it takes power.

This is why the primitive mountain peoples of both Laos and Vietnam have, in an overwhelming majority, sided against the communists.

This is why there are almost 3 million refugees from communist rule in Asia today--people who have seen the reality of the so-called "People's Democracy," and who have given up everything they possessed and frequently risked their lives to escape from it.

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There is one final comment I would like to make while dealing with this subject. Too often I have heard it said that the Vietnamese people are not fighting because there is nothing to choose between communism and the kind of government they now have.

To equate an authoritarian regime like that in South Vietnam, or Taiwan, or Thailand with the totalitarian rule of communism is tantamount to losing all sense of proportion. Not only have these regimes never been guilty of the massive bloodletting and total direction of personal life which has characterized communist rule in every country, but, carefully examined, it will turn out that these regimes are a mixture of natural democracy at the bottom with political controls of varying rigidity at the top.

Even at their worst, the political autocracies that exist in certain free Asian countries are a thousand times better than communism from the standpoint of how they treat their own people. And at their best, some of these autocracies have combined control of the press and political parties with remarkably progressive social programs.

But perhaps more important from our standpoint is that these "free autocracies," for lack of a better term, do not threaten the peace of their neighbors or of the world or threaten our own security, whereas world communism has now become a threat of terrifying dimensions.

The Fallacy that the Vietnamese People Have No Will to Resist Communism

We have been told that the Vietnamese people are indifferent to communism; that they resist it only half-heartedly. Some commentators have even sought to create the impression that America is in a position of coercing the South Vietnamese to fight against communism.

This estimate of the attitude of the South Vietnamese people is totally false.

True, South Vietnam is suffering from political instability.

True, the war against the Viet Cong is going badly.

But these things by themselves do not constitute proof that the Vietnamese people are indifferent to communism or that they do not have the will to resist.

The people of South Vietnam are, in fact, one of the most anti-communist peoples in the world. Among them are more than one million refugees who sacrificed everything they possessed to flee from North Vietnam to South Vietnam after the country was divided by the Geneva agreement of 1954; and it is estimated that there are another 300 thousand internal refugees who have fled from communist-controlled areas in the South. Among the present population of 14 million, in addition, there are several million peasants and workers and students who have at one time or another borne arms against the Communists, some of them in the Vietnamese army, the majority in village self-defense units.

The overwhelming majority of the people of South Vietnam know what communism means because they have experienced it on their own backs. There are indeed very few South Vietnamese who do not have friends or relatives who have been the victims of communist brutality and terror.

Let me tell you the story of one such act of communist terror, because statistics by themselves tend to be meaningless.

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In the village of Phu Hoa, there was a teenage girl by the name of Giau, the pride of her parents and a born leader of others. As a member of the Republican Youth Organization, she organized the village youth and gave talks. On the evening of January 15, 1962, she was abducted from her village by Viet Cong soldiers. The next morning her mutilated and decapitated body -- I have a photograph of it -- was discovered in the roadway outside the village with a note on her breast captioned "Death Sentence for Giau," and signed by the "People's Front of Liberation."

For a long period of time, assassinations such as this were going on at the rate of some 500 a month, or 6,000 a year. The victims were most frequently active supporters of government, local administrators, village heads, and schoolteachers. The families of village militiamen were another favorite target. The Viet Cong would entice the militia away from the village -- and when they returned they would find their wives and children massacred.

While the facts of these mass assassinations are not generally known in our country, they are known in Vietnam. And this is one of the reasons why the Vietnamese people hate the communists, and why they continue to resist them despite the chronic political instability in Saigon and despite the seeming hopelessness of their situation.

For some strange reason, the torture of one Viet Cong prisoner aroused far more indignation in our country than the assassination of scores of thousands of innocent civilians by the Viet Cong communists, including the bombing of a school bus in which a score of children died.

But, if the Vietnamese people are anti-communist, I have been asked, why has the Vietnamese army put up so poor a show?

The Vietnamese army has been handicapped by political instability by the frequent shifts of officers, by poor staff work, by its inadequate use of scouts and security patrols, and by the many disadvantages under which counter-guerrilla forces must always operate. But, it is simply not true that the Vietnamese army has shown no willingness to fight. They have fought bravely in thousands of engagements. They have taken heavy casualties and inflicted much heavier casualties on the enemy.

The belief that the Vietnamese people do not have the will to resist the communists and that the Vietnamese forces have fought poorly against them, is in large measure due to the unfortunate emphasis which the press always places on disasters and defects. It probably also springs in part from the traditional attitude of the American newspaperman that it is his duty to mercilessly expose every weakness in his city government, in his state government, in his national government.

But whatever the reasons may be, the emphasis in the press has been so misleading that even knowledgeable members of the Administration have been confused by it. For example, a member of the Administration who recently visited Vietnam informed me that he was amazed to learn that in eight engagements of battalion size and larger which took place during the month of January, the Vietnamese army got the better of the engagement in every single case.

I have here the comparative figures for Vietnamese and Viet Cong casualties for the three-year period 1962 to 1964, which I have received from an official source. I wish to read them, Mr. President, because they throw an altogether new light on the situation in Vietnam.

In 1962 the Vietnamese army lost 4,400 killed in action against 21,000 Viet Cong killed, and 1,300 prisoners against 5,500 captives taken from the Viet Cong.

In 1963 the figures were 5,700 Vietnamese soldiers killed in action against 21,000 Viet Cong, and 3,300 missing or captured against 4,000 Viet Cong captured.

And even last year, when the fortunes of war turned against the Vietnamese government, the Vietnamese army killed 17,000 Viet Cong against a loss of 7,000 men and took 4,200 communists captives against 5,800 captives lost to them.

(more)

To those who say that the Vietnamese army has not shown the will to resist, I point out that, over the 3-year period for which I have presented figures, this army suffered a total death toll of 17,000 men, which is almost as high as the total American toll in South Korea. The enemy's casualties have been much heavier. But the Communists have continued to attack regardless of losses. And because it has not been possible to reconstitute a stable government since the overthrow of Diem, and, because no one knows where guerrillas may strike next, and because unlimited terror is a dreadfully effective instrument, the Viet Cong, over the past 15 months, have been able to make most of the Vietnamese countryside insecure.

The fact that the Viet Cong seem to be winning and that they have been so effective in resisting government counterattacks, has led some people to believe that the Viet Cong soldier is convinced of the justice of his cause and that this is why he fights more grimly.

The Communists are masters of the art of imposing iron discipline by means of unlimited terror.

You will recall that during the Korean war we all marvelled at the discipline of the Chinese Communist soldiers who kept on marching without breaking step while they were being bombed and strafed by American planes, or who attacked our positions, wave upon wave, apparently oblivious to casualties.

You will also recall the terrible riots in the Koje prisoner of war camp, when the prisoners seemed so grimly united against us that for weeks on end American soldiers could not venture into the POW compound. Again, the common assumption was that the prisoners were all fanatical communists.

But then the end of the war came -- and it turned out that 20,000 out of 25,000 of the Communist prisoners in our hands asked for refugee status rather than returning to their homelands. And, of the 5,000 who returned home, there is reason to believe that the majority did so with heavy hearts, because of strong family ties and not because of any love for communism.

I remind my colleagues, because these things tend to be forgotten, of the evidence which emerged that the Koje prisoners of war had been terrorized by a tiny minority of Communist militants who ran the camp with an iron hand, torturing political opponents, staging kangaroo courts, and executing and burying those who were sentenced.

I also remind them of the scenes that took place when the prisoners were brought before the Communist interrogators under the procedures set up by the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission. The prisoners had to be dragged before the interrogators forcibly, their arms pinned behind their backs by Indian soldiers. And, when the Communist interrogators spoke to them, urging that they return to their homeland, the prisoners spat out their hatred with a vehemence that western observers found frightening. So embarrassing were the interrogations for the Communists that after a number of sessions they decided to call off the whole show.

In the light of this conclusion, how much significance can one attach to the seemingly fanatical courage displayed by the Chinese and North Korean soldiers in attacking our positions, or to the grim unity of the Koje prisoners of war in resisting their American captors?

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Before we marvel at the apparently high morale of the Viet Cong forces in South Vietnam, I suggest that we recall the experience of the Korean war, because the evidence is overwhelming that the Viet Cong communists are using terror on the same scale and in the same manner that it was employed on the Korean battlefield and in the prisoner of war camps.

That the morale of the Viet Cong forces is not ten feet tall is demonstrated by the substantial number of Viet Cong prisoners taken over the past three years. It is demonstrated even more dramatically by the fact that from February, 1963, through the end of 1964, there were approximately 17,000 Viet Cong defections. And the number of defections would be far larger, I am certain, if a stable government could establish itself in Saigon.

It is interesting to note that, while most of the defectors have been young peasants who were conscripted by the Viet Cong, their ranks also include North Vietnamese officers who were told that they were going South to fight the Americans and who broke when they discovered that they were fighting their own people.

Impatient constituents have sometimes asked me why the communists have been able to plan elaborate attacks on our airfields and other installations without advance intelligence reaching us from members of the local population who must have observed the communists.

The instrument of terror is also applicable to the control of civilian population. Whenever the communists take over a village or a town, they systematically massacre all known anti-communist leaders, and those who are suspected of informing, and they frequently mutilate their bodies as an example to the people. If we could give the Vietnamese villagers a feeling of greater security, I am sure that more intelligence would be forthcoming. As matters now stand, the average Vietnamese peasant fears that the communists are going to win the war, and he knows the terrible punishment that awaits those who inform on the communists. This is why our intelligence has admittedly been inadequate. But this is a situation that could change dramatically if we succeeded in convincing the Vietnamese people of our determination to help them retain their freedom, and if we succeeded in inflicting a number of significant defeats on the enemy.

The Buddhist Fallacy

The myth of Buddhist persecution and the parallel myth that the Buddhists are opposed to the Government, have, because of the so-called militant Buddhist movement, become important political factors in Vietnam. It is, therefore, important that we should seek to understand the nature of this movement, the motivation of its leaders, and the real degree of influence it exerts over the Vietnamese people.

The campaign which resulted in the overthrow of President Diem was marked by the charge that he had subjected the Buddhist religion to inhuman persecution; and, in protest against this alleged persecution, a number of Buddhist monks went through the horrifying ritual of self-immolation.

Week after week, month after month, the American people and the people of the world were inundated with stories supporting the charge that Diem was persecuting the Buddhist religion. There were a number of experienced correspondents of national reputation who challenged the authenticity of these stories. But their voices were drowned by the torrent of charges and allegations that appeared in some of our major newspapers, and that were lent further credence because of their repetition by our official information agencies.

At the invitation of President Diem, the U. N. General Assembly decided to send a fact finding mission to South Vietnam to look into the situation. While the mission was still in the country, President Diem and his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, were overthrown and assassinated.

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The mission decided that the overthrow of Diem made it unnecessary to come up with a formal finding. But the summary of the testimony which it had taken in Vietnam pointed strongly to the conclusion that the persecution of the Buddhists was either non-existent or vastly exaggerated and that the agitation was essentially political. This, in essence, was what I was told in a personal conversation with Ambassador Fernando Volio Jiminez, of Costa Rica, who had introduced the motion calling for the setting up of the U.N. Mission and who served as a member of it.

Ambassador Pinto of Dahomey, another member of the U.N. Mission, expressed himself in similar terms in public.

The entire tragic story suggests that the free world was made the victim of a gigantic propaganda hoax, as a result of which the legitimate government of President Diem was destroyed and a chaotic situation created which has inevitably played into the hands of the communists.

If my colleagues have not yet had the time to read the report of the U.N. Fact Finding Mission to Vietnam, I would urge them to do so because it throws an essential light on the current activities of the militant Buddhists. I am arranging to have copies mailed to every Senator.

The first fact which needs to be established in evaluating the militant Buddhist movement is that the Buddhists do not constitute 80 or 85 per cent, as was widely reported at the time of the Buddhist crisis. According to Dr. Mai Tho Truyen, one of the greatest authorities on Vietnam Buddhism, the Vietnamese Buddhists number approximately 4 million people, or about 30 per cent of the population.

The second point that must be made is that the militant Buddhists constitute only a small fraction of the total Buddhist population. The millions of the Buddhist peasants, in their great majority, do not approve of the militant political actions and the government-toppling intrigues of the militants in Saigon. Their activities, indeed run completely counter to the Pacific traditions of the Buddhist religion.

It is questionable whether the Buddhist militants have been able to mobilize as many as 50,000 active supporters in all the demonstrations they have staged in Saigon and Hue and other cities. But because political power resides in the cities, the several tens of thousands of Buddhist militants, by their clamor and their persistent demonstrations and their clever propaganda, have succeeded in creating the impression that they speak for the people of the cities and for the majority of the people of Vietnam.

What do the Buddhist militants want? Before the overthrow of President Diem, Thich Tri Quang told Marguerite Higgins frankly: "We cannot get an arrangement with the North until we get rid of Diem and Nhu."

The evidence is clear that Thich Tri Quang and some of his other militants are still bent on an agreement with the North. Indeed, only last Friday, Quang called for U.S. negotiations with Ho Chi Minh.

If there is reason to believe that Thich Tri Quang is a neutralist there is even more reason for fearing that some of the other members of the Buddhist opposition movement are openly pro-communist or that they have become tools of the rather substantial communist infiltration which is known to exist in the Buddhist clergy in the various countries of Asia.

That such an infiltration should exist is not surprising because there are no barriers to it.

A man who wants to become a Buddhist monk does not have to prepare himself for his ministry by engaging in studies, nor does he have to be ordained, nor does he take any vow.

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He simply shaves his head and dons the saffron robe and enters a monastery -- and overnight he becomes one of the religious elite.

When he wishes to leave the monastery, he sheds his robe and leaves it; if he wishes to re-enter, he dons his robe again and re-enters.

I do not criticize this procedure on religious grounds.

Buddhism is one of the great religions of mankind and much can be said for an arrangement that enables every man of religious disposition to spend at least a portion of his life under the voluntary monastic discipline characteristic of Buddhism.

But, regrettably, it is a procedure that leaves the door wide open to communist infiltration.

The militant Buddhists have used the influence and prestige which accrued to them from the overthrow of Diem for the prime purpose of making stable government impossible: in this sense, whatever the intent of their leaders, they have been serving the desires of the communist Viet Cong.

They have organized demonstrations, provoked riots, inflamed passions with highly publicized fasts and self-immolations, and subjected the government to a ceaseless propaganda barrage. They overthrew the Khanh government. Then they overthrew the Huong government which succeeded it. And they seem to be intent on making things impossible for any government that may come to power.

It is, of course, difficult to deal with a political conspiracy that camouflages itself in religious robes. In any case, this is a matter for the Vietnamese government and not for our own government. But it would make matters immeasurably easier for the Vietnamese authorities if the true facts about Buddhism in Vietnam were given to the American people and if they could be helped to understand how little the Buddhist militants really represent, how nefarious their political activities have really been, and how much they have done to undermine the fight against communists.

No stable government can be created in Vietnam without the participation and support of responsible Buddhist leadership. But this responsible leadership cannot be found among the handful of monks of questionable antecedents who have been misdirecting the militant Buddhist movement in the cities of Vietnam.

It is time to speak bluntly on this issue.

The Fallacy of the French Analogy

Over and over again in recent months I have heard it said that our position in Vietnam is impossible because the French, who knew Vietnam so much better than we do, were compelled to admit defeat after eight years of war against the Viet Minh. A recent half-page advertisement in The New York Times asked: "How can we win in Vietnam with less than 30,000 advisers, when the French could not win with an army of nearly half a million...?"

Our own position is entirely different from the French position in Indochina. The French were a colonial power, exploiting and imposing their will on the Indochinese people and stubbornly denying them their freedom. The French military effort in Indochina was doomed because it had against it not only the communists but the overwhelming majority of the Indochinese people. It was a war fought by Frenchmen against Indochinese.

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The United States, however, does not seek to impose its control on Vietnam or exploit Vietnam. We are not a colonial power. We seek only to help the people of South Vietnam defend their freedom against an insurgency that is inspired and directed and aided by the North Vietnamese Communists. This is understood by the Vietnamese people. And that is why hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who fought with Ho Chi Minh against the French are today fighting for the Saigon government against the Viet Cong.

That is why the war against the Viet Cong can be won, while the war of French colonialism against the ~~Indochinese~~ independence movement was doomed from the outset.

What Can Be Done

I believe the war in Vietnam can be won without a significant increase in our military effort. There are many things that can be done to improve the performance of our side, and most of them lie essentially in the non-military field.

Let me set forth some of these things that I believe can be done.

(a) The Need for Improved Liaison

One of the most obvious and most serious weaknesses of the American position in Vietnam is the lack of adequate liaison with the leaders of the various sectors of the Vietnamese community.

Because of this lack of communication, we have frequently been caught unawares by developments; we have remained without serious ability to influence them; and we have not been able to effectively assist the Vietnamese in communicating with each other and in stabilizing the political situation in Saigon.

No one person is to blame for this. It is, rather, the system which rotates officers and AID officials and other Americans in Vietnam on an annual or two-year basis.

As one American officer pointed out in a recent interview, "It takes about eight months before you can really get to know the country and the people. And, just about the time you're beginning to understand something, you're rotated home and that's the end of your utility."

I believe that something can be done to improve this situation.

I have met a number of Americans, former soldiers and former AID officials who have spent five years or more in Vietnam, have built up personal friendships with leaders of every sector of the Vietnamese community, enjoy the confidence of the Vietnamese because of their understanding and dedication, and who would jump at the opportunity to return to Vietnam for the purpose of helping it in this critical hour. I am told that there may be as many as 10 or 12 such people in this country.

I have proposed in a letter to the President that these Americans be constituted into a liaison group and that they be dispatched to Saigon immediately for the purpose of helping the Embassy to establish the broadest and most effective possible liaison with the army leaders, with the Buddhists, with the intellectual community, and with the Vietnamese political leaders.

I know that there is always a tendency on the part of World War II officers to resent World War I officers, and on the part of those who are involved in a situation today to resist the assistance of those who preceded them. There is also sometimes a tendency for those who were there yesterday to believe that they understand things better than those who are there today.

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But this is a situation where, I am confident, every American, no matter what his rank, will seek to rise above his personal prejudices. It is a situation that demands the utilization of every ounce of experience and dedication available to us.

It is my earnest personal conviction that the dispatch of such a liaison group to Saigon would result in an early improvement in our abilities to communicate with the Vietnamese and in our ability to assist them in achieving the political stability which is essential to the successful prosecution of the war.

(b) The Need for a Stepped-Up Political Warfare Effort

From many conversations with Vietnamese and with Americans who have served in various capacities in Vietnam, I am convinced that another one of our major weaknesses lies in the field of political warfare.

We have, by and large, been trying to meet the Communist insurgency by traditional military methods or by traditional methods slightly tailored to meet the special requirements of guerrilla warfare. In the field of political warfare, where the Communists have scored their most spectacular triumphs, our own effort has been limited, and halting, and amateurish, and, in fact, sadly ineffective.

The prime goal of political warfare, as it must be waged by free men, is to win men's minds. The prime goal of political warfare, as it is waged by the Communists, is to erode and paralyze the will to resist by means of total terror.

An effective political warfare program requires three major ingredients: (1) A handful of basic slogans which capsule popular desires and which are capable of striking responsive chords in the hearts of the people; (2) a propaganda apparatus capable of conveying this program both to those on the government side and those on the side of the insurgents; (3) specially trained cadres to direct the effort.

But the slogans we have are inadequate. Our propaganda program is dismally weak compared with that of the Communists. And according to my information, we still have not assisted the Vietnamese to set up an intensive training program in Communist cold war methods and how to counter them.

An article in "The New York Times" on August 3, 1964, pointed out that in every area "the basic cutting tool of the Viet Cong is a squad of about ten armed men and women whose primary function is propaganda." The article also said that "Most of the experts in psychological warfare and propaganda here believe the Viet Cong's agit-prop teams have done the Saigon Government more damage than even the tough Viet Cong regular battalions." Finally, the article made the point that according to estimates there were 320 Viet Cong "agit-prop" teams working in the country, against 20 "information teams" for the government side. This gave the Viet Cong an edge of 16 to 1 in the field of propaganda personnel. And the edge was probably even greater in terms of finesse and effectiveness.

Even if we help the South Vietnamese government intensify its propaganda effort, there would still remain the problem of basic goals and slogans.

I have pointed out that the Vietnamese people have a proud history and a strong sense of national unity. All Vietnamese, whether they live in the North or South, would like to see a unified and peaceful Viet Nam. But as matters now stand, only the Communists are able to hold forth the prospect of the re-unification of Viet Nam. To date we have not given the South Vietnamese government the green light to set up a "Committee for the Liberation of North Viet Nam," as counterpart to the "Liberation Front" which the Communists have set up in the South. This places the South Vietnamese side at a grave disadvantage.

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There are any number of patriotic North Vietnamese refugees who have been itching for the opportunity to set up a Liberation Committee for the North. The establishment of such a committee could, in my opinion, have an immediate and profound impact on the conduct of the war.

(c) Carrying the Guerrilla War to the North:

First of all, I think there is a growing acceptance of the need for punishing the North with hit-and-run raids. It would be much more effective if these raids could be carried out in the name of a North Vietnamese Liberation Front than in the name of the South Vietnamese government.

Second, I have reason for believing that increasing consideration is being given to the need for countering the Viet Cong insurgency in the South with a guerrilla warfare effort in the North.

In May of 1961, when I returned from Laos and Vietnam, I made a statement, which I should like to repeat today.

"The best way for us to stop Communist guerrilla action in Laos and in South Vietnam is to send guerrilla forces into North Vietnam, to equip and supply those patriots already in the field; to make every Communist official fear the just retribution of an outraged humanity; to make every Communist arsenal, government building, communications center and transportation facility a target for sabotage; to provide a rallying point for the great masses of oppressed people who hate communism because they have known it. Only when we give the Communists more trouble than they can handle at home, will they cease their aggression against the outposts of freedom."

I believe that every word I said in 1961 is doubly valid today. It is not too late to embark upon such a program. And if we do give the South Vietnamese government the green light to embark upon it on an effective, hard-hitting scale, again I think it would add significantly to the psychological impact of the entire program if all guerrilla activities were carried out in the name of the "Committee for the Liberation of the North."

(d) A Few Military Suggestions:

I do not pretend to be a military expert. But I have discussed the situation in Vietnam with a number of military men of considerable experience in the area, and I have been encouraged to believe that the several suggestions which I have to make in this field are realistic.

I submit them for the consideration of my colleagues, because I think they make sense.

My first proposition is that we cannot regard the war in Vietnam in isolation from the rest of Southeast Asia.

The Communist Party over which Ho Chi Minh presided for many years was the "Communist Party of Indochina". Indeed, to this day, there is no such thing as a Communist Party of Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh's thinking and strategy are directed towards the re-unification of all the former territories of French Indochina under his personal sway. This makes it imperative for us to develop a coordinated strategy for the entire area if we are to cope effectively with the Communist strategy.

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Proposition number two is that there are certain dramatic military actions open to us that do not involve the territory of North Viet Nam.

The hub of The Ho Chi Minh Trail is the town of Tchepone, inside the Laotian frontier, just south of the 17th Parallel, the dividing line between North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam. Through Tchepone pour most of the reinforcements and equipment from North Viet Nam. From Tchepone the men and equipment are infiltrated into South Viet Nam along hundreds of different jungle trails.

I recall that when I met with President Diem in April of 1961, he urged that the Americans assist him and the Laotian government in pre-emptive action to secure three key centers in the Laotian Panhandle -- Tchepone, Saravane and Attapeu -- in order to prevent the large-scale infiltration which is today taking place. I still have a copy of the marked map which he gave me in outlining his project. Had Diem's advice been followed there would have been no Ho Chi Minh Trail. But this was at the time of the Laotian armistice and we were not disposed to take any actions which might provoke the Laotian Communists. So nothing was done.

The seizure of Tchepone by Laotian and Vietnamese forces, with American air support would, I have been assured, be a feasible military operation and one that could be carried out with the means available to us on the spot. It would do more to put a crimp in the Ho Chi Minh Trail than any amount of bombing we could attempt. And it would have as dramatic an impact on the situation in Laos as on the situation in Viet Nam.

Finally, there is the matter of collective action by the SEATO Nations.

As late as April of 1961, the SEATO nations in the immediate area the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan all favored common action against the Communist menace in Laos. But the British and French were opposed to such action, and we ourselves sat on the fence; and the result was that nothing was done.

The Charter of SEATO will have to be modified so that one nation cannot veto collective action by all the other nations. Britain, I am inclined to believe, would now be disposed to support collective action by SEATO because of the situation in Malaysia. But, perhaps France should be invited to leave SEATO, on the grounds that she has no vital interests in the area, and her entire attitude towards Red China is one of appeasement. In view of the fact that something has to be done immediately, however, the sensible course is to encourage collective action by the free nations in the area, outside the framework of SEATO, until SEATO can be reorganized in a manner that makes it effective.

In this connection, I am most encouraged by the news that South Korea has decided to send a contingent of several thousand military engineers to South Vietnam, and the Philippines have decided to do likewise. It is infinitely better from every standpoint to have Asian troops supporting the Vietnamese forces against the Viet Cong on the ground, than it is to have American troops actively involved.

(e) The Need For Underscoring Our Long-Term Commitment.

The retaliatory strikes ordered by President Johnson against the North have had the effect of reiterating our commitment in a manner that the Communists understand; and this, in the long-run, is probably more important than the damage wrought by these strikes.

But if the Communists are to be discouraged from continuing this costly war, we must seek every possible means of underscoring our determination to stand by the people of South Vietnam, to pay whatever cost may be necessary and to take whatever risk may be necessary to prevent the Communists from subjugation the Vietnamese people and other people in the area.

It is important to reiterate our resolve at every opportunity. And it is even more important to translate this resolve into hard political and military actions.

The American Friends of Vietnam have suggested another dramatic measure. They have suggested a commitment to a massive Southeast Asian development program based on the harnessing of the Mekong River -- a kind of Tennessee Valley Authority for Southeast Asia. Such a plan, they point out, would offer incredible promise to Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand as well as to South Vietnam, and it would offer equal promise to the people of North Vietnam, which only the continued belligerence and non-cooperation of their government could frustrate.

This, to me, sounds eminently sensible.

For A Commitment to Victory

If we decide to withdraw from Vietnam we can certainly find plenty of excuses to ease our path. We can blame it on the geography; or on the topography; or on local apathy; or on political instability; or on religious strife; or even on anti-Americanism. But that will fool no one but ourselves. These conditions make our success there difficult, but only our own timidity and vacillation can make it impossible.

It has become obvious that we cannot go on fighting this undeclared war under the rules laid down by our enemies. We have reached the point where we shall have to make a great decision, a decision as to whether we are to take the hard steps necessary to turn the tide in Vietnam or whether we are to refrain from doing so and thus lose inevitably by default.

The ultimate outcome of the cold war depends upon an affirmative decision to do whatever is necessary to achieve victory in South Vietnam. The events of recent weeks demonstrate again that the Administration is not lacking in resolve and that it is rapidly approaching such a decision.

Whether that means a larger commitment of forces, or continued retaliatory strikes against the North, or carrying guerrilla warfare to the enemy homeland, or completely sealing off South Vietnam from Communist aid -- I say to the Administration, "Give us the plan that will do the job, and we will support you".

Whether our victory be near or far, can we, dare we, turn away or begin to turn away from the task before us, however frustrating or burdensome it may be?

Here surely is a time for us to heed Santayana's maxim "Those who will not learn from the past are destined to repeat it."

And so I speak today not merely to urge that we stand fast in Vietnam, but also to urge that we meet head-on the new isolationism in its incipient stages, before the long months and years of discontent, frustration and weariness that lie ahead have swelled the chorus urging disengagement and withdrawal to a deafening roar.

Let us expound a foreign policy nurtured in our constantly growing strength, not one fed by fear and disillusionment; a policy which each year is prepared to expend more, not less, in the cause of preserving our country and the decencies of man.

Let us insist upon a defense budget based upon the dangers we face abroad, not upon the benefits we seek at home.

Let us embrace a doctrine that refuses to yield to force, ever; that honors its commitments because we know that our good faith is the cement binding the free world together; a doctrine that recognizes in its foreign aid program not only that the rich are morally obligated to help the poor, but also that prosperity cannot permanently endure surrounded by poverty, and justice cannot conquer until its conquest is universal.

Let us, above all, encourage and inspire a national spirit worthy of our history, worthy of our burgeoning, bursting strength, in our arms, in our agriculture, in industry, in science, in finance, a spirit of confidence, of optimism, of willingness to accept new risks and exploit new opportunities.

And let us remember that Providence has showered upon our people greater blessings than on any other, and that, great though our works have been, much greater is expected of us.

In recent days, the free world has paid tribute to its greatest champion of our age, Winston Churchill.

It is a curious thing that though Churchill is acknowledged on all sides as the pre-eminent figure of our time and as the highest embodiment of western statesmanship, he was, throughout his life, and remains today, a prophet unheeded, a statesman whom men venerate but will not emulate.

It may well be that Winston Churchill's greatest legacy will prove to be, not the legacy of his immortal deeds, but that of his example and his precepts; and that free men of the future will pay him the homage denied by his contemporaries, the tribute of imitation and acceptance of his message.

As we ponder the passing of this heroic figure and reflect upon his career and try to draw from it lessons which we might apply to the aggressive onslaught that we face today in a hundred ways on a hundred fronts, we might take to heart this advice which he gave in the dark days of 1941 to the boys of Harrow, his old school.

"Never give in. Never, never, never, never! Never yield to force and the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy. Never yield in any way, great or small, large or petty, except to convictions of honor and good sense."

Let us resolve to nail this message to the mast-head of our Ship of State in this year of decision.

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