Q. Can you explain the reasons for this North Vietnamese aggression?

A. The underlying theory behind what the communists are doing in Southeast Asia is to be found in the militant doctrine of Asian communism. And that doctrine is not an empty threat; action is being taken in support of it.

The Communist assault on Southeast Asia is not confined to South Viet-Nam. Next door, loyal Laotian forces are resisting North Vietnamese invaders and their Communist Laotian allies. Guerrillas trained in Communist China and North Viet-Nam are operating in northeast Thailand. Peking has openly declared its support for the Communist insurgents in Burma. Its leaders have long publicly advocated the use of force to destroy non-Communist governments, and to achieve eventually Communist control of the world.

Its militancy has alienated Peking from most of the other Communist states, and created profound anxiety among nearly all the free nations of Asia. The free nations of Southeast Asia would be appalled if South Viet-Nam were to be abandoned, exposing them to the momentum of successful communist aggression.
Twenty years ago it was clear to the leaders of Western Europe that our shield there was necessary to their future.

Today it is equally clear to Asian leaders that our presence in Vietnam is vital, is necessary, is a must to Asia’s tomorrow.

There has been much talk in the United States about the so-called “domino theory”—the theory that if South Vietnam should fall, its neighbors would topple one after another. As I pointed out in a speech I recently made in San Antonio, the threat of Communist domination is not a matter of theory for Asians. Communist domination for Asians is a matter of life and death.

But it is now clear, I think, to all Asians that South Vietnam is not going to fall. In every capital of Free Asia that fact has already registered, and registered well. It is being acted upon. What is happening in Asia might really be called the “domino theory in reverse.” We do not need to speculate about the results. We know what has happened since we made our stand clear in Vietnam.

Just a few years ago, Southeast Asia was only a geographic phrase. Its separate states had no sense of identity with each other.

All of those states were overwhelmed by the size of their own domestic problems.

Moreover—and most important—they were hypnotized by the menace of China.

Out of this fear—and out of this sense of isolation—this awareness of desperate problems—grew something ominous. It was a paralysis of the will to progress. There was a hopeless feeling among all Asians that they were the victims, rather than the forgers, of their own destiny.

Now, in the span of a few years, all of that, I am glad to say, has changed and the major agent of that change has been America’s firmness in Asia.

Behind the shield of our commitment there, hope has quickened in the nations of Asia.
A great deal.
North Vietnamese regiments have invaded South Vietnam. Other
North Vietnamese regiments have crossed into Laos and are opposed
by Laotian forces. North Vietnam has also trained the guerrillas
who are operating in northeast Thailand. In Burma, dissident com-
munist elements are being encouraged by outside forces. And let us
not forget the communist effort in 1965 to seize control of Indonesia.
With that kind of insidious and invidious activity underway, it is
important to consider the consequences of the added impetus that a
victory in South Vietnam would bring to them.
As you all know, we have for two years or more been examining into the possibilities of using ground obstacles and other devices to help impede the flow of men and supplies into South Vietnam. Many persons, some inside the Department of Defense and some in research organizations outside the Department, have recommended different proposals.

Some of these proposals have been examined in detail and discarded. Others appear to have more promise. You are all aware that work has begun on clearing the jungle south of the DMZ for a stretch of roughly 15 miles. We are preparing to initiate late this year or early next year the operation of a system to make infiltration more difficult. The system's objectives will be consistent with those of our air campaign against the lines of communication. We know, of course, that no obstacle system can stop the infiltration of personnel or supplies.

Equipment to be installed will range from barbed wire to highly sophisticated devices. The more the enemy knows about our plans, the more ready he could be to defeat the system when it is installed. Therefore, I am directing that no additional information be made public by anyone in the Department of Defense on this program. I do not intend to give the enemy the advantage of knowing what materials we will use, where they might be used or in what quantities. All such information would be of military assistance to him. Appropriate Committees of Congress will, of course, be kept informed of our plans.

MR. HARSH: Can you tell us this, whether if a barrier -- whether -- if a barrier became militarily effective it would reduce the importance of the bombing to the extent that it was effective?

SECRETARY RUSK: No. Again, if I were a regimental commander up there, to prevent the intrusion of these forces from North Vietnam across the DMZ, I would be glad to have my men reinforced by materiel. That is the basic element in the situation.
NAME: HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, Vice President
OCCASION: Interview: NBC "MEET THE PRESS"
DATE: November 26, 1967

MR. GEYELIN: Mr. Vice President, you have always been identified as an advocate of the barrier across the top of South Vietnam. Where does that stand? Is it going to work or is it being enplaced (sic)?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Mr. Geyelin, I feel this way: That there are many ways that you ought to try to intercept the enemy, block the enemy and the enemy's activities and progress. The barrier is but one of them. It isn't an alternative. The bombing, the barrier, the bombing of trails, what took place recently at Dok (sic) To, so that at the intersection, at the end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and on the near boundary of Cambodia -- all of these things are part of our effort to suppress the aggression, to resist the aggression and to bring the enemy -- to prevent the success of the enemy.

I think we ought to do all of them and I don't think we ought to put them in terms of alternatives.
MR. SCHERER: What would constitute reasonable success in Vietnam from our point of view?

MR. ROSTOW: The cessation of the aggression, which is a thoroughly professional and massive operation, which means the end of infiltration of men and supplies, and the chance of the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future. In diplomatic terms, if you like, it is the return to the Geneva Accords of 1954 and '62, which the government in Hanoi agreed to, and their effective carrying out.
Question: Mr. Secretary, there are Republican critics in the last few days who say we cannot win a limited war when the enemy is fighting an all-out war.

Secretary McNamara: Well, of course, the enemy is not fighting an all-out war, and our limited war is associated with our limited political objectives. We said before, and I want to repeat now, that our objective is to preserve the independence of South Vietnam, to assure the people of South Vietnam the right to shape their own destiny, to use their own political institutions, to shape their economy and to live in peace. We are not seeking bases there, we are not seeking allies, we are not seeking long-run military relationships, and why anybody in this country should ask that we extend the war beyond the limits required to meet that limited objective, I cannot understand.

NAME: William P. Bundy, Asst Sec of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
OCCASION: National Student Association, University of Maryland
DATE: August 15, 1967

The key elements in the policy were stated in President Johnson's Baltimore speech of April 1965, and the major combat force commitment was explained in the President's statement of July 28, 1965. These have been the cornerstones of policy, and they have been elaborated and explained repeatedly and at length by all senior Administration spokesmen.

In essence:

a. Our objective remained solely that of protecting the independence of South Viet-Nam from external interference and force. We declined, and still decline, to threaten the regime in North Viet-Nam itself, or the territory and regime of Communist China.

b. We indicated in April of 1965 that we were prepared for discussions or negotiations without condition, and we have relentlessly pursued our own efforts to enter into meaningful discussions as well as following up on a host of peace initiatives by others. Unfortunately Hanoi has clung firmly to the objective of insuring a Communist take-over of South Viet-Nam, and has refused to enter into any fruitful discussions. Indeed, Hanoi has rejected any discussions whatever, initially unless its basic objective was accepted in advance through the so-called "third point," more recently unless we agreed to a complete cessation of the bombing without any responsive action on their part. Hanoi's philosophy toward negotiation has now become authoritatively available, particularly in the section on "fighting while negotiating" in the captured remarks of one of the North Vietnamese leaders, Comrade Vinh.
US POLICY - Commitments and Objectives

Wm. Bundy (continued)

c. We continued to place every possible emphasis on the crucial non-military aspects of the conflict, greatly strengthening our own contribution to the essentially South Vietnamese task of restoring stability and control in the countryside and working for the welfare of the people.

d. Militarily, our actions were directed to proving to North Vietnam that its effort to take over the South by military force must fail, and to extending and enlarging the areas in which the vital business of bringing real security and peace to the countryside could go forward with all the strength we could hope to give it. The total effort in the South remained primary, even as the bombing of military targets in the North was carried on--initially to demonstrate resolve, but always and basically to make Hanoi's infiltration far more difficult and costly and to prevent levels of new men and equipment that could only, in the arithmetic of guerrilla warfare, multiply many times over, for each addition from North Vietnam, the requirement for forces in the South.

e. We encouraged the South Vietnamese in their own resolve to move to a constitutional basis of government, a process set under way formally by Prime Minister Ky in January of 1966 and followed since that time in the face of all the difficulties and dangers of attempting to create such a basis in a country without political experience and ravaged by terrorism and by guerrilla and conventional military action.

f. We encouraged the South Vietnamese at the same time to proceed on the track that has now become reconciliation, the holding out to members of the Viet Cong of the possibility of re-entering the political life of their country under peaceful conditions. In essence, we seek and would accept a fair determination of the will of the people of South Viet-Nam along the lines well summarized by Ambassador Goldberg's Chicago speech of May 12, 1967.

NAME: General Earle G. Wheeler, USA, Chairman of the JCS
OCCASION: Statement before the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee
DATE: August 16, 1967

The political objectives of the war established by our Government are limited, and do not include overthrow of the Hanoi Regime or conquest of North Vietnam. Moreover, an expansion of the war -- geographically or in number of participants -- is considered contrary to United States' interest.
After the Tonkin Gulf we responded to the action with appropriate measures.

But after that, we felt that we should point out that there was likelihood there would be other instances. We could see the problem developing in that area. So we asked the leadership of the Congress to come to the White House.

We reviewed with them Senator Taft's statements about Korea, and the actions that President Eisenhower had taken, and asked their judgment about the resolution that would give us the opinion of the Congress.

We were informed that a resolution was thought desirable. So the members of the executive and legislative branches talked about the content of that resolution.

A resolution was drafted. That was reviewed with the leaders on, I believe, August 4, 1964.

I sent a message up to the Congress shortly afterwards and asked for consideration of a resolution. Some of the Members of the Congress felt that they should amend the resolution, even after amendments had already been put into it by Members, to provide that if at any time the Congress felt that the authority delegated in the resolution should be withdrawn, the Congress, without waiting for a recommendation from the President—he might differ with them—could withdraw that authority by just passing a resolution which did not require the President's veto. They could do it by themselves.

That suggestion was made to me by a prominent Senator. I readily accepted.

So the machinery is there any time the Congress desires to withdraw its views on the matter.

We stated then, and we repeat now, we did not think the resolution was necessary to do what we did and what we are doing. But we thought it was desirable. We thought if we were going to ask them to stay the whole route, and if we expected them to be there on the landing we ought to ask them to be there on the take off.

* * *

Our policy in Vietnam is the same: We are there to deter aggression.

We are there to permit the people of South Vietnam to determine for themselves who their leaders should be and what kind of a government they should have.
US POLICY - Commitments and Objectives

NAME: General Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff, USA
OCCASION: Statement before the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, Committee on Armed Services, US Senate
DATE: August 28, 1967

The effectiveness of all operations must be measured against U. S. objectives in Southeast Asia. These objectives are:

-- To assist the South Vietnamese in eliminating the armed enemy within South Vietnam and to support the South Vietnamese in the extension of their Government's control over its own territory.

-- To apply gradually increasing pressures against North Vietnam so as to cause North Vietnam to cease supporting and directing the insurgency in South Vietnam.

The war in Southeast Asia is a single conflict integrated militarily, geographically, politically, psychologically, and socially. Individual elements of the war effort must be considered within the context of the total operation. All combat operations contribute to the eventual achievement of our objectives in Southeast Asia.

NAME: Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff, USA
OCCASION: Defense Orientation Conference, Washington, DC
DATE: September 29, 1967

I have not discussed the conditions we seek to avoid, but let me summarize quickly: We seek no wider war. We do not have a wider war. We do not seek the destruction of the North Vietnam regime. We have not taken actions to destroy the North Vietnam regime. There are others. On balance, we are successful in both the actions that we seek to accomplish and the actions that we seek to avoid.
Our commitment is clear and our national interest is real. The SEATO Treaty, approved with only one dissenting vote by our Senate, declares that "Each party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area ... would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger." The Treaty says "each party" will act. The fidelity of the United States is not subject to the veto of some other signatory—and five signatories have engaged their forces alongside Korean and South Vietnamese troops. Indeed, the proportion of non-U.S. forces in South Viet-Nam is greater than non-U.S. forces in Korea.

In August 1964 the Congress by joint resolution declared, with only two dissenting votes, that "The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia." This was not a new idea in 1964. It was the basis for the SEATO Treaty a decade earlier. It is no less valid in 1967. Our several alliances in the Pacific reflect our profound interest in peace in the Pacific, and in Asia where two-thirds of the world's people live, no less vital to us as a nation than is peace in our own hemisphere or in the NATO area.

I have heard the word "credibility" injected into our domestic debate. Let me say, as solemnly as I can, that those who would place in question the credibility of the pledged word of the United States under our mutual security treaties would subject this nation to mortal danger. If any who would be our adversary should suppose that our treaties are a bluff, or will be abandoned if the going gets tough, the result could be catastrophe for all mankind.
These commitments -- both legal and moral -- are so solidly founded that I cannot see how anyone can rightly argue that we should renege on them.

They are rooted in the Geneva Accords of 1954, (at the conclusion of which the United States formally stated that we "would view any renewal of the aggression ... with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security"), rooted in the SEATO Treaty (which applies to South Viet-Nam through a protocol annexed to it), and rooted in numerous other assurances (including President Kennedy's statement of August 2, 1961 that "the United States is determined that the Republic of Viet-Nam shall not be lost to the communists for lack of any support which the United States Government can render").

Our commitments to South Viet-Nam are far better grounded than were those to South Korea at the time of the aggression there. For this reason, I am puzzled as to why so many liberals who supported President Truman in a policy of limited war in Korea now oppose a parallel policy in Viet-Nam.

* In early 1970, Katzenbach was on 
  Democratic policy council, which called 
  on Nixon to withdraw from Vietnam.
Our commitment in Vietnam and Southeast Asia is the same kind of commitment this nation undertook after World War II when it faced down Soviet pressure in Europe. It is a commitment to see that Communist aggression and subversion in Asia -- of the kind we have plainly seen in Korea, in India, in Tibet, in Indonesia, in Burma, in Malaysia, and now in Thailand, in Laos and in Vietnam -- does not succeed.

Nor should the objective of this commitment be difficult to understand.

It is to prevent World War III. It is to stop aggression before it becomes a pattern of international conduct.

It is to allow the nations of Asia to develop freely and independently, just as the nations of Europe have done, so that aggression may not have fertile ground in which to grow.

It is to convince the leaders of militant Asian Communism that time and history are not on their side and that peaceful coexistence is a far more profitable path.
So, we are fighting in Viet-Nam

--because the peace and security of Southeast Asia are vital to our national interest;

--because we made a solemn commitment "to act to meet the common danger" if South Viet-Nam were subjected to "aggression by means of armed attack";

--because if those who would be our enemies should come to think that the defensive commitments of the United States--to more than 40 allies--are just bluffs, we would be on the slippery slope to general war;

--because Asian Communist leaders have proclaimed the struggle in Viet-Nam to be a critical test of a special technique for achieving Communist domination of the world; through what they, in their upside down language, call "wars of national liberation."

We are in Viet-Nam because we believe that the people of South Viet-Nam should have a chance to determine their own government and their own future by their own choice and not through force imposed by Hanoi. The idea of self-determination is fundamental to a nation which was founded upon the notion that "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." This does not mean that we are the world's policemen but it does mean that we take this factor into full account when we make treaties and undertake commitments beyond our borders.

And we are fighting in Viet-Nam because we are resolved not to repeat the blunders which led to the Second World War.
U.S. POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Q. Mr. President, sir, one of the main points in the domestic arguments about the policy of the war has been the fact that in 1964, when you were campaigning, you spoke of not wishing to send American boys to fight a war that Asian boys should fight. Then a year later, the Government did that. I wonder if you could give us your thinking on the change in policy?

THE PRESIDENT. There has not been a change of policy. You have quoted one sentence in a speech that contained many sentences and many paragraphs. We always have said—and we repeat now—that we do not want American boys to do the fighting that South Vietnamese boys ought to do or that Asian boys ought to do.

We are asking them all to do all they can. But that did not imply then and does not imply now that we would not do what we needed to do to deter aggression.

As a matter of fact, before that statement was made, we began discussing at this table in May of that year the desirability of asking the Congress to join with us in deterring aggression.

In presenting that resolution to Congress, we made clear to Congress some of the things that I would ask you not to overlook now; namely, that we had a vital security interest in Southeast Asia; that Asian security was important to our own American security.

Second, we intended to comply with what we believed to be our commitments under the SEATO Treaty signed by Senator Mansfield and others at Manila in September 1954.

Finally, that we asked the Congress not only to approve what we had already done in resisting aggression in the Tonkin Gulf, and elsewhere in that area, but to also authorize us to take whatever steps necessary to deter further aggression.
Q. Mr. President, is your aim in Vietnam to win the war or to seek a compromised, negotiated solution?

THE PRESIDENT. I think our aims in Vietnam have been very clear from the beginning. They are consistent with the SEATO Treaty, with the Atlantic Charter, and with the many statements that we have made to the Congress in connection with the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. The Secretary of State has made this clear dozens and dozens of times—and I made it enough that I thought even all the preachers in the country had heard about it.

That is, namely, to protect the security of the United States. We think the security of the United States is definitely tied in with the security of Southeast Asia.

Secondly, to resist aggression. When we are a party to a treaty that says we will do it, then we carry it out.

I think if you saw a little child in this room who was trying to waddle across the floor and some big bully came along and grabbed it by the hair and started stomping it, I think you would do something about it.

I think that we thought we made a mistake when we saw Hitler moving across the landscape of Europe. The concessions that were made by the men carrying umbrellas at that time—I think in retrospect we thought that was a mistake.

So as a consequence, in 1954 under the leadership of President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles, we had a SEATO Treaty.

It was debated, it was considered and it was gone into thoroughly by the Senate. The men who presented that Treaty then said, “This is dangerous. The time may come when we may have to put up or shut up.”

But we ought to serve notice in Asia now as we refused to serve notice in Europe a few years ago that we will resist aggression—that we will stand against someone who seeks to gobble up little countries, if those little countries call upon us for our help.

I didn’t vote for that Treaty. I was in the hospital. Senator Kennedy didn’t vote for it—the late President—he was in the hospital. Senator Dirksen didn’t vote for it. But 82 Senators did vote for it. They knew what was in that Treaty.

The time came when we had to decide whether we meant what we said when we said our security was tied in to their security and that we would stand in unison in the face of danger.

We are doing that. We are doing it against whoever combines out there to promote aggression. We are going (continued)
to do whatever we think is necessary to protect the security of South Vietnam--and let those people determine for themselves what kind of a government they have.

We think they are moving along very quickly in that direction to developing a democratic procedure.

Third, we are going to do whatever it is necessary to do to see that the aggressor does not succeed.

Those are our purposes. Those are our goals.

let us clearly state our objectives -- what it is we are trying to achieve by our presence in Viet-Nam.

-- Our immediate objective is the independence of South Viet-Nam and its freedom from attack.

-- In a broader frame, we aim to reinforce the growing climate of confidence in Southeast Asia -- a confidence borne of an affirmation of the right to freedom from attack for other nations in the area, some of which already are threatened by externally-supported Communist insurrections.

-- We are affirming our commitment to resist aggression -- a commitment under the Charter of the United Nations and our obligation as a member of SEATO. The credibility of this commitment must be beyond the doubt of friend and foe alike.

-- We seek early negotiations to arrive at a just and honorable peace based on the principal of self-determination.

-- Within this overall context, we are working to help the Vietnamese help themselves in building new political institutions and developing a viable economy.
MR. SPIVAK: Ambassador Bunker, there are many people in this country who are saying that the United States today is really seeking a military victory in Vietnam and is not seeking negotiations, and that is one of our problems.

Can you tell us whether our goal in Vietnam today is military victory?

AMBASSADOR BUNKER: Well, I think the President has made it quite clear that our goal is a political settlement through negotiations, and we are, Mr. Spivak, as you know, fighting a limited war for limited objectives and therefore with limited means. We are not in any sense bringing our entire resources to bear. We have no designs against the government of North Vietnam, we have made that quite clear. What we are doing in our objective is to resist aggression. As I say, under your commitments to do so under the United Nations Charter, under the SEATO Treaty, but we have no desire for any territory or bases or any permanent fixtures in South Vietnam or in that part of the world.
Q. Mr. Secretary, why are we in South Viet-Nam today?

Secretary Rusk: The United States has combat forces in South Viet-Nam because it undertook a mutual security commitment, by solemn treaty, in 1955 to "act to meet the common danger" in the event of an "aggression by means of armed attack" against any country covered by that treaty.

Second, we are in Viet-Nam because of the vital interest of the United States in the peace and security of Southeast Asia. This vital interest was specifically reaffirmed by a resolution adopted by both Houses of the Congress in August 1964, with only two negative votes.

We are in Viet-Nam because the United States must be just as interested in the organization of peace in the Pacific as in the Atlantic. We are there because we have not forgotten the costly lesson of the Nineteen-Thirties: that one successful aggression leads to another.

We are in Viet-Nam because it is necessary for those who might become our adversaries to understand that the treaty commitments of the United States, which encompass more than 40 allies, mean exactly what they say. Otherwise, there might be temptations to move against one or more of our allies in a way that would bring us all into the catastrophe of World War III.
US POLICY - Commitments and Objectives

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: Foreign Policy Conference for Business Executives
DATE: December 4, 1967

Our presence in Vietnam is in keeping with a foreign policy which has guided this Nation for more than 20 years. Four Presidents, 11 Congresses, and the most thoughtful men of our generation have endorsed that policy and have built that policy from the ground up.

For two decades, we have made it clear that we will use American strength to block aggression when our security is threatened, and when—as in Vietnam—the victims of aggression ask for our help and are prepared to struggle for their own independence and for their own freedom.

NAME: William P. Bundy, Asst Sec of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
OCCASION: Article: US News & World Report
DATE: December 18, 1967

Our objective is simple and unchanging. President Johnson stated it at Johns Hopkins on April 7, 1965, in these terms:

““Our objective is the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack. We want nothing for ourselves—only that the people of South Vietnam be allowed to guide their own country in their own way.”

In a word, we are assisting the Government and people of South Vietnam to defend themselves against an attempt to impose on them by force a Hanoi-dominated government.

We believe that the great majority of the South Vietnamese people reject such a solution, and that the South Vietnamese people should be permitted to work out their own political future without external interference.

Behind our pursuit of this objective—and our belief that it deeply involves our national interests—have lain basic judgments, of which four stand out:

First, Southeast Asia matters. Its 250 million people are entitled to develop as free and independent nations in whatever international posture they wish, and this is the only kind of Southeast Asia compatible with a peaceful future for Asia as a whole and wider areas.

Second, the nations of Southeast Asia are individually threatened by the parallel and mutually reinforcing ambitions of North Vietnam and of Communist China. A North Vietnamese takeover of the South by force would stimulate these expansionist ambitions and weaken the will and ability of the nations of Southeast Asia, and indeed beyond, to resist pressure and subversion.

Third, if South Vietnam were to be lost through a failure on our part to fulfill the national commitment embodied in our whole course of conduct since 1954, including SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization], the effect on confidence in our commitments in Asia and elsewhere could only be very serious.

And, fourth, a success of the Communist technique of “people's war” or a “war of national liberation” would undoubtedly have the effect of encouraging the extremist line of thought among Communist nations. It might thus undo the more promising trends that have developed in recent years in the Soviet Union and in the Eastern European countries, and this could seriously affect the Middle East, Latin America, and even Europe.
NAME: Walt W. Rostow, Special Assistant to the President
OCCASION: NBC "Meet the Press"
DATE: July 9, 1967

MR. CHILDS: Now you, when you went on a mission to Vietnam in 1961, with General Maxwell Taylor, you were, as I recall it, one of the first to advocate the bombing of North Vietnam. That is correct, isn't it?

MR. ROSTOW: No, what I have said -- and I said this as early as June, '61, in a speech I gave at Fort Bragg, which was cleared by President Kennedy, was the following that if -- I said that infiltration of men and arms across frontiers is an act of aggression and that if the international community did not deal with that act of aggression and stop it, men would be led inevitably to seek out the source of the aggression. Now very recently in a letter to Senator Jackson, I believe, President Johnson released a passage from General Taylor's report in which he said to President Kennedy that the recommendations he was making would improve the situation but unless the Geneva Conference -- which was then meeting -- resulted in a stoppage of infiltration, we would have to face down the line the question of whether we confined our action to the boundaries of South Vietnam or impose a penalty on those who were illegally violating the frontiers.

Now the Geneva Accords of '62 would have stopped infiltration through Laos. The agreement was that they would get the North Vietnamese troops out and they would stop transiting Laos and the Soviets were party to that agreement and had responsibility for its execution. In fact, that agreement was not kept and in '64 as you know, they radically expanded their infiltration. But that is the history of the affair, Mr. Childs.
Let me pause here to clear up another current historical inaccuracy. The basis for the successive decisions— in February to start bombing, in March to introduce small numbers of combat forces, and in July to move to major United States combat forces— was as I have stated it. It depended on an over-all view of the situation, and on an over-all view that what had been going on for years was for all practical purposes aggression— and indeed this term dates from late 1961 or early 1962 in the statements of senior Administration spokesmen.

But there is a separate point whether, as has sometimes been asserted, it was the United States alone which unilaterally changed the character of the war in the direction of a conventional conflict. It is alleged that Hanoi was adhering to a tacit agreement that, so long as we did not bomb North Viet-Nam, Hanoi would not send in its regulars, at least in units.

Multiple and conclusive evidence which became available from the spring of 1965 onward seems to me to refute these contentions. As has been repeatedly made public over the past two years, we know that one North Vietnamese regiment entered South Viet-Nam by December 1964, and we know that several other regiments entered in the spring of 1965 on timetables of infiltration that can only have reflected command decisions taken in Hanoi prior to the beginning of the bombing.

From the standpoint of the basis for U. S. decisions, this evidence simply reinforces the February picture that Hanoi was moving for the kill. Native North Vietnamese, alone or in regular units, were in themselves no more and no less aggressive than the earlier native South Vietnamese who had gone North and became North Vietnamese nationals. The point is that Hanoi—as we suspected then and later proved— had taken major steps to raise the level of the war before the bombing began.
In Vietnam, our airpower is being used with restraint, responsibility and precision, as a scalpel, not as an axe. It is being used as an instrument of conflict control and negotiation, not as an instrument of vast destruction. The world is well aware of the capabilities of airpower for destruction, but the Free World is looking to us for responsible, humane leadership. We are demonstrating this leadership in Vietnam today. Airpower is being used exactly as the President wants it to be used—and as I believe the vast majority of the American people want it used.

The precise use of airpower as an element of national power designed to bring about negotiation as opposed to capitulation is costly in terms of time, money and equipment; but in the long run, it is less costly than would be an unrestrained use of our massive power that could quite conceivably change the entire character of the war.
US POLICY - Limited War Strategy

NAME: Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense
OCCASION: DoD News Release No. 733-67
DATE: August 8, 1967

"It is true that there are restraints on the bombing, but they are restraints designed to save American lives, to avoid unnecessary devastation and civilian casualties in North Vietnam, and to avoid action which carries with it the high risk of widening the war with all that that implies. We believe the American public supports these restraints."

NAME: Adm. U.S.G. Sharp, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific
OCCASION: Statement before the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee
DATE: August 9, 1967

Our government has repeatedly made it clear that our objectives in the Vietnam conflict are limited. We are not out to destroy the Hanoi Regime, or to compel the people of North Vietnam to adopt another form of government, nor are we out to devastate North Vietnam. We simply want North Vietnam to cease its direction and support of the Viet Cong insurgency in the south and take its forces home. Our strategy for the conduct of the war in the north reflects these limited objectives. Our attacks are confined to military targets and are conducted with tactics which cause least possible injury to civilians and non-military facilities. What our campaign in North Vietnam is designed to do is to speed the day when Hanoi will conclude, on the basis of the situation in North and South Vietnam, that its aggression in the south is both unsuccessful and exceedingly costly -- to the point that it is not rational to continue.

Within this framework, there are three broad tasks which we seek to carry out in North Vietnam:

a. To reduce the flow of external assistance being provided to North Vietnam;

b. To destroy those military and industrial resources that contribute most to the support of aggression; and

c. To harass, disrupt, and impede movement of men and materials into South Vietnam.
Air operations against North Vietnam have been directed toward the attainment of three basic aims: to reduce and impede the flow of men and supplies from North to South Vietnam; to impose a gradually increasing cost on the enemy's campaign of aggression in the South; and, to convince him that he cannot continue the war of aggression against his neighbor without incurring penalties of still greater severity.

As we have progressed toward these limited goals, we have observed certain restrictions that recognize political considerations (including the risk of widening the war), that seek to minimize civilian casualties, and that limit damage to other than specified and approved targets. The intent has been to meet our objectives while refraining from the destruction of the North Vietnamese government. We have not attacked his agricultural base or urban centers. We have sought only to apply pressures gradually on his war-supporting base, primarily on the military lines of communication and logistics support facilities. An important aspect to remember is that we are able to apply airpower in North Vietnam as a separate and decisive entity, exerting pressure on the enemy without the direct involvement of our ground forces. It is an operation in which we can maintain virtually complete initiative with respect to timing, objective and weight of effort.
Airpower with restraint

"In measuring airpower's overall contribution to America's war effort in Southeast Asia, it must be remembered that we have sought a limited objective... calling for three specific types of restraint in the employment of tactical airpower:

-- the positive definition of geographical areas where our aircraft are permitted to operate;

-- the limitations on types of ordnance which may be used;

-- and discrimination in selection of targets.

"The pace and intensity of our combat air operations have very carefully geared the timetable for destruction of certain targets in such a way as to give the enemy opportunity to reflect on the latest level of destruction, and to respond to our offers of negotiation."

To those who would ask us to use even more powerful measures in conducting the war, I suggest this caution: When the alternatives that might be employed are examined, a grim picture emerges. This is so because a frightful power can be unleashed at the touch of a button. This is so because our action in South Vietnam continues to be consistent with a policy of collective security that has been pursued by our nation since the end of World War II. The decision is not that of the United States alone, but must be influenced by the views of other contributing nations. Moreover, our nation, the United States of America, has always sought for ways, not to destroy men but, to help them live in peace and harmony under a rule of law that recognizes the rights and dignities of every man. What level of risk would the nation assume by adopting measures that could lead to a great war and its attendant imponderables? On the other hand, we know that sitting idly by can be more dangerous than taking no risks at all.
US POLICY - Limited War Strategy

NAME: Vice President Hubert Humphrey
OCCASION: National Defense Executive Reserve
DATE: October 23, 1967

I support our policy in Southeast Asia and Vietnam--
I support it now as I have over the past 12 years.

I support our policy of prudence and restraint--an
effort carefully calculated to discourage further aggression
but not to risks of triggering a nuclear and final World War
III.

I support it because I believe it to be vital to our
own national security. I support it because I believe it
serves the long-term interest of a stable and peaceful
world.

And were we to abandon that policy today, our children
might have to pay the final, terrible price tomorrow.

NAME: Lt. General Lewis W. Walt, USMC, Director of
Personnel and Deputy Chief of Staff (Manpower), HQMC
OCCASION: Address at the National War College, Washington, D.C.
DATE: November 6, 1967

Total war in the past meant industrial mobilization at
home, waves of bombers blackening the skys over the enemy's
homeland, great masses of troops and armor crossing borders,
and fleets at sea engaging and destroying the enemy.

By contrast, we use the word "limited" to characterize
our commitment to Vietnam. Our bombing is "limited." Our
use of seapower is "limited." Our troop commitment is
"limited." We have "limited objectives. But the effort by
our men on the field of battle is not limited!
US POLICY - Limited War Strategy

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: Remarks at Camp Pendleton, California
DATE: November 10, 1967

Marines are winning in Vietnam—where the only victory we seek is to keep a small country out of the hands of aggressors.

You and I know that it is harder and tougher to ask for and to achieve a restrained and limited victory. One could surrender—or start world war III—and could do either without much help or much brains.

But the hard course and the true course—the only course—is the one we must steer between surrender and annihilation.

That is where honor lies. That is where freedom waits. That is where we find our only hope for true peace for ourselves and for our children.

NAME: General William C. Westmoreland, Commander, MACV
OCCASION: Military Briefing at the Pentagon
DATE: November 22, 1967

Now our strategy, I would define as follows: to secure our bases which are essential if we are to fight troops and sustain combat; to control populated and productive areas, and these are, in the main, along the coastline and in the Delta region with emphasis on the environs of Saigon; to neutralize his base areas which are in the main situated in very difficult terrain as I've described before along international borders, and those within country are usually positioned along provincial borders and almost always in very remote terrain.

The next to force the enemy back, particularly his main forces, back into peripheral areas and to contain him there. Next to interdict infiltration. And finally to inflict maximum attrition on his ranks.
US POLICY - Limited War Strategy

NAME: General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman, JCS
OCCASION: Address before the Economic Club of Detroit
DATE: December 18, 1967

Let me now add to this picture of the war in South Vietnam a brief perspective of the air campaign against the north -- one of the foggiest aspects of this war. Unfortunately, some persons, among them retired military officers -- professionals who really ought to know better -- have contributed to this fog.

They have argued that we should not bomb North Vietnam because the North Vietnamese are not bombing us. Yet, I question that any of these same gentlemen would argue that we should not use helicopters or armored personnel carriers, or even fighter bombers, in South Vietnam merely because the enemy does not have such equipment. Furthermore, I cannot see how any responsible military commander could jeopardize the lives of his men by refusing to attack military units and military equipment just because they had not yet arrived within the range of his mortars and artillery.

We must remember that the bombing of North Vietnam is only one of the many interrelated elements of our total strategy. We never expected, nor do we expect now, that air strikes, in themselves, would accomplish anything more than bring added pressure to bear on the enemy and reduce the levels of his infiltration of men and supplies.

This is a closely controlled campaign of limited purposes, but it, along with related political and military actions, contributes to the attainment of one simple goal -- preservation of the independence of South Vietnam and its freedom from attack. The selective bombing of military targets in North Vietnam backs our fighting men by denying the enemy a sanctuary, exacts a penalty against North Vietnam for her cynical aggression and limits the flow and substantially increases the cost of infiltration of men and materiel from the North.
NAME: Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense
OCCASION: News Conference at the Pentagon
DATE: September 7, 1967

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you said the question of handling the war and the domestic problem is a matter of will. Do you think there is a change in this country in the will to continue the war?

SECRETARY McNAMARA: No, I don't think so. I think there is a concern in the country, a frustration in the country with the unpredictable character of the war, I think there's a lack of patience at times and this can be dangerous. The London Economist, who two or three weeks ago had a very perceptive editorial on this exact subject and they said, "America is short of nothing required to achieve its objectives in Southeast Asia except patience," and I myself concur in that conclusion.

I think it is dangerous because impatience can lead to irrational, irresponsible actions, actions which can have the result of widening the war. That's not our objective. We don't propose to take them.
Why, in the face of military and political progress in the South, and the burden of our bombing in the North, do they insist and persist with the war?

From many sources the answer is the same. They still hope that the people of the United States will not see this struggle through to the very end. As one Western diplomat reported to me only this week—he had just been in Hanoi—"They believe their staying power is greater than ours and that they can't lose." A visitor from a Communist capital had this to say: "They expect the war to be long, and that the Americans in the end will be defeated by a breakdown in morale, fatigue, and psychological factors." The Premier of North Vietnam said as far back as 1962: "Americans do not like long, inconclusive war. . . . Thus we are sure to win in the end."

Are the North Vietnamese right about us?

I think not. No. I think they are wrong. I think it is the common failing of totalitarian regimes, that they cannot really understand the nature of our democracy:

—They mistake dissent for disloyalty;
—They mistake restlessness for a rejection of policy;
—They mistake a few committees for a country;
—They misjudge individual speeches for public policy.

They are no better suited to judge the strength and perseverance of America than the Nazi and the Stalinist propagandists were able to judge it. It is a tragedy that they must discover these qualities in the American people, and discover them through a bloody war.

And so I report to you that we are going to continue to press forward. Two things we must do. Two things we shall do.

First, we must not mislead our enemy. Let him not think that debate and dissent will produce wavering and withdrawal. For I can assure you they won't. Let him not think that protests will produce surrender. Because they won't. Let him not think that he will wait us out. For he won't.
Second, we will provide all that our brave men require to do the job that must be done. And that job is going to be done.

These gallant men have our prayers--have our thanks--have our heart-felt praise--and our deepest gratitude.

Let the world know that the keepers of peace will endure through every trial--and that with the full backing of their countrymen, they are going to prevail.

NAME: Vice President Hubert Humphrey
OCCASION: National Defense Executive Reserve
DATE: October 23, 1967

I think it is time that all Americans realized that we are in the midst of a protracted, costly struggle--a struggle in which we are making slow but steady progress--which nevertheless will probably not end until Hanoi comes to believe that we have the will, the determination, the perservance, patience and strength to see it through.

I will be criticized by some for saying it, but I have no doubt that expressions of American public support--or lack of support--have a good deal to do with convincing Hanoi, and Peking, and the independent nations of Asia, whether or not we can and will last the course.

Our hearts cry out at the misery and loss of life in Vietnam. We desperately want an end to the struggle.

But we must know that the enemy's hope for victory is not alone in his military power--but also in our division, our weariness, our uncertainty.

We must also know that the road to peace--peace with honor--lies in a large degree in our unity, in our steadfastness, in our purpose.
I believe in each American's right of dissent.

I have done my own share of dissenting.

But, in such a time, I would ask each American--when he considers dissent--to consider as well the policy options available to his government...to consider in his own mind whether he in fact has a constructive alternate course to offer...and to consider whether or not his dissent will add to, or subtract from, intelligent and well-reasoned discussion of this issue.

NAME: Vice President Hubert Humphrey
OCCASION: AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education Conference
DATE: October 24, 1967

This democracy can surely debate the tactics and timing we use to realize that commitment, and such a debate can be healthy.

But let us announce to the world, as one people, that we share a basic, unshakeable commitment to stability, to growth, and self-determination, without which there can be no peace.

And let us make clear to the world that we have the patience, courage and wisdom to see it through.

I believe the American people will stand fast. But they must hear the facts debated in a responsible and realistic fashion, not in a frame of reference long since proved wrong by history -- by the history of nations...or the history of all human behavior.
US POLICY - Public Support

NAME:  Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, USN, Chief of Naval Operations
OCCASION: Navy Day Luncheon, New Orleans
DATE:  October 27, 1967

Our nation is beset with the hue and cry of the most vocal, pitiful, minority group in its history. These are the hippies, the flower children, the draft card burners, the demonstrators, too many of whom are unwashed, uncut, unconformable, and most -- unbelievable.

People make news. And people who are extremists, who deal in violence, who thrive on agitation and controversy get a media exposure far beyond and out of proportion to their numbers and reason for dissent.

Unfortunately, their antics, statements, and daily criticism of our country, our government, and our foreign policy gives aid to the enemy, prolongs the war, and damages the integrity of citizens like yourselves -- and particularly the man in uniform in Vietnam.

NAME:  Lt Gen Lewis W. Walt, USMC, Dir of Personnel/DCS (Manpower)
OCCASION: Remarks at the Naval War College, Newport, R. I.
DATE:  November 2, 1967

Only history can judge the wisdom of our decision to commit troops to the jungles and rice paddies of Vietnam. However wise or unwise this decision, the fact remains that we have 500,000 American boys committed in a bloody, dirty war...They were told by the President and the Congress of the United States to get the job done over there.

More than 13,000 Americans have died in Vietnam obeying this command.

This time for weakness, vacillation, decision by consensus or debate is long past. Now is the time for unity of purpose, to show the enemy that no war of aggression, whatever its concept, will succeed in a world of free men.
EFFECT OF THE PEACE DEMONSTRATIONS

Q. Secretary Rusk said the other day that Hanoi had been encouraged by the recent peace demonstrations. I wonder, sir, if you could give us your assessment of what damage you think has been done to the American cause by the peace demonstrations?

THE PRESIDENT. I would prefer not to be negative. I would hope that every person who has a plan, a program, or observation in connection with the war that our young men are fighting out there would engage in some introspection and ask himself whether what he is about to say is going to make a contribution to solving the problem before he speaks.

If, in his judgment, it does, then he has that opportunity and that right.

So far as I am aware, there have been no great, unexpected developments that have flowed from the various suggestions and programs that have come from people on the outside who have busily engaged in finding out what is wrong.

The demands on our persistence, on our perseverance, on our sense of purpose will not diminish in the months that lie ahead.

We face foes whose stubbornness is steeped and seasoned in closed ideological rigidity, and thus who cannot distinguish in our open, free society between dissent and divisiveness -- between unity and uniformity.

The totalitarian temptation is always to read into divergence of views a disloyalty to duty.

There is divergency of views in this Republic -- and may there always be. It is a Republic founded -- and fought over -- to protect that very right.

But there is no disloyalty to duty.
As a long-time dissenter myself, I ask no American who dissents in good conscience to still his voice. But I do ask all Americans, before they dissent, to search their hearts ... to examine the facts ... to know the effect of what they say on our civilians and soldiers in Vietnam -- and on our adversaries as well.

I ask them to face, before they raise their voices, the hard fact of cynical Communist-initiated aggression and terror and to offer workable alternatives to meeting it.

I ask them to recognize that we face in Vietnam no peaceful reformer seeking power through parliamentary means.

We face not handbills, but hand grenades.

We face in Vietnam no indigenous movement of Robin Hoods, but one more Communist apparatus trying to seize land and people by brute force.

And to those who deplore war and use of arms, as I do, I ask: What other course do you recommend in meeting this challenge? If you can find it, we will use it.
The Vietnam Dissenters

Q. Mr. President, some people on the air and in print accuse you of trying to label all criticism of your Vietnam policy as unpatriotic. Could you tell us whether you have guidelines in which you are enabled to separate conscientious dissent from irresponsible dissension?

The President. No. I haven't called anyone unpatriotic. I haven't said anything that would indicate that.

The wicked fleeth when no one pursueth, sometimes.

I do think that some people are irresponsible, make untrue statements, and ought to be cautious and careful when they are dealing with the problem involving their men at the front.

There is a great deal of difference, as I said a moment ago, between criticism, indifference, and responsible dissent—all of which we insist on and all of which we protect—and storm-trooper bullying, throwing yourself down in the road, smashing windows, rowdism, and every time a person attempts to speak to try to drown him out.

We believe very strongly in preserving the right to differ in this country, and the right to dissent. If I have done a good job of anything since I have been President, it is to insure that there are plenty of dissenters.

There is not a person in this press corps that can't write what he wants to write. Most of them do write what they want to. I say “want” advisedly. I want to protect that. Our Congress wants to protect it.

But if I, by chance, should say, “I am not sure you saw all the cables on this and you are exactly right; let me explain the other side of it,” I would hope that you wouldn’t say I am lambasting my critics, or that I am assailing someone.

What I am trying to do is to preserve my right to give the other side. I don’t think one side ought to dominate the whole picture.

So what I would say is, let's realize that we are in the midst of a war. Let’s realize that there are 500,000 of our boys out there who are risking their lives to win that war. Let’s ask ourselves what it is we can do to help.

If you think you can make a contribution and help them by expressing your opinion and dissenting, then do it.
US POLICY - Public Support

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson

OCCASION: Remarks at Fort Benning, Georgia

DATE: November 20, 1967

At this moment in Vietnam, thousands of young Americans march with Jefferson. Tragically, but selflessly, they spill their "heart's blood" to defend again the vital interests of our Union—and of that wider union of free men who want only to live and to build in peace.

That peace will come more quickly when the enemy of freedom finds no crack in our courage—and no split in our resolve—and no encouragement to prolong his war in the shortness of our patience or the sharpness of our tongues.

The enemy probes our unity now. But it is he who will shatter against it. He will fail because he will hear the answer that America's citizens and citizen soldiers have always given to aggression.

NAME: Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President

OCCASION: Interview: NBC "MEET THE PRESS"

DATE: November 26, 1967

I think most of our people who disagree on Administration matters relating to Vietnam, do not disagree on the fundamental commitment. They are not asking that we withdraw. They are not even suggesting it. They are suggesting that there is a different way to do it. We have a substantial number of civilian experts in military matters that seem to know better how to fight the military war than some of our generals. That is what they seem to feel.

Now is is my view that they are in error, even though I recognize their right to disagree. No, my view is that the American people have the courage to stick it out, will stick it out, will persevere. And that was the message that I brought to Southeast Asia. This was the basic concern that the leaders of Southeast Asia had: Will the Americans persevere? Will we stay with them? Will we help them in national security and national development? Will we have the patience and my answer was Yes.
US POLICY - Public Support

NAME: Vice President Hubert Humphrey

OCCASION: Democratic Fund Raising Dinner, St. Louis, Mo.

DATE: December 8, 1967

Are we going to last it out until there is just and peaceful settlement?

Or are we going to withdraw, short of such a settlement...abandon the people of South Vietnam...and prove to the aggressors that might, after all, does make right?

Or -- at the other extreme -- are we going to reach impetuously for the weapons that would settle the issue in Vietnam by burying it in World War III?

I am ready to hear those issues debated responsibly by the American people. Let those who are "concerned" stand up and tell us which course they choose.

And I am ready to predict that the people will stand behind the Administration which has had the courage to take the difficult middle path -- to stand fast against aggression, to insist on the development of democratic institutions even under the most adverse conditions, and to show restraint when it has the power to do otherwise.

NAME: Vice President Hubert Humphrey

OCCASION: Remarks before the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, Minneapolis

DATE: December 9, 1967

But as we are "concerned," we who bear responsibility must also be prepared to carefully examine the various policy options available in each situation...to weigh the consequences of each possible course...and then to decide and act, as painful as that decision and action may be. And this, as I said, is what we have done.

I believe it is especially important that those in our party who prize dissent...who properly defend each man's right to disagree, should -- if they cannot agree with some aspect of our present policy -- clearly enunciate the alternative policy courses and actions which they favor.

For with each American right comes an American responsibility -- in this case, I believe, the responsibility to come forth with positive, constructive alternatives.
US POLICY - Public Support

NAME: General Earle G. Wheeler, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
OCCASION: Address before the Economic Club of Detroit
DATE: December 18, 1967

The single most important factor in prolonging the war is Hanoi's calculation that there is a reasonable possibility of a change in U.S. policy before the ultimate collapse of the Viet Cong manpower base and infrastructure. In a very real sense, the major campaign of the war has been and is being fought here in the United States. Those Americans who dissent from U.S. policy must be aware of this fact. They have a right to dissent but they also have a responsibility to recognize and acknowledge what their dissent means.

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

THE PRESIDENT: I think that Hanoi feels that if they can hold out long enough, they will not win a military victory against General Westmoreland. They haven't done that. They can't point to one single victory they won from our Marines, from our Air, from our Navy or from our Army.

They think, though, that they can repeat what happened to them with the French; that if their will is strong and they continue to remain firm, that they will develop enough sympathy and understanding in this country, and hatred for war in this country, that their will will outlast our will.

I don't think that is true. I think in due time, if our people will understand and recognize what is happening, I think they will help me prove it is not true.
VIET CONG - Atrocities

NAME: President Lyndon B. Johnson
OCCASION: Remarks at the Presentation of Vietnam Civilian Awards
DATE: August 16, 1967

Since the first of this year, the Vietcong has killed almost 1,800 civilians—it has wounded another 3,300, and it has kidnapped more than 2,200.

The enemy's purpose is quite clear. It is to deprive South Vietnam of every hamlet or village leader—to deprive them of every teacher and worker—who tries to improve the life of his people. It is to so intimidate the Republic of South Vietnam that at last it will surrender in hopeless desperation and frustration.

NAME: Dean Rusk, Secretary of State
OCCASION: ABC's Issues and Answers
DATE: September 10, 1967

In a broadcast just yesterday from Hanoi they announced that we had killed 500 civilians in North Vietnam by our bombing in the past six months. The first six months of 1967. Now that figure of 500 is just about the same number of South Vietnamese civilians killed by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in the South during the election campaign, which has just closed. During about four weeks. And this is a matter of policy on the part of the Viet Cong. They were ordered to do so, whereas the civilian casualties in the North were unfortunate by-products of attacks on military targets.
I want to squelch any exaggerations you may have heard about the injury or death we have inflicted on South Vietnamese people or the damage we have wrought on their property through our combat actions. Of course there have been some isolated instances in which damage has been done. Some innocent people have been accidentally wounded or killed by mis directed artillery fire and other human error. General Sherman did not exaggerate when he said, "War is Hell." But I ask you to compare those few accidental deaths with the cruel, calculated, ruthless campaign of terror that has been and still is being carried on by the Viet Cong. Never have I heard of American soldiers standing a town mayor in front of his people and disembowelling him. The Viet Cong soldiers do--regularly. I have never heard of an American who cut off a young girl's hand as a warning to others simply because she had chosen to go to school to learn to write. The Viet Cong have done this and many barbaric deeds like it, over and over. Thus far in 1967 they have murdered 1,500 civilians, wounded nearly 2,700, and kidnapped around 2,000--many of whom were village officials, civil workers, and school teachers. During the first week of September alone -- the week of the recent elections -- the Viet Cong committed nearly a thousand atrocities -- many, many more than the total accidental deaths that can be attributed to our operations.
The conflict there has often been called a civil war. There is a genuine South Vietnamese element among the Viet Cong. But that is not why American combat forces are in South Viet-Nam. They are there because of what North Viet-Nam has been putting into the South: cadre, arms, men and, since late 1964, major organized units of the regular army of North Viet-Nam. It has continued to infiltrate regiments and divisions as well as replacements for the Viet Cong main forces.

In view of our government, the war in Viet-Nam is like the attack on South Korea, and earlier threats to Greece, Iran and Berlin. It constitutes a clear aggression by a Communist regime supported both by China and the Soviet Union -- an attempt to take over another country by force. Whatever view one takes of the origins of the war -- whether it is considered an insurrection against the authority of the South Vietnamese state aided by North Viet-Nam, or, as we believe, an infiltration and invasion from North Viet-Nam -- the issue in international law and politics is the same. In either view, North Viet-Nam is waging war against South Viet-Nam. And South Viet-Nam has the right to ask for the help of the international community in resisting an attack mounted from beyond its borders.

Neither South Viet-Nam nor the United States wants to conquer North Viet-Nam, or to overturn its Communist regime. The central issue of the war is whether North Viet-Nam will be allowed to conquer South Viet-Nam.
Our objective is to protect the independence of South Viet-Nam from external interference and force. We do not seek to destroy North Viet-Nam or to threaten its regime. It is not we or the South Vietnamese who are unwilling to co-exist. It is the North Vietnamese who are unwilling. It is they who are relentless in their efforts to take over the government of their neighbor.

There are some who complain that the United States has become involved in a civil war in Viet-Nam. In Viet-Nam one part of a divided country is indeed fighting another. But the fact that it is Vietnamese who have attacked Vietnamese does not make armed aggression any more acceptable. Certainly it is no more acceptable for the North Vietnamese to attempt to unite Viet-Nam by force than it would be for one part of divided Germany, or China, or Korea, to unite those countries by force.

It does not clarify the issue to call Viet-Nam "just a civil war" when more than twenty regiments of North Vietnamese forces are attempting to impose their will upon the South. Of course both sides are Vietnamese but it should be clear that the problems of the divided states -- Germany, Korea, and Viet-Nam -- are to be solved not by force but by peaceful means.
VIET CONG - Civil War or Aggression

NAME: General William C. Westmoreland, Commander, MACV
OCCASION: Military Briefing at the Pentagon
DATE: November 22, 1967

During the past two years we have seen this become more and more of a North Vietnamese war, whereas in '63, 4, 5--'63 and 4 we were dealing with infiltration, and we still are. We've had to contend in the past two years also with what I would refer to as invasion.

NAME: Dean Rusk, Secretary of State
OCCASION: Interview to be published in Reader's Digest
DATE: State Department Press Release, November 27, 1967

The United States combat forces did not go to South Viet-Nam because of the dissidence or the acts of violence of indigenous elements of the National Liberation Front. United States combat forces were injected because of the intrusion of North Vietnamese men, arms, and regular units. If all those who have entered South Viet-Nam from North Viet-Nam were to go home, I have no doubt that the authentic southerners on both sides could resolve their problems.

NAME: General Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff, USA
OCCASION: Address at the Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco
DATE: December 19, 1967

South Vietnam wants to remain free of communist tyranny and has asked us to assist. Our fighting men are helping them meet and destroy forces entering the country from outside its boundaries. That is not civil war. It is just one more in a series of so-called wars of national liberation by which the communists intend to subvert and overthrow the young, the unsettled, and the impoverished nations of the globe. We are in Vietnam, I repeat, by invitation, and also because we now know that a threat to freedom and peace anywhere in the world is a threat to all free men.
Most importantly, in my estimation, the enemy has not been able to win a major military victory in South Vietnam. Indications of some of the other cumulative effects of military operations are now emerging:

-- Enemy units are encountering increasing difficulty in conducting operations;
-- Attacks against North Vietnam have removed its status as a sanctuary from which insurgency is exported;
-- North Vietnamese support of aggression in South Vietnam has been made more difficult;
-- North Vietnamese demands upon communist nations for war support equipment and materials have increased.
they have slowed down the planned progress we had for pacification. To that extent, we must concede a measure of enemy success. Short of that, however, all they have left to hold to is their hope that, because of the slowness of our progress, and our casualties, and our domestic dissent, we will become discouraged. I, for one, gentlemen, am not discouraged. It will take time, and money, and determination; not just by the military, but by all Americans.

"If you exclude the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam, just south of the Demilitarized Zone, you find that the major forces of the enemy have already been largely broken up. They will have an occasional ability to mount an attack in a force of up to 2,500 in any single grouping. And there may be multiple groupings of 2,500 in poorly coordinated attacks. But this will be periodic and somewhat spasmodic, because I do not believe that they any longer have the capability of regular, planned reinforcement."
During the first six or seven months of this year -- the last six months I was over there -- he openly invaded across the DMZ, the border between North and South Vietnam with over 30,000 troops. We met them head on and we drove them out. They had the mission of taking the two northern provinces. They didn't take anything, except an awful lot of losses. We say 6 - 1, but I believe it is probably closer to 12 - 1, because we only count the bodies that we find, and they make a great effort to remove their dead from the battlefield, and to hide them. We found mass graves over there in our search of the battlefield, where in a few hours time, they had buried as many as 60 and 80 in a single, well-camouflaged, grave. They do everything they can to hide their casualties.

it is evident from what we have learned from our reconnaissance, from interrogations of prisoners and from the effect on the enemy's tactics that the enemy has been hurt far more severely than his actions and words indicate. He can still harass and ambush and sabotage but military victory is now beyond his grasp. All he can do from here on out is to try to draw out the conflict in the hope that the cost of the war to us as well as pressure from without and within will eventually induce our government to make far-reaching concessions in order to terminate the conflict.
MR. GORALSKI: In connection with I Corps and some of the other areas where we have been reading reports of problems, you testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday and afterwards Senator Russell said that while you were optimistic you tempered your statements of optimism with indications of difficulties. What difficulties are you experiencing there now militarily, General?

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: I would say in any war your main difficulty is the enemy. I mean we have to find the enemy and we have to bring him to battle. This is our constant endeavor.

MR. GORALSKI: They are certainly willing to fight, are they not?

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: The enemy is very sophisticated. He is a master at guerrilla warfare. We have sometimes difficulty finding where he is and sometimes we have difficulty maintaining contact once we have brought him to battle.

MR. GORALSKI: But you also have a problem, do you not, with the North Vietnamese Regulars, who are doing more than engaging in guerrilla warfare? These are classic-type operations that they are now engaging in, are they not?

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: These are in effect conventional forces, but despite the fact they have sent their best troops to the South under their best leadership, they have yet to win a single battle of significance.
VIET CONG - Evaluation of Military Operations

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

He is losing control of the scattered population under his influence. He is losing credibility with the population he still controls. He is alienating the people by his increased demands and taxes where he can impose them. He sees the strength of his forces steadily declining. He can no longer recruit in the South to any meaningful extent; he must plug the gap with North Vietnamese. His monsoon offensives have been failures. He was dealt a mortal blow by the installation of a freely elected representative government. And he failed in his desperate effort to take the world's headlines from the Inauguration by a military victory.

NAME: General William C. Westmoreland, Commander, MACV
OCCASION: Military Briefing at the Pentagon
DATE: November 22, 1967

Despite the fact that we've had pressure on the enemy for slightly over one year and the major effort by North Vietnam he has nothing to show for his investment. He has not won a single significant victory in the South during the last one and a half years. On the other hand, he boasts of fictitious victory to bolster his morale and to make propaganda. He's paying a tremendous price in pursuing his announced strategy of protracted war.