Q Mr. Secretary, what is the motive of the Soviet Government to reject the reconvening of the Geneva Conference? Did you explore this with Mr. Gromyko in New York?

A I find it difficult to get into motives. I would suppose that Hanoi categorically refuses a Geneva Conference, and therefore the Soviet Union is unwilling to step out in front and join with the British Co-Chairman to convene a conference to which Hanoi and Peking both strenuously object. We ourselves will be very glad to have such a conference convened, about Vietnam, about Laos, about Cambodia, or about any subject related to Southeast Asia.

NAME: Dean Rusk, Secretary of State
OCCASION: Interview: Videotaped at USIA Television Studios
DATE: October 16, 1967

We have stopped the bombing for various periods of at least five occasions without any response from Hanoi. We have proposed to Hanoi that we demilitarize the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam and let the International Control Commission put observers in there and guarantee its demilitarization. (continued)
Dean Rusk (continued)

We've agreed with Prince Sinahouk's request that there be a consultation among the Geneva Agreement powers to reinforce the neutrality of Cambodia and to assist him in keeping out of this conflict. We have said to Hanoi, "If you will put on the table the schedule of the withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces we will put on the table a schedule of withdrawal of United States forces."

We have taken other steps from time to time, such as suspending the bombing in certain areas for certain periods of time to see whether or not there could be any response.

The problem here is that we can't find any formula or any action on the ground that seems to elicit any response from Hanoi. And that seems to be still our problem.

NAME: Lyndon B. Johnson, President
OCCASION: Remarks to Delegates to the Federation's 15th Triennial Congress
DATE: October 23, 1967

In every way we can, we search for peace in Vietnam. But we appear to be searching alone. Those who began the war are not willing to sit down and with us explore the ways to end it. They cling stubbornly to the belief that their aggression will be rewarded—by our frustration, by our impatience, or by our unwillingness to stay the course.

It will not be so.

Peace and stability will come to Asia only when the aggressors know that they cannot take another people's land by force.

Our Asian allies fighting beside us believe this. And so do the leaders and the peoples of those free nations that are standing there in the path of conquest.
It is not enough to say: "We ought to seek peace."

We have, without ceasing, over many months, sought discussions leading to peace. We have "stopped the bombing" on five occasions, with no response other than a stepping-up of North Vietnamese infiltration and supply. We have sought the help of the United Nations and of third parties around the world in getting to the conference table.

The President has written directly to Ho Chi Minh.

Yet we are still to have our first positive response. The answer from Hanoi to the President, to the United Nations, to the Pope, to one and all has been No!

But Despite North Vietnam's out-of-hand rejections of discussions, negotiations, cease-fire or other peace proposals--we shall continue to seek peace.

We stand ready now, without any preconditions, to meet and discuss the possibility of negotiations.

We have been and are ready to accept an immediate cease fire by all combatants.

We are ready to attend a reconvening of the Geneva Conference--to cease all aerial and naval bombardment of the North when this will lead promptly to productive discussions.

The Road Block to peace is not in Washington. It is in Hanoi.

Peace-wishing is a good deal easier than peace-making. And Peace-making is most difficult when you adversary still believes that time is on his side, as all the official statements of the North Vietnamese Government indicates he does.
Since 1945, the United States has met one crisis after another with a combination of firmness and restraint. That is what we are doing in Viet-Nam. And we can all be proud that our men there, without the background of a nation seized with war hysteria here at home, are doing their job with a skill and gallantry unsurpassed in the history of the armed forces of the United States.

At the same time, we stand ready to talk and negotiate peace. We will negotiate without conditions. We will negotiate about conditions. If anyone here or abroad who is interested in peace in Viet-Nam can produce anywhere in the world a representative of North Viet-Nam who is prepared to talk about peace, I will be there.
Q. Mr. President, in that same vein, do you think that you, personally, can help to alleviate some of the uncertainty in the country over Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT. I am doing my best to do that every day. I tried my best in San Antonio when I said to the American people on the televised networks—some live and some a little later that night delayed—and through all of the press, that we would go the last mile.

We were willing to, at that moment, stop our bombing and enter into prompt and productive discussions, assuming they would not take advantage of it. They have not given us any affirmative response to this point.

We will continue willing to negotiate now, to stop the bombing now, if they will talk promptly, productively, and not take advantage of us.

But the problem is not here with your country or with your Government or with your soldiers. The problem is with the Communist enemy who insists on continuing the course that places us in Vietnam and that will keep us there until they decide might does not make right, and they cannot gobble up weaker people because they are stronger.

We are going to stand for limited objectives. We are going to try to keep from widening the war. We are going to try to deter aggression and to permit self-determination in South Vietnam.

And when that is done, we are going to be content. We do not want bases, domination, colonization. We do not practice colonialism.

We seek to do nothing except keep our commitments—try to help innocent people who want the right to live according to their own self-determination.
NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: Remarks from the Flight Deck of the U.S.S. Enterprise
DATE: November 11, 1967

Our statesmen will press the search for peace to the corners of our earth.

That meeting ground could even be the sea. Standing here, specks between the vastness of ocean and heaven, men might realize the ultimate smallness of their quarrels. They just might come to see the waste of war amidst this wealth of God and nature. Somehow they might realize the infinity of promise that stretches outward like the sea, could men only settle their differences and could they be free to explore it together.

It may only be a dream. But it could so easily be salvation. The United States follows the dream of peace, so we include even the seas in our search. For us, the wardroom could easily be a conference room. A neutral ship on a neutral sea would be as good a meeting place as any.

So long as two would come to the meeting. So long as both met halfway. So long as one did not insist that the other walk on water and work a miracle alone.

NAME: Ellsworth Bunker, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam
OCCASION: Address before the Overseas Press Club, New York
DATE: November 17, 1967

As you know Hanoi continues to refuse to come to the negotiating table even though they could do so without any prior commitment whatsoever. They have also refused to engage in any kind of dialogue about the possibility of peace talks. But the door remains open and we hope that at one point or another they will see fit to walk through it.

I would be less than candid were I to imply that once negotiations were underway the going would be easy. The going would no doubt be tough -- long and arduous. But our central objective is peace and we, the South Vietnamese, and our allies are surely prepared. We would much prefer the most difficult of negotiations to the least difficult of battles.
Those who would "negotiate now" should know that if a representative of Hanoi would make himself available anywhere to discuss peace I would be there. We will negotiate today without condition or about conditions. Those who deplore the violence, as do I, should know that all the violence could end within hours with minimum cooperation from the authorities in Hanoi. Those who are concerned about escalation should know that we have tried over and over again, through diplomacy and by practical actions on the ground, to start the process of deescalation -- only to face a categorical rejection from the other side. Those who would brush aside a security treaty as a scrap of paper should reflect soberly on the dangers which would arise if it should be discovered that our security treaties do not mean what they say.

Some of our friends abroad have advised us that our determined effort to find a peaceful solution in Southeast Asia may mislead Hanoi into thinking that we are prepared to abandon our commitments. This is a risk which we must accept. Our purpose is peace--and we must make this evident to all, including Hanoi.

But that does not mean a temporary peace today on a basis which would guarantee a larger war tomorrow. Hanoi must understand that we are ready for peace, but are determined to do whatever is necessary.
to deny their appetite for absorbing their neighbors. This is always a problem for a democracy in dealing with totalitarian regimes. It is not easy for totalitarian regimes to understand that, at the end of the day, democracies will do what is necessary to defend their vital interests.

NAME: Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President
OCCASION: Interview: NBC "MEET THE PRESS"
DATE: November 26, 1967

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We will continue our efforts to involve the Security Council of the United Nations in the area of Southeast Asia and the struggle in Vietnam. Ambassador Goldberg has made this very clear, speaking for our government. He right now is in consultation with members of the Security Council to see how best to bring this about. So the Administration -- what you are talking about is nothing new for the Administration. In fact last February Ambassador Goldberg presented the Vietnam issue to the United Nations and renewed it again this September with the reconvening of the United Nations and the General Assembly. So we will continue to pursue this course. Any honorable course, sir, to find a solution, a peaceful solution to this struggle.
If the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union is prepared to accept a United Nations finding on who is the aggressor in Vietnam, I invite him today to step down the hall with me to the Security Council which under the Charter has responsibility for making such judgment.

Now, the United States is opposed to aggression, Mr. President, and is prepared to debate Vietnam in the Security Council. We are in Vietnam to help the people of South Vietnam to exercise their right of self-determination free from force and aggression -- an aggression of which the Soviet Union is a principal supporter and supplier. And when that purpose is achieved, we will leave. We do not covet one square inch of the territory of Vietnam, and we have stated from this rostrum our willingness to agree to a time schedule for the supervised phased withdrawal from South Vietnam of all external forces, those of North Vietnam as well as those from the United States, and other countries aiding South Vietnam.

Q-2 MR. SCHERER: Mr. President, there seems to be a growing impression throughout the world that the United States will settle for nothing less than military victory in Vietnam. What is your view on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have just explained what I thought would be a fair solution. I will repeat it as briefly and succinctly as I can.

The Demilitarized Zone must be respected as the 1954 agreements require. The unity of Vietnam as a whole must be a matter for peaceful adjustments and negotiation.

The North Vietnamese forces must get out of Laos and stop infiltrating Laos. That is what the 1962 agreement required, and it must be respected.

The overwhelming majority of the people of South Vietnam want a one man-one vote constitutional government.

200 (continued)
President Johnson (continued)

About 70 percent of all the citizens who might have voted in South Vietnam registered in the election, and about 60 percent of them voted.

The 20 percent or so of the population now under Viet Cong control must live under a one man-one vote constitutional system if there is to be peace.

President Thieu has said that the South Vietnamese Government is not prepared to recognize the NLF as a government, and it knows well that NLF's control is by Hanoi. And so do we.

But he also has said that he is prepared for informal talks with members of the NLF, and these could bring good results.

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: Statement after Meeting with Pope Paul
DATE: December 23, 1967

We agree with His Holiness that "an honorable settlement of the painful and threatening dispute is still possible." I received his judgment to this end, and I deeply appreciate the full and free manner in which it was given.

His Holiness has suggested a principle of mutual restraint. If this principle was accepted by both sides, there would be rapid and solid progress toward peace.

We would be willing to stop the bombing and proceed promptly to serious and productive discussions.

A total end to the violence would be our urgent objective.

We support informal talks with the South.

We are ready for formal talks with the North.

We will agree to any proposal that would substitute the word and the vote for the knife and the grenade in bringing honorable peace to Vietnam.

We shall keep closely in touch with His Holiness in the days ahead, as we shall with others who are searching to lift the scourge of war from Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

201
The United States Government has been greatly concerned at the plight of Americans held prisoner by the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam. More than 20 American soldiers and several American civilians are believed held by the National Liberation Front. We know that more than 160 American military personnel are confined in North Vietnam. Several hundred more are considered missing because the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam withhold the names of prisoners and generally prohibit most prisoners from sending letters. We are greatly concerned that some of these prisoners may not be treated humanely. The claims of the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese that they are treated humanely cannot be verified because neutral observers or organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross have not been allowed to visit the prisoners, and inspect their places of detention.

* * *

The United States calls on the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam to permit impartial inspection of all prisoners, and urges them to repatriate those sick and wounded prisoners who qualify for repatriation under the Convention.

The Governments of the United States and Vietnam have repeatedly made clear both publicly and privately through many channels their desire to bring about an exchange of prisoners. The Government of the United States reiterates this desire and its willingness to discuss such exchanges at any time and in any appropriate way, using intermediaries or directly, by public means or privately.
QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, if it is illegal under the trading with the enemy act for any American to send money or property to North Vietnam or the Viet Cong, how is it possible for our government to offer a reward of $1,760 in gold as a reward to any North Vietnam peasant for aiding an American pilot after being shot down?

Is it ethical for the United States Government to offer bribes?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: Well, first, I assume that it must be within the law or I don't think that the government would have done it. And, secondly, if a million -- thousand -- I would say a million, too -- but if $1,700 will save the life of an American pilot, I will certainly stand and support that.

NAME: Paul H. Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense
OCCASION: News Release (DoD) 985-67
DATE: October 14, 1967

The Hanoi government has thus far refused to abide by provisions of the Geneva Convention covering prisoners of war. Representatives of the International Red Cross continue to be denied access to prisoners of war held in North Vietnam. Mail privileges to and from families are restricted or totally denied. No list of prisoners has been provided to the International Red Cross as required by the Convention. Attempts by the State and Defense Departments and the International Red Cross to secure compliance with requirements of the Geneva Convention have been persistently rebuffed. These attempts will continue.

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The callous refusal by the Hanoi government to fulfill its obligations under the Geneva Convention is compounded by yet another violation of international law and decency. The enemy's propaganda apparatus now is at work to exploit these military men. As has been reported in recent news stories, the communists are trafficking in prisoner of war propaganda films and photographs.
The Geneva Convention, to which North Vietnam subscribes, clearly states that military men who are held as prisoners of war must not be put on exhibition. Yet this is exactly what the Hanoi government has been doing with its parade of prisoners through the streets of Hanoi and its other filmed public displays of our captured servicemen. On a carefully selected basis, Hanoi's leaders have been permitting hand-picked newsmen to film and photograph a few prisoners. Then, in collusion with such other communist governments as East Germany, Hanoi has arranged for propaganda films of U. S. prisoners of war to be sold throughout the world for a price.

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: Christmas Message, 1967
DATE: December 24, 1967

I told His Holiness that America welcomed his efforts to bring an end to the strife and sorrow. And I told him of a matter that weighs on our hearts this Christmas, and every day of the year: the treatment of American prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

I told him how we hoped he would intercede on their behalf, seeking to gain for them more humane living conditions and the elemental right to communicate with their loved ones. I assured him that his representatives would be welcomed wherever prisoners were held in South Vietnam.
There is another phase of the airlift effort that is a source of deepest satisfaction to me, and that is the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery mission. I have little doubt that this will supply one of the proudest chapters in the annals of air operations.

Carried out for the most part by helicopters, these rescue operations between December 1964 and July of this year have resulted in 777 combat saves. A large number of these saves have been accomplished in the heavily defended areas of North Vietnam. Needless to say, the key to the success with these operations has been the extraordinary skill and courage of the aircrews who make up the rescue and recovery teams.
THE STATE OF THE VIETNAMESE ECONOMY

As to the economy, there has been dramatic change. One of my missions in September—as it had been in July—was to seek to find means to break the bottleneck in the Port of Saigon—a bottleneck which at that time was not seriously impeding military operations, but which was a serious drag on the development of the economy.

There were, in September and October, for example—when I went down to the port and inspected it—between 800 and 900 barges which were serving as floating warehouses because of the inability to unload the ships even in the extended period that they spent in the harbor— inability to unload ships during that period and move the merchandise into the warehouses.

This was not only clogging the port, but it was, of course, denying the economy the goods that it needed to sop up the increasing purchasing power.

This blockage of the port was, therefore, one of the factors contributing to a perilous state of the economy. The danger of a runaway inflation, a disorderly inflation was very great indeed.

Elimination of the bottleneck in the port has done much to reduce the pressure on prices. There are today simply a normal number of barges being used to facilitate the off-loading of the cargo vessels in the port. I would guess something on the order of 40 as compared to the 800 or 900 floating warehouses of last October.

A number of other factors have contributed to easing of the price pressure. I don't mean to say that prices aren't continuing to rise—of course they are—but at a much more reasonable rate than was true midyear last year.

And I think the danger of runaway inflation has been very greatly reduced. In particular, the price of necessities—fish, kerosene, fish sauce, charcoal, for example—has not increased significantly and has not increased out of line with the incomes of those who buy such necessities.

So there has been a very substantial improvement in the economy and a much more stable basis for future development of that economy.
SOUTH VIETNAM - Economy

NAME: Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense
OCCASION: DoD News Release No. 672-67
DATE: July 21, 1967

There has been a remarkable change in the economic situation. Inflation, while still a problem, is far more controlled. Elimination of the bottleneck in the port of Saigon has done much to reduce the pressure of prices. The danger of inflation remains, but the danger of a disorderly, runaway inflation has been checked.

NAME: Ellsworth Bunker, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam
OCCASION: Address before the Overseas Press Club, New York
DATE: November 17, 1967

The economic situation in South Viet-Nam is complicated not only by the economics of development but also by the massive U.S. presence and the backdrop of armed conflict.

In spite of this, however, a picture of the economy appears that is not unencouraging:

The threat of run-away inflation in the spring of 1966 has been checked. While inflationary pressures are severe, they have been kept under tolerable control. Prices have gone up, but food supplies are ample.

Today there is full employment, indeed in many cases a labor shortage. While this makes the economy prone to inflationary pressures it also means a fundamental change in the conditions of life for millions of Vietnamese workers and peasants. In pacified areas, and even in some that are contested, the standard of living is probably higher now than it has ever been in the past. The means by which economic betterment is coming to the countryside are clear enough. Farm prices have increased because of war-generated urban demand. Roads and canals have been secured so that the farmer can move his produce to market. Jobs are available in local towns and cities for all who want them. This combination is producing something akin to a rural boom in many areas in rural Viet-Nam.
Q General, could you explain in connection with that why the South Vietnamese have not fully mobilized?

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: The South Vietnamese have a very large force under arms now, over 700,000 men. This is a considerable military force for a country of 15 million, approximately.

True, enough, they are capable of organizing additional military forces. As I stated a moment ago, they will increase their regular and para-military structure during the coming year.

Leadership has been a problem and a major problem. Their leadership potential has been stretched almost to the elastic limit.

Training facilities, budgetary considerations, demands of the local economy and the local government have, too. It makes no sense at all to increase a military force if you are going to degrade the quality.

One has to always strike a balance between quality and quantity. I feel that during the past year, we struck a pretty good balance -- the Vietnamese Armed Forces -- between the quality considerations and the quantity involved.

But now that they have had a chance to settle down to improve the quality of their force, with emphasis on their leadership, they are now in a position to continue to expand.

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QUESTION: General Westmoreland, could you comment for us, from your viewpoint in Saigon, on the adequacy of the mobilization and effort by the South Vietnamese?

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: During the last three years the South Vietnamese Armed Forces have more than doubled in strength. This includes the three major components, namely, the regular ground forces -- the ARVN, the regional forces, and the popular forces. This has involved quite a strain on their leadership resources.

During the past year there was a slowdown in the creation of new units because we realized about a year ago they were overextending themselves. They have made tremendous strides during the past year in improving their quality and their general proficiency.

They are now in a position where they can, again, expand. It is implied that during the coming year, there will be an increase in the strength of their forces. I cannot give you the specific numbers, but the increase will be fairly substantial.
As you know, I was also the Senior US Advisor to the South Vietnamese fighting forces in the I Corps area. What I said about the people applies equally to the South Vietnamese Armed Forces units which are fighting in I Corps. In Operation HICKORY, for example, 5 Army of the Republic of Vietnam battalions were well-led and fought courageously, inflicting a major defeat on the North Vietnamese Army units dug in inside the DMZ.

The 7,000 man South Vietnamese Marine Corps spends 75% of its time in the field. They have accounted for more than 2300 Viet Cong killed and another 900 captured in the past year and a half.

MR. PIERPOINT: But aren't we doing most of the fighting?

MR. CLIFFORD: No.

GENERAL TAYLOR: No, we're not. I checked very carefully with General Westmoreland's headquarters in terms of the factor which should be used in measuring the participation in combat which would be the killed-in-action per thousand. It is very close for the Vietnamese, the Americans, and for the free world forces. It runs around ten per thousand, almost within a few decimal points --
GENERAL TAYLOR: Well, first I will point out the Vietnamese have indicated their intention to increase their forces by 65,000. So that, of course, tops our number substantially. In the case of the other allies, in our trip we were not asking them for specific commitments. But certainly we found an understanding of the need for all of us to do more in order to get this broad pressure across the whole spectrum to which you referred.

MR. PIERPOINT: But did they indicate that they are willing themselves, that is, aside from the South Vietnamese, to send more troops? They seem to want us to send more.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Again I don't want to suggest they gave any specific commitments. But certainly the impression we received, I received, was that they are willing and they recognize the need to do more in South Vietnam.
The armed forces of South Vietnam are steadily improving in many ways, and these improvements can be seen. Many battalion-sized units are now providing security for what is called Revolutionary Development -- pacification work at the lowest levels. Security is the key to pacification and these forces are demonstrating their determination and skill even in the face of a stepped-up Viet Cong terror campaign. Incidentally, I view this increased, almost desperate surge of terrorist activity as an admission in itself by the Viet Cong that our Revolutionary Development program is working. Other South Vietnam Army forces are searching out and destroying the regular North Vietnam Army units. Only recently they administered some resounding defeats to seasoned North Vietnam Army combat battalions in battles in both the northern and southern provinces of South Vietnam. The enemy losses were great and the South Vietnamese took only a few casualties. These successes clearly show us that their frail leadership which was initially stretched to the utmost has improved measurably, as has the tactical skill of the units themselves.

Let me cite just a few of many operations conducted by units of the South Vietnam Army to illustrate how hard and effectively they fight.

One division commander told me that a year ago he had to send three battalions to accomplish a task he is now able to do with only one battalion.

A Regional Force company guarding a section of a canal has successfully withstood 13 enemy attacks over a period of eight weeks. While visiting several hamlets on the banks of that canal, I saw light industry operating after two years of idleness imposed by a lack of security. Boats and barges were moving freely on the canal.

The South Vietnam Army is also proving that it can conduct more sophisticated combat operations. As an example: The 7th Vietnamese Army Division just completed an eight day operation during which it very
General Johnson (Continued)

successfully fought in a combined effort with other forces, U. S. and Vietnamese. This operation involved forces from two U. S. divisions, forces from two different military areas, and the new U. S. Riverine Force -- one of the first times that this new unit has operated with the Vietnamese.

The most dramatic evidence of the Vietnamese Army's willingness and ability to fight is this point: Since 1960 more than 50,000 soldiers of the Vietnamese Armed Forces have lost their lives defending their country. What would this mean in terms of United States losses under the same conditions on our soil? Our population is approaching 200 million. South Vietnam's is about 16 million. We have more than 12 times as many people. If our rate of loss equaled theirs, we would have lost over 600,000 people, or over twice as many killed as our country suffered in all of World War II. Obviously, the South Vietnamese are fighting.

Q. If North Vietnam should stop its involvement there reasonably soon, could the South Vietnamese Government forces handle the situation?

GENERAL LARSEN. Again talking II Corps area, I don't think there would be any question but that the South Vietnamese could take care of the problem if the North Vietnamese pulled out and stopped their support, stopped effective resupplying and troop commitments.

There would be no question in my mind but that the South Vietnamese could take care of the situation.

I am talking about II Corps area.

Q. How much of a land area is that?

GENERAL LARSEN. 46 percent of the land area of South Vietnam.
SOUTH VIETNAM - Military Forces

NAME: Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff, USA
OCCASION: Annual Meeting of the US Army Association
DATE: October 10, 1967

Both the morale and the performance of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces have improved steadily. Two years ago, the communist forces were on the offensive and were winning significant victories. Now, the communists are on the defensive and South Vietnamese units are gaining increasing success on the battlefield. It has been a year since communist forces have won a significant victory.

Closely related to the improved performance of the regular armed forces of South Vietnam has been a steady decline in their desertion rates. During May, June, and July of this year, their desertion rate was around a half of the rate a year ago. It should be kept in mind that desertion does not necessarily mean defection to the other side. In most cases it is just absence without leave. On the other hand, the communist defection rate has steadily increased and by the end of August, returnees to government control in 1967 exceeded the total for all of 1966.

Two years ago the South Vietnamese Army was losing three weapons for each communist weapon they captured. Today the South Vietnamese Army is capturing four communist weapons for each one they lose.
Most of her eligible manpower has been in uniform for many years. In spite of criticisms to the contrary, the Vietnam forces have taken losses, in proportion to her size, commensurate with those of the Germans or Russians in World War I and World War II.

* * *

I should like now to enumerate to you some of the changes in the Vietnamese Armed Forces which are, and certainly will be in the months to come, improving their effectiveness:

1. It is becoming easier to give direct commissions to deserving non-commissioned officers in order to make the most of proven leadership abilities.

2. Battlefield commissions are being presented to demonstrated leaders to tap the worthy reservoir of combat leadership.

3. An Officer Candidate School has been established to supplement the shortage of officers.

4. An overhaul of management practices has begun to give more effective personnel procurement, training, financial management, and logistical support.

5. An increase in advisory effort is giving more assistance at lower levels.

6. Better living conditions through more family housing and more allowances for soldiers with large families, plus wider commissary availability for dependents, are all contributing to better standards for the Armed Forces.

7. Improvements throughout the school system are producing better qualified and more experienced leadership.

8. Several methods of closer working relationships between U. S. and Vietnamese units have been fostered, with the ultimate goal of preparing indigenous forces to take over responsibility for major areas where U. S. units now are predominant.
SOUTH VIETNAM - Military Forces

NAME: Ellsworth Bunker, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam
OCCASION: Address before the Overseas Press Club, New York
DATE: November 17, 1967

In numerous heavy engagements throughout the country units of the Vietnamese armed forces have turned in first rate performances. They contributed materially to the success of the initial operations in the DMZ; in the II Corps area they also have given a good account of themselves and recently in III Corps and the Delta area of IV Corps they have conducted some highly successful operations.

For example, a few weeks ago a North Vietnamese Army regiment, the Eighty-eighth, attacked the base camp of a South Vietnamese infantry battalion in Phuoc Long Province 70 miles north of Saigon. Though fighting at better than four to one odds, the South Vietnamese unit sent the North Vietnamese reeling back with heavy losses.

Last August a regimental-size force of South Vietnamese soldiers came to the rescue of a beleaguered American Special Forces camp at Dak Seang in the Central Highlands some 300 miles north of Saigon. Driving uphill in a five-day battle through thick jungle terrain, the South Vietnamese force killed 181 North Vietnamese, captured an elaborate complex of bunkers, complete with big stocks of ammunition, supplies and weapons.

Sometimes when I hear criticism of the Vietnamese military I recall some of the things that were said about the South Korean Army in 1950 and 1951. We were told that the South Koreans would not fight, that their generals were corrupt, and that they had no capability of governing themselves and could never develop a viable economy. Not only did the test of time prove all of these judgments to be false. But now we have 48,000 superb Korean soldiers fighting to help a fellow Asian nation defend itself against aggression.

There is still room for improvement in the South Vietnamese Armed Forces. A comprehensive program of reorientation, motivation and improvement of quality and performance of the forces is underway and the results are evident in many areas:

a. Experimentation with various forms of integrated U.S. and Vietnamese Armed Forces operations is being carried out with the intent of raising the level of training and effectiveness of the Vietnamese units and to practice the principles of economy of forces for the U.S. units. Excellent results have already been obtained and I believe there is great promise on both counts.

b. The number of desertions has dropped to a little over one-third of what it was a year ago.

c. The number of missing in action has dropped to one-half of what it was in early 1966.
SOUTH VIETNAM - Military Forces

Ellsworth Bunker (Continued)

d. The trend of weapons lost has been reversed. In early 1966 combined South Vietnamese forces lost more than twice the number captured. The ratio is now the exact opposite.

e. In large unit operations the Vietnamese Army is making more enemy contacts although fewer total operations are run.

f. In small unit operations the rate of South Vietnamese contact with the enemy has risen to thirty percent. Speaking militarily, then, we are not confronting a stalemate in Viet-Nam. Much is yet ahead of us, but with the initiative in our possession the opportunity for continued progress is unfolding.

NAME: General William C. Westmoreland, Commander, MACV

OCCASION: National Press Club, Washington, D. C.

DATE: November 21, 1967

The Vietnamese Armed Forces have accomplished much in a short time. Here are a few examples:

Career management for officers, particularly infantry officers, has been instituted.

Sound promotion procedures have been put into effect.

Discipline and conduct is being stressed.

Increased emphasis is being devoted to small unit tactics and leadership.

The promotion of enlisted men to the commissioned ranks is now commonplace (2200 in 1966).

Officer Candidates must now take basic training and prove that they have the leadership potential to be officers.

An Inspector General for the Vietnamese Armed Forces has been appointed and is now active in detailed inspections.

Corrupt and inefficient officials are being gradually eliminated.
The military school system has been revitalized.

The Military Academy has gone to a four year curriculum.

A school for Battalion Commanders has been established.

A ten month National Defense College has been organized for selected senior officers.

The same personnel management programs which have been installed successfully in the Vietnamese Army are being expanded to the Regional Forces and Popular Forces.

NAME: Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President
OCCASION: Interview: NBC "MEET THE PRESS"
DATE: November 26, 1967

MR. SCHERE: Mr. Vice President, you mentioned watching Senator Kennedy on CBS today. He said that the South Vietnamese Army, as you heard him, has really pulled out of this war, and he asked the question: Why is the South Vietnamese Army not at Dakto and not at the DMZ? What would be your answer to that?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: My answer, of course, would be that the South Vietnamese Army has been at Dakto and has been at the DMZ and in fact some of the most courageous fighting of this war has been by some of the units of the South Vietnamese Army, the ARVN, in the Demilitarized Zone. Generals that have returned --

I was there by the way. I met some of the units. In fact I decorated the Commander of one of the airborne units of the South Vietnamese Army in the DMZ area and they have performed valiantly, courageously, that particular part of the services in the I Corps area.
The press only recently revealed there were some units of the South Vietnamese Army at Dakto. But this struggle is going on in many places. While I was in Saigon for the inaugural there were three major engagements within 25 to 40 kilometers of Saigon and in all three of those engagements it was the ARVN and the regional forces of the South Vietnamese Army that engaged the North Vietnamese regular forces and defeated them, giving them a smashing defeat. In fact there were five such engagements.

NAME: General John P. McConnell, Chief of Staff, USAF
OCCASION: Plane-side Interview at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, SVN
DATE: November 29, 1967

25% of the in-country attack sorties that are flown over here are flown by the Vietnamese Air Force. General Minh [Brig. Gen. Tran Van Minh, Commander of the Vietnamese Air Force] has officers in the Air Force who have flown more than 4,000 sorties.... That's a lot of sorties. He's got people flying in his Air Force who have more than 10,000 hours of actual flying time, and I think we should give credit to these people, who are doing a terrific job over here together with us, and I don't believe they get enough credit.
Q General, there is a commonly accepted idea back home that the Viet Cong is a better fighter than the South Vietnamese, more dedicated and better motivated. Do you agree?

A I think that was a fair thing to say—about 1965. But the situation has changed. Look at the number of Viet Cong who are defecting. Look at the battles that are won by the South Vietnamese. Now we are seeing incidents in which the Regional Forces and Popular Forces are ambushing the Viet Cong. It always used to be the other way around.

Of course, I know that there still are South Vietnamese units that are not well motivated. But the pendulum has swung way over to the other side, so that the well-motivated, the well-led and the capable territorial units now are in the majority.

I feel that the South Vietnamese soldier is a talented, heroic little soldier. He is not as big and he is not as strong and he cannot carry as much as the average American. But for his size and his capability, I repeat, he is a talented and heroic little fighter.

Q You were in Korea during the war when the South Korean Army was developing. Can you compare the South Vietnamese Army now with the Republic of Korea Army then?

A The Korean Army was a young army when the North Koreans invaded South Korea. The losses in soldiers and leaders in the South Korean Army was staggering. And then, as the war continued, the Army was built up by training and work and fighting, all going on at the same time. At the time I was there, many of the criticisms you hear today from the U.S. people about South Vietnam's Army—you heard them all from the U.S. about the Koreans then....
NAME: Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., Deputy US Commander, VN
OCCASION: Interview with US News and World Report
DATE: December 4, 1967

Q People at home ask when the South Vietnamese will be able to take over the job, so we can begin phasing out. When do you think this might come about?

A I wouldn't risk a prediction as to the timing, but the way I see what's going on here is that all of us together are working and fighting to reduce the effectiveness of the Viet Cong infrastructure, the Viet Cong guerrilla, the Viet Cong main forces and North Vietnamese Army forces in the country.

We are beating them down, so that their numbers, their training, their morale, their capabilities go lower and lower. We are making steady progress in all this all the time.

On the other side, with the advisers, with the training teams, with everything we can do and everything the Vietnamese can do, we are raising the competence, the quality, confidence, training, equipment, the logistics of the Regional Forces, Popular Forces and ARVN.

There is going to come a time in this process when the capabilities of the ARVN, the Regional Forces and Popular Forces will be raised to such a point that it will be within the capability of ARVN, with advisory and material help from us, to handle their own problems.

NAME: Lyndon B. Johnson, President
OCCASION: Interview with Ray Scherer, NBC; Frank Reynolds, ABC, and Dan Rather, CBS
DATE: December 18, 1967

Most of the people out there tell us that they believe that the South Vietnamese army at this time is equal to the Korean troops in 1954. If they are, I don't think we will have to apologize too much for them. They are taking up their positions on the DMZ.

They have been giving very good results from their actions. General Abrams thinks they are doing all right. I would prefer his judgment to anybody's judgment that I know.

* * *

They have over 700,000 men there out of 17 million population, and they are raising another 65,000 compared to the additional 40-odd that we are sending.

...we don't plan to supplant them at all. But we do plan to supplement them to whatever is necessary to keep the communist conspiracy from gobbling up that nation.
SOUTH VIETNAM - Political Conditions

NAME: Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense
OCCASION: Meeting with the Press on Arrival at Andrews AFB from Vietnam
DATE: July 11, 1967

The Constitutional Assembly had completed its work since I was last there. Preparation for the elections is well under way. As you know, the election for the President and Vice President will be held in about 45 days, and that will be followed shortly by the elections for the legislative branch. This is tremendous progress in a country that is under the intensive pressure from outside powers as is Vietnam.

NAME: Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense
OCCASION: News Conference at the White House
DATE: July 12, 1967

The political scene has changed substantially since my last visit to South Vietnam last September and early October.

The Constituent Assembly, as you know, has completed its work during that period. The nation now has a Constitution. Preparations for the elections are advancing rapidly.

As you are well aware, the election for the Chief Executive, the Vice President will be held within about 45 days and that will be followed very shortly thereafter -- within the next 45 or 60 days -- by the completion of elections for the Legislative Branch of the government.

This is tremendous progress when one looks back at the situation that existed nine months ago.

NAME: Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff, USA
OCCASION: News Conference at the White House Upon His Return From SVN
DATE: August 12, 1967

Q. But your optimistic assessment depends on the successful elections?

GENERAL JOHNSON. Conditioned by a reasonably successful election.

Q. Have you any reason for optimism there?

GENERAL JOHNSON. Yes. I talked to the Chief of the Joint General Staff, Gen. Cao Van Vien, on Tuesday morning. I raised the question of the honesty of the elections. He assured me that there would be honest elections, and I believe him. He is a straightforward man. At least, he has been in my relationships with him.
We ought not to be astonished that that nation, racked by a war of insurgency and beset by its neighbors to the north, has not already emerged, full-blown, as a perfect model of two-party democracy.

Instead we might take heart that in the very midst of that war, only a few months after the enemy threatened to cut that nation in half

-the Vietnamese people elected their own representatives to a Constituent Assembly, notwithstanding all the discouragements and terror that the Communist world could muster;

-that Assembly then wrote a democratic constitution;

-local elections were then held in the villages where security permitted, and more are planned for the near future;

-a national campaign for President and Vice President is now underway; the members of a new Senate will be chosen at the same time, and members of a House of Representatives in the following months.

It is with great pride that I acknowledge that all through that ordeal and painful emerging process a great American leader helped to guide those people with sound and solid advice. And we honor him, too, here today, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge.

Today's leaders in Vietnam, Chief of State Thieu and Prime Minister Ky, have given their very solemn pledge that they will support the outcome of fair elections, whoever wins.

I take that pledge most seriously.

In recent months I have conveyed to them—through personal letters, through Ambassador Bunker, Secretary McNamara, General Taylor and Mr. Clark Clifford—my strong conviction that it is very vital for the elections in Vietnam to be free and to be fair.
MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Bundy, do you think that the elections or the results of the election can make an important contribution towards ending the war?

MR. BUNDY: Yes, I do. I think above all, in the sense that the resulting government, with a constitutional base and a demonstration of popular support, will be in a stronger position to do all the things that need doing, not just those measures that directly affect the war but, dealing with the problem of corruption, dealing with such questions as land reform, building the country and, secondly, I think a -- and this is the very strong feeling out there which you get in the speeches of the candidates -- the candidates are talking a great deal about peace, and what all of them are saying, and the civilian candidates, Thieu and all the rest, is that the government that emerges from this election will be in a stronger position to speak for South Vietnam. They have got the feeling that we have been doing too much talking about the negotiating issues.
Q. If the observers don’t interfere, inspect, or interrogate, how can they be sure of the fairness of the election?

AMBASSADOR LODGE. How can you be sure of the fairness of any election? How can you be sure in this country of the fairness of an election? We have had some interesting counts in this country.

Q. What is the purpose of this trip?

AMBASSADOR LODGE. The purpose of this trip is to respond to the invitation of the Government of South Vietnam and have this commission lend its presence.

Q. Why do they want them there?

AMBASSADOR LODGE. Because they are, I think, preoccupied at world opinion.

Q. Then the Government will be interested in the final outside judgment?

AMBASSADOR LODGE. The Government of Saigon, as I can vouch for, having been there myself, is very much aware of public opinion. That is one of the reasons why these people have made this tremendous effort to move towards constitutional government, which in the light of their antecedents is a very dramatic and extraordinary thing.

There are several reasons for this. But one reason why they are so anxious and eager to get a constitutional government is precisely because of their standing in world opinion and because they think if their country can speak with one voice and with a constitutional voice it will help them. I think it will too.
SOUTH VIETNAM - Political Conditions

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: News Conference
DATE: September 1, 1967

THE VIETNAMESE ELECTIONS

Q. Mr. President, what about these persistent reports that there may be some kind of a new peace move around about the time of the Vietnamese elections, which fall on Sunday, and the possibility that this might include another bombing pause? Are you giving any thought, yourself, to such a move?

THE PRESIDENT. I would say the reports—bombing pause and peace proposal Sunday—so far as I am aware, are off the top of someone’s head. I know nothing about them. We look every day for every possibility that would lead toward peace, as I said yesterday.

But I think that we do ourselves a great disservice when, out of the clear air, we conjure up something that has no basis in fact. I cannot say what would happen tomorrow or the next day, or the next day.

But so far as I am aware at this time, the reports you mention are purely speculative and are without any foundation.

Q. Could I follow that up, sir? How will the United States follow up the election in South Vietnam?

THE PRESIDENT. Just as it is. The United States has a policy there, a carefully thought out policy. It is a consistent policy. We want to see those people have the right of self-determination. We are very hopeful that they will be able, notwithstanding the terror that is being practiced, the murder that is being committed, to be able to carry out their election with a minimum loss of life and with a maximum fairness and freedom that is possible in the conditions under which they operate.

We think it will involve substantial progress if they can have a fair and free election, and select their own officials. We believe that following this election, the officials so selected will do everything they can to improve the efficiency of their services, both military and civilian.

We have definite ideas in that regard—so far as pacification is concerned, so far as land reform is concerned, et cetera. We believe that the officials selected by the people themselves will, when they get the election behind them, take steps in that direction.

Of course, we will do anything we can to be helpful. It is a decision for them. It is their government, their actions, requiring their support. But any way we can supplement that support, we will do so with both counsel and resources.
The new government has been inaugurated, promising vigorous action and calling on the people for greater efforts and sacrifices. It has already taken two important steps:

a. A decree providing for partial mobilization expanding the draft ages to include men from 18 to 33, requisitioning of specialists and technicians from 34 to 45 years of age and recalling to service men within the draft age groups previously demobilized; and

b. A decree law to become effective January 1, 1968 providing that all lands and property taxes will be administered by local authorities and all revenues collected for local governments -- namely villages, provinces, municipalities, and prefectures. The decree virtually transfers all land tax authority to local units of government, and this represents a giant step forward.

The Prime Minister of the new Government, Nguyen Van Loc, spoke to the land reform problem a few days ago when taking office. He said the government would distribute public lands to peasants, re-establish 500,000 expired land leases and issue ownership certificates to 110,500 peasants who have purchased expropriated rice fields. Prime Minister Loc said, further, that farm improvement centers would be set up to teach farmers modern techniques of cultivation and irrigation.

He also announced that the government would found an agricultural development bank for farmers and fishermen. It will have two billion piasters of working capital.
MR. GORALESKI: Ambassador Bunker, at the heart of much of the concern in this country is the feeling that the will of the United States Government to prosecute the war in Vietnam has outdistanced the will of the South Vietnamese people to see the conflict continue. How do you answer such attitudes?

AMBASSADOR BUNKER: I don't think that is correct, Mr. Goralski. I think that the will of the South Vietnamese people to continue the war effort is firm, is strong. I think it has been made clear by President Thieu in his public statements, his inaugural address; I think it has been made clear by the Vice-President; I think it has been made clear by the Prime Minister in the statement which he issued upon assuming office.

NAME: General William C. Westmoreland, Commander, MACV
OCCASION: National Press Club, Washington, D. C.
DATE: November 21, 1967

In 1963 and 1964 there started the military invasion from the North, when the first North Vietnamese Regiments entered the South. This almost succeeded By early 1965, the Vietnamese government found its resolution exhausted by a decade of struggle, and its last resources committed. It was at that point that the intervention of our Armed Forces restored a future to the long-suffering people of South Vietnam, who grasped the opportunity.

As you know, in the midst of war the South Vietnamese have in the past year held free elections, and have turned out a larger percentage of the vote than we normally do in this country. The Viet Cong have tried desperately to stop these elections by terror and intimidation. But the Vietnamese voted despite the Viet Cong efforts. This mass disregard of Viet Cong initiatives killed the myth that the Viet Cong or the National Liberation Front speak for the people.
SOUTHEAST ASIA - Importance of ("Domino Theory," "Yellow-Peril")

NAME: Dean Rusk, Secretary of State
OCCASION: Golden Anniversary Convention of Lions International, Chicago
DATE: July 6, 1967

More is at stake than self-determination for the South Vietnamese, important as that is. Even more is at stake than the security of other nations in Southeast Asia, important as that is. The greater question is whether aggression is to be allowed to succeed, thus opening the way for further aggression. And tied to that is the integrity of the commitments of the United States. Our commitments in the Pacific are just as binding as our commitments in the Atlantic. If those who wish to pursue world revolution by force should come to believe that the United States will not do what it has promised, the prospects of peace would rapidly vanish.

NAME: William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian & Pacific Affairs
OCCASION: The Federal Bar Association, San Francisco
DATE: July 28, 1967

We believe that our role is essential both to our own national interest and to the aspirations of the area itself. We seek no specific position for ourselves in the Southeast Asia of the future. Rather, we believe deeply that the fabric of peace in Asia cannot endure unless the individual nations of the area are secure from the threat of aggression. The only way to prevent wider and greater wars that would surely in the end threaten our own most specific national interests is to help, as we can, the nations of the area to work for their own national survival and self-determination. They seek many things, but above all the right to be themselves and to assist their peoples to enjoy a better life.

So security is a part of the common task, and a part from which we could walk away only if we were prepared to let nature take its course. I think it would not be a very lovely course.

But security is still only a part of the job and in an enduring sense perhaps the least significant part. Security is only the essential means to an end, and that end is nothing less than the sum total of all that the peoples and nations of Asia can do for themselves to improve the welfare of their people, to establish and strengthen political and social structures that fit the needs and desires of each people, to use for constructive ends the progress of science and technology, and to knit up their ties with each other.
Q. To characterize this as a War of Southeast Asia, does this also raise the possibility of extending the warfare into other areas beyond the present limitations?

GEN. TAYLOR. No, I would say it does not. It is simply a reminder of the fact that the outcome in South Vietnam would have bearings throughout all of Southeast Asia, and as we all know the Thais have indications of minor outbreaks of guerrilla activities. The Thais are worried about that situation, as they should be.

They understand thoroughly that if indeed South Vietnam collapses, their problem will be enormously enhanced. The same feeling is elsewhere with regard to Malaysia, and the condition which will exist if indeed the British withdraw from that area.

So all of these countries are looking at the problem not in terms of the real estate confined by the boundaries of South Vietnam, but the entire Southeast Asia land mass.
My own view, based on participation and subsequent discussion with others, is that the underlying view of the relation between Viet-Nam and the threat to Southeast Asia was clear and strongly believed throughout the top levels of the Kennedy Administration. We knew, as we have always known, that the action against South Viet-Nam reflected deeply held ambitions by Hanoi to unify Viet-Nam under Communist control, and that Hanoi needed and wanted only Chinese aid to this end and wished to be its own master. And we knew, as again we always have, that North Viet-Nam would resist any Communist Chinese trespassing on areas it controlled. But these two propositions were not then, as they are not now, inconsistent with the belief that the aggressive ambitions of Communist China and North Viet-Nam -- largely North Vietnamese in old Indochina, overlapping in Thailand, Chinese in the rest of Southeast Asia -- would surely feed on each other. In the eyes of the rest of Southeast Asia, certainly, they were part of a common and parallel threat.

* * *

Our bet with history has been that Southeast Asia does matter, that the independence of South Viet-Nam crucially affects Southeast Asia, and that non-Communist nationalism in Southeast Asia and in Viet-Nam has in it the seeds of a peaceful, progressive, and stable area that can take its place in a world at peace. ...

From the standpoint of our own security, and the kind of world in which we wish to live, I believe we must continue to be deeply concerned to do what we can to keep Southeast Asia from falling under external domination and aggression that would contribute to such domination. And I believe also that we have a wider concern in doing what we can, and as we are wanted, to assist sound programs on an individual country or regional basis, and to improve the welfare of the peoples of the area. And I do not think that you can do the latter unless the former is achieved.

The second part of our bet is that the independence of South Viet-Nam critically affects Southeast Asia. South Viet-Nam and its 15 million people are important in themselves, but they assume an additional importance if the judgment is accepted that a success for aggression there would drastically weaken the situation in Southeast Asia and indeed beyond. That judgment cannot be defended solely by reference to the dynamics of major aggressive powers and their prospective victims in the past. I myself believe that those parallels have validity, but the question is always that Justice Holmes called "concrete cases." In this concrete case, I think the underlying judgment has been valid, and remains valid today.
it has seemed to us all along that the preservation of the independence of South Vietnam was directly related to the fate of Southeast Asia as a whole. If South Vietnam were to be taken over, the parallel expansionist designs of Communist China and North Vietnam would surely be encouraged, and the resistance to these designs seriously weakened throughout the area, and perhaps beyond. In Asian terms, and as responsible opinion virtually throughout Southeast Asia sees it, the stakes in Vietnam involve the most drastic alternatives for Southeast Asia and for Asia as a whole. One only has to look at what is now happening in Laos, Thailand and Burma to understand this.
Of course, there is a great price for engaging in the struggle for Vietnam. There was a price that we paid in Europe, too, in the 1940's. There was a price in Korea in the 1950's.

There were prices paid all through the islands of the Pacific in the dark days of World War II.

The question is always whether it is worth paying the price. I say it is.

I say that the price of Communist conquest in Southeast Asia, of risking a third world war by our failure to stand in Vietnam now, is a far heavier price to pay.

I cannot tell you tonight as your President—with certainty—that a Communist conquest of South Vietnam would be followed by a Communist conquest of Southeast Asia. But I do know there are North Vietnamese troops in Laos. I do know that there are North Vietnamese trained guerrillas tonight in northeast Thailand. I do know that there are Communist-supported guerrilla forces operating in Burma. And a Communist coup was barely averted in Indonesia, the fifth largest nation in the world.

So your American President cannot tell you—with certainty—that a Southeast Asia dominated by Communist power would bring a third world war much closer to terrible reality. One could hope that this would not be so.

But all that we have learned in this tragic century strongly suggests to me that it would be so. As President of the United States, I am not prepared to gamble on the chance that it is not so. I am not prepared to risk the security—indeed, the survival—of this American Nation on mere hope and wishful thinking. I am convinced that by seeing this struggle through now, we are greatly reducing the chances of a much larger war—perhaps a nuclear war. I would rather stand in Vietnam, in our time, and by meeting this danger now, and facing up to it, thereby reduce the danger for our children and for our grandchildren.
I have never subscribed to the domino theory; it's much too esoteric. There are North Vietnamese regiments today fighting in South Viet-Nam. There are North Vietnamese armed forces in Laos being opposed by Laotian forces. There are North Vietnamese-trained guerrillas operating in Northeast Thailand. There are Communist dissident elements in Burma who are being aided, encouraged, and helped from outside Burma across the Chinese frontier.

There was a major Communist effort in 1965 to pull off a coups d'etat against Indonesia. You don't need the domino theory. Look at their proclaimed doctrine and look at what they're doing about it.
Q Mr. Secretary, one of the questions--basic questions--that seems to be emerging in this Senate debate is whether our national security is really at stake in Viet-Nam, and whether Viet-Nam represents an integral part of our defense perimeter in the Pacific.

Your earlier statement indicates that you think our security is at stake in Viet-Nam. I think it would help in this debate if you would perhaps elaborate and explain why you think our security is at stake in Viet-Nam.

A Within the next decade or two, there will be a billion Chinese on the Mainland, armed with nuclear weapons, with no certainty about what their attitude toward the rest of Asia will be.

Now the free nations of Asia will make up at least a billion people. They don't want China to overrun them on the basis of a doctrine of the world revolution. The militancy of China has isolated China, even within the Communist World, but they have not drawn back from it. They have reaffirmed it, as recently as their reception of their great and good friend, Albania, two days ago.

Now we believe that the free nations of Asia must brace themselves, get themselves set, with secure, progressive, stable institutions of their own, with co-operation among the free nations of Asia--stretching from Korea and Japan right around to the subcontinent--if there is to be peace in Asia over the next 10 or 20 years. We would hope that in China there would emerge a generation of leadership that would think seriously about what is called "peaceful co-existence," that would recognize the pragmatic necessity for human beings to live together in peace, rather than on a basis of continuing warfare.

Now from a strategic point of view, it is not very attractive to think of the world cut in two (sic) by Asian Communism, reaching out through Southeast Asia and Indonesia, which we know has been their objective; and that these hundreds of millions of people in the free nations of Asia should be under the deadly and constant pressure of the authorities in Peking, so that their future is circumscribed by fear. (continued)
Dean Rusk (Continued)

Now these are vitally important matters to us, who are both a Pacific and an Atlantic power. After all, World War II hit us from the Pacific, and Asia is where two-thirds of the world's people live. So we have a tremendous stake in the ability of the Free Nations of Asia to live in peace; and to turn the interests of people in Mainland China to the pragmatic requirements of their own people, and away from a doctrinaire and ideological adventurism abroad.

NAME: Dean Rusk, Secretary of State
OCCASION: Interview; Videotaped at USIA Television Studios
DATE: October 16, 1967

MR. BARNETT: Mr. Secretary, since your last press conference, some of your critics have accused you of using the threat of yellow peril to justify the allied forces' presence in South Vietnam. And, related to that also is the fact that many people have seen what they consider a shade different emphasis in your approach to this, that at one time American forces were there to justify the self-determination of South Vietnam, and now you're talking more in terms of giving strength to the non-Communist nations in Asia as a defense against Peking?

Could you clarify this?

SECRETARY RUSK: Yes. In the first place, I put out a statement in which I rejected categorically any effort to put into my mouth the concept of the yellow peril, which was a racial concept of 60 or 70 years ago fostered by extreme journalism of those days. This is not in my mind.

I pointed out that other Asian nations, ranging from Korea and Japan on the one side around to the subcontinent of India on the other, are concerned about their own safety over against the things which are being said and done in Peking and by Peking. These free nations of Asia also are of Asian races. So that to me, this has nothing whatever to do with the sense of yellow peril that was built upon a racial fear and hostility 60 or 70 years ago in which the hordes of Asia were going to overrun the white race as a racial matter. (continued)
SOUTHEAST ASIA - Importance of ("Domino Theory," "Yellow-Peril")

Dean Rusk (Continued)

Now as far as the difference in emphasis is concerned, one of our problems is that people tend to listen to what we say on only one point at a time. We have spoken about our treaty commitments to Vietnam. We've talked about our interest in organizing a peace in the Pacific, because of our other alliances in the Pacific as with Korea, Japan, the Republic of China, the Philippines, the SEATO Treaty, and our ANZUS Treaty with Australia and New Zealand.

So we have a great stake in the integrity of the alliances which we have in the Pacific Ocean area.

Now, we have also talked about our own national interest, our own security interests in Southeast Asia, and in these alliances. Now, we haven't shifted from one to the other; we speak about all of these things, and have for 6 or 7 years. At times people seem to think we emphasize one, some the other. I think this is more based upon the way people listen, rather than the way in which we state these underlying elements in our policy.

NAME: Eugene V. Rostow, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

OCCASION: Regional Foreign Policy Conference, University of Kansas

DATE: October 17, 1967

Three Presidents have concluded the fate of Southeast Asia as a whole is directly related to the preservation of South Viet-Nam's independence. And Congress has repeatedly affirmed their judgment. If South Viet-Nam were to be taken over, the expansionist forces of Communist China and North Viet-Nam would be encouraged, and resistance to them and to aggression generally throughout the world would be seriously weakened.

The United States is no less a Pacific than an Atlantic power. Our security demands an equilibrium of power in the Far East as much as it does in Europe and in the Middle East. That equilibrium depends on Viet-Nam and the system of alliances it symbolizes.

Responsible opinion throughout Southeast Asia believes that the outcome in Viet-Nam will determine the future alignment of the whole region. Present events in Laos, Thailand, and Burma confirm this widespread judgment.
In discussing our interests in Southeast Asia at his press conference last week, Secretary Rusk pointed out that the free nations of the area fully share our determination—which are also oriental—are deeply concerned about their long term security in the face of a militant, hostile and rigidly ideological Communist China.

By some mysterious alchemy, some commentators managed to transform these remarks into an evocation of "the yellow peril." Any fair reading of the Secretary's words demonstrates that such an interpretation is sheer fantasy. His statement had nothing to do with race—yellow, brown or any other. They were addressed to the unquestioned need to help the free nations of Asia build strong, stable, and progressive institutions if peace is to be maintained in that part of the world. And they are doing so.

America has made a commitment to the Vietnam people to come to their assistance and to protect them against North Vietnam military invasion. We as a nation are bound to live up to this commitment. The war goes far deeper than merely protecting Vietnam. Our presence there spells the difference between a Southeast Asia oriented toward the Free World and one which is oriented toward the Communist world. Our critics know this.
I have talked, face-to-face, on many occasions with the leaders of Southeast Asia. I can tell you that, without exception, they have said that—-if we failed in Vietnam—they would be under unbearable pressure from a nuclear-armed Communist China.

The overwhelming fact of international life in Asia today is a militant Asian communism backed and supported by a Communist China which still lives by irrational, revolutionary creed and preaches the doctrine of the "war of national liberation."

Leaders of free Asia would, they have told me, face the peril of aggression—overt, covert, or both.

If they were to survive, they would be compelled, they have told me, to make "some sort of new arrangement" with the militant power which is at their doorstep.

I give you the words of Thanat Khoman, the foreign minister of Thailand, speaking in Bangkok earlier this year:

"Thanks to the wisdom and courage of the President of the United States... we are now succeeding in putting out a small fire. It was a decision that will go down in history as the move that prevented the world from having to face another major conflagration."

I give you the words of President Park of Korea in his State of the Nation address last year:

"For the first time in our history, last year we decided to dispatch combat troops overseas... because in our belief any aggression against the Republic of Vietnam represented a direct and grave menace against the security and peace of Free Asia and therefore directly jeopardized the very security and freedom of our own people."
Prime Minister Holyoake of New Zealand:

"We can thank God that America at least regards aggression in Asia with the same concern as it regards aggression in Europe--and is prepared to back up its concern with action."

President Marcos of the Philippines:

"I find it honorable to say, in view of the resolution of the United States government to help protect the freedom-loving peoples of Asia, that the least that the peoples of Asia can do is to fulfill their own part, and that is, demonstrate their own love for freedom fighting with their own men, with their own complement, and their own soldiers, for freedom."

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: Remarks Upon Presenting the Medal of Honor to Maj. Howard V. Lee, USMC
DATE: October 25, 1967

There has been some furor in this country in the past week or so about the "yellow peril." Let me take just a moment to point out the absurdity of this charge. We fought side by side with Asians at Bataan and Corregidor, in Korea, and now in Vietnam. We have utterly repudiated the racist nonsense of an earlier era. Indeed, we have made a commitment in Asia because we do believe

— that no men, whatever the pigmentation of their skins, should ever be delivered over to totalitarianism;
— that freedom is not a prize reserved for white Europeans or Americans in our private enclaves of affluence.

Race has no place in our purpose.
A few days ago I returned from a mission, at the request of the President, to three nations of Southeast Asia. Today I wish to report to you the observations and conclusions which I bring home with me.

First, and most importantly, I come home with a reinforced belief that the safety, security, and independence of the nations of Southeast Asia are critical to the safety, security and independence of the United States -- and that this will be even more true in the years ahead.

Secondly, I am convinced that our present struggle in Vietnam is critical to the security of all of Southeast Asia.

We do not want to be world policemen. The job of international security is a job for many nations.

We do not seek to inject ourselves into every dispute, every place in the world.

But, when confronted with stakes as high as those in Asia today, I believe it would be both foolish and immoral either to abandon the people of Asia or to subject our own people to the larger danger which would then surely follow.
MR. GORALSKI: Mr. Ambassador, we are still being told that the United States is in Vietnam to help the Vietnamese lead their own political life as they wish to lead it, as they wish to do. But increasingly we hear more of the effort in Vietnam being related to Communist China.

In fact, sir, are we now fighting a preventive war?

AMBASSADOR BUNKER: No, we are not. I think we have made quite clear what our objectives are in Vietnam. They are, first, to, through negotiations, to secure a just and honorable and durable political settlement, which is satisfactory to both the Government of Vietnam, to ourselves, to the Government of North Vietnam. Secondly, to permit the South Vietnamese to choose the kind of government under which they wish to live, to help them build their political institutions suited to their own needs and their own genius; to develop a viable economy and, as the President has made quite clear, when the press is secured, to make it possible to develop regional organizations for economic development and mutual cooperation.

MR. GORALSKI: But, Mr. Ambassador, we are told by high officials in the government that basically what we are doing in Vietnam is to make sure that Peking's appetite is not whetted, that it knows it cannot encourage Communism through guerrilla take-overs.

AMBASSADOR BUNKER: Well, it seems to me what we are doing is to make credible our commitments under the United Nations and under the SEATO Treaty, to resist aggression, and where Peking or anybody else is expansionist. We have made a commitment.