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UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD VIETNAM:

A Summary Review Of Its History

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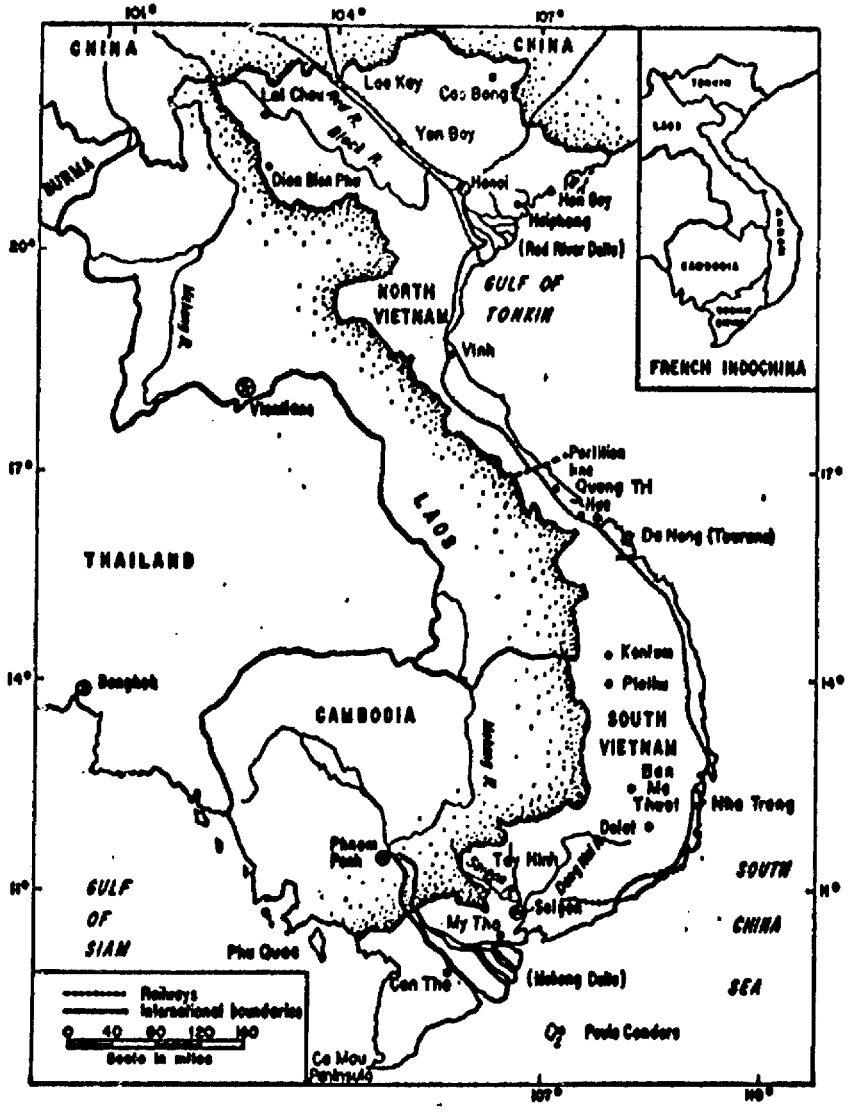

Map 7. Vietnam

Source: Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia, 2nd Edition, 1964. Reproduced by the Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, March 1966, with the permission of the Cornell University Press.

I. Summary

The war in Vietnam began at the end of 1946 as a war for independence from France. However, the leader of the independence movement, Ho Chi Minh, was a Communist, and the struggle for independence became tangled in the ambitions of the Communist world to expand and the determination of the United States to halt all forms of Communist aggression.

In 1950, after France established Vietnam as an independent state within the French Union, the United States began the two-pronged assistance effort which has been continued ever since. On the one hand economic assistance was provided to help improve the welfare of the Vietnamese people. On the other hand military assistance was provided to strengthen the defenses of South Vietnam against the activities of the Communists.

The assistance was substantially increased on several occasions, particularly in 1953 to support a new French strategy, in 1954 after Vietnam became fully independent, in 1960 and 1961 in response to increased Communist guerrilla activity, and in 1964 and 1965 again in response to increased Communist activity, more openly assisted by North Vietnam.

At the Geneva Conference of 1954 agreement was reached to divide Vietnam, henceforth to be fully independent, into two parts, a Communist North and a non-Communist South, pending elections for a reunified state. Although the United States had participated in the Geneva

Conference, it dissociated itself from the final agreement but pledged that it would not use force to disturb the settlement and that any renewal of Communist aggression would be viewed as a matter of grave concern. The French gradually withdrew, and for a period of five years there was relative stability under the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. The elections for reunification were not held, however, because of South Vietnam's position that it was not bound by the Geneva Agreements and that in any case free elections were not possible under the Communist regime in the North.

In 1959 guerrilla warfare against the South Vietnamese government began to intensify markedly. In addition, the internal political situation in South Vietnam began to deteriorate, culminating with the fall of the Diem regime in the fall of 1963. Governmental instability persisted even after Diem's overthrow, however, with continued strife between religious, regional, and political factions. This instability appeared to subside after the election of a constituent assembly in September 1966. A new Constitution was written and an elected President, Nguyen Van Thieu, was installed on October 31, 1967.

Most observers described the elections in South Vietnam in September and October 1967 for President, Vice President, and seats in the legislature as being relatively fair and honest. But critics make the point that in the campaign for the presidency and vice presidency the military junta barred the entrance of several potentially strong candidates, that the provision for no runoff virtually assured a Thieu-Ky victory, and that military control of administrative machinery

and facilities put the civilian candidates at a disadvantage. New civilian cabinets were installed in May-June 1968 and again in August-September 1969. The present cabinet headed by General Tran Thien Khiem, Premier and Minister of the Interior, has been criticized as being far from representative of all groups and as containing many holdovers from the previous cabinet, with few new faces. United States efforts to broaden the base of the South Vietnamese government continue.

President Johnson in August 1964, following the Tonkin Gulf incident between U.S. and North Vietnamese naval vessels, asked Congress for a resolution expressing U.S. unity and determination that "all such attacks will be met" and that the United States would continue "assisting the free nations of the area to defend their freedom." The Southeast Asia Resolution was approved on August 7 by Congress by votes of 88-2 and 416-0 and declared that the United States was "prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom."

The scale of hostilities quickly escalated in the first half of 1965. In February 1965, the United States began launching air strikes against North Vietnam, first as a specific retaliatory measure and then on a regular basis, encompassing a growing number of targets. In March 1965 the United States began sending ground combat troops in addition to military advisers. The first major U.S. combat offensive began in June 1965. U.S. forces in Vietnam reached a peak of 543,000 in April 1969, but this was reduced to less than 430,000 in May of this year. President Nixon announced on April 20 that the ceiling would be reduced to 284,000

by the spring of 1971. Extremely heavy infiltration of regular North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam during the four-year period 1966-1969 gradually changed the composition of Communist forces in the south, so that in 1970 a significant majority of main force units were composed of northerners. 1/

In the ground fighting, the United States buildup after the middle of 1965 made unlikely a Communist military victory. The United States has said that it does not seek a military victory or "the annihilation of the enemy." The Tet offensive of the North Vietnamese and Vietcong in January-February 1968 was a military failure, but did achieve a significant political/psychological victory by casting doubts on U.S. claims of progress in the military situation and in pacification. Communist offensives in May and August of 1968 were less sustained and fighting was lighter in the fall of 1968. The Communists launched another offensive in February 1969 whose scope and intensity was considerably less than that of the 1968 Tet offensive. There were other brief periods of increased combat actions, but overall battlefield activity has declined since the spring of 1969. A change in U.S. strategy and tactics took place in mid-1969 with the adoption of a "protective reaction" policy which aimed at holding down U.S. casualties by limited response to enemy actions. But the most significant development in 1969 related to strategy was the increasing stress on Vietnamization -- turning combat operations over to South Vietnamese

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1/ Department of Defense estimates indicate that approximately 40,000 troops were infiltrated into the south from 1961 to 1964, about 35,000 in 1965, about 90,000 in 1966, about 100,000 in 1967, about 250,000 in 1968 (the figure of 140,000 has also been used by the Department of Defense), and 100,000-110,000 in 1969.

forces -- and on reduction of U.S. troop strength as the immediate prospects for a negotiated settlement dimmed.

Developments in 1970 pointed up the all-Indochina nature of the war. In Cambodia, the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk on March 18 and his replacement by a pro-Western group was followed by wide-ranging North Vietnamese-Vietcong offensives which gained control of most of Cambodia east of the Mekong. This widening of the "sanctuary" areas and concern about North Vietnam's intentions led to South Vietnamese and U.S. military operations in Cambodia in late April. The United States has described the operations as necessary to protect American troops in South Vietnam and to ensure the success of the Vietnamization program, and as in line with the Nixon Doctrine's purpose of letting Asian nations handle Asian security problems. Critics called the Cambodian operations a widening of the war and a contradiction of the Nixon Doctrine, and charged that they endangered a negotiated settlement.

A Communist offensive in Laos in February 1970 retook the Plain of Jars and appeared to be carried out in conjunction with a political campaign aimed at improving the Pathet Lao position in any future Laos government. The Cambodian operations had their effects in Laos, as North Vietnamese troops gained control over northeast Cambodia and opened up new areas in southern Laos in a move to establish new supply routes to Cambodia and South Vietnam.

The domestic opposition to U.S. policy in Indochina increased with time and as the cost of the war rose. Probably no other single issue has so dominated Congressional debate since 1965. Concern over the Vietnam war was a major factor in the passage by the Senate of a national commitments

resolution on June 25, 1969, which declared that it was the sense of the Senate that a national commitment to a foreign power resulted only from affirmative action taken by both the executive and legislative branches. A Senate-sponsored amendment, adopted by both houses, to the Defense Appropriations Act of 1970 (approved December 29, 1969) stated that none of the funds appropriated "shall be used to finance the introduction of American ground combat troops into Laos or Thailand." The prohibition was publicly endorsed by the Nixon Administration. Resolutions introduced to repeal the Tonkin Gulf Resolution were at first opposed by the Administration but in March 1970 the State Department said such a move "is a matter within the discretion of the Congress" and that U.S. policy in Southeast Asia did not depend on the resolution. The House of Representatives in December passed a resolution 333-55 in support of President Nixon's Vietnam peace policy and in May rejected amendments designed to restrict the President's authority to introduce American combat troops in Cambodia, Laos, or Thailand without the consent of Congress (see page 130).

Although numerous efforts were made beginning in 1965 to get negotiations started, all attempts failed until the spring of 1968. The partial bombing halt announced by President Johnson on March 31, 1968, was followed by intensified bargaining that led to the opening of talks between the United States and North Vietnam in Paris in May 1968. Agreement was reached that led to a complete halt to the bombing of North Vietnam on November 1, 1968, as part of a package deal to bring Saigon and the NLF into expanded talks. Substantive discussions began in January 1969. Progress in the talks since that time has been virtually nil. The opposing sides still differ substantially on the terms of settlement.

II. World War II and its aftermath: 1945-1949

For about eighty years before the Second World War, Vietnam was part of French Indochina. During the war the Vichy French colonial administration in Indochina was permitted by the Japanese to continue because it had capitulated to their demands. Toward the end of the war, however, on March 9, 1945, the Japanese occupied Indochina with military force and encouraged the Emperor Bao Dai to proclaim Vietnam's independence.

Meanwhile, the Viet Minh had been organized during the Second World War as a united front of both non-Communist and Communist elements with the objective of winning national independence. After the Japanese surrender on August 13, 1945, the Viet Minh elected a National Liberation Committee headed by Ho Chi Minh, a Communist. Bao Dai abdicated in favor of this group, becoming its "Supreme Political Advisor." On September 2, 1945, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the establishment and independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

France, however, had looked forward to establishing within the French Union an Indochinese Federation composed of what is now North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. This meant, France said, that the Indochinese would have local autonomy but their interests abroad would be represented by France. At the end of 1945 liberated French prisoners of war and other French military forces replaced the British forces who, under the terms of arrangements made at the Potsdam Conference, had liberated Vietnam south of the 16th parallel from Japanese occupation. Vietnam north of the 16th parallel, under these arrangements, was liberated by China.

During the first postwar year the French and Vietnamese leaders negotiated for a peaceful settlement of the problem of sovereignty over Vietnam. By an agreement signed March 6, 1946, France recognized the Republic of Vietnam as a free state belonging to the Indochinese Federation and the French Union. France agreed to carry out decisions concerning unification through a referendum, and Ho Chi Minh pledged to accept French troops to replace Chinese troops in the north.

Later, the negotiators from France and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam found it impossible to reach further agreement on what constituted a free state and other matters. Despite a modus vivendi signed September 14, 1946, which called for a cessation of all acts of hostilities, by the end of 1946 war had broken out between the French and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

After two years of warfare, when military measures had failed to produce a solution to the political problems, the French in March 1949 established Vietnam as an associated State in the French Union, headed by Bao Dai.

Around the same time, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam also changed its political strategy by establishing diplomatic relations with the Communist regime, which had by then taken control of the Chinese mainland, and with the Soviet Union. In addition, in 1951 the Indo-Chinese Communist Party reconstituted itself as the Vietnam Workers', or Lao Dong, Party, and its actions made clear that it held the controlling power in the revolutionary front.

Up until 1950 the United States had not become involved. During the Second World War President Roosevelt had suggested a trusteeship for Indochina and President Truman had also mentioned in connection with Indochina a United Nations trusteeship, which would make effective the right of a colonial people to choose its form of government. The trusteeship idea had been rejected by Britain and France, however, and United States leaders suspected that the British and French were seeking to reinstate their control over former colonies in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, the United States acquiesced in the agreement at the Potsdam Conference under which the southern half of Indochina was to be in the area of military operations under British command, and the northern half was to remain in the China theater.

After the British turned their area of control in Indochina over to the French at the end of 1945, many in the United States were unsympathetic to the colonial policies subsequently followed by France. However, the American government was sensitive to relations with the French government and French political problems. Identification of the Viet Minh with international Communist efforts and the rising threat of Communist aggression in the Far East gradually led to increasing American involvement.

III. United States assistance to French efforts: 1950-1954

On February 7, 1950, after France had formally established Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as independent states within the French Union, the United States accorded each of the new states diplomatic recognition. Soon after recognition, the United States began sending economic aid and military equipment. On May 8, 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson stated that "the problem of meeting the threat to the security of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos....is primarily the responsibility of France and the Governments and peoples of Indo-China," but that the "solution of the Indo-China problem depends both upon the restoration of security and upon the development of genuine nationalism and that United States assistance can and should contribute to these major objectives."[1/]

On May 24, 1950, the United States sent notes to Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and France informing them that the United States had decided to initiate an economic aid program to the three new nations to help them restore stability and pursue peaceful and democratic development. The aid was intended to complement, not substitute for, efforts by France and the three Associated States themselves. Bilateral agreements with the United States were to be concluded with each country, but economic aid operations could begin before their conclusion.

The agreement for direct economic assistance to Vietnam was signed on September 7, 1951. In the years 1951-1954, $96 million was authorized for technical and economic aid, with an additional $30 million in 1953

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1 / Department of State Bulletin, May 22, 1950, p. 821.

and 1954 for defense support: that is, financial or other assistance to sustain military efforts. 1/ This aid was administered by the Special Technical and Economic Mission (STEM) of the Foreign Operations Administration. It was used for projects such as public health and sanitation, housing, education, agriculture, transportation, and regrouping villages.

Military aid for the war against the Viet Minh forces also began in 1950. On December 23, 1950, the United States signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with France, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos for indirect United States military aid to the three Associated States. Under this program ammunition, aircraft, naval vessels, small arms, and other military equipment were delivered to the French command of the French Union forces. The military assistance was under the supervision of a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) from the United States.

The rate of deliveries of this military equipment was speeded up during 1951. By 1952 United States aid was officially described as supplying one-third of the total cost of the Indochina operation. On June 18, 1952, a Franco-American communique announced that the United States would expand its aid with the added amount to be especially directed toward assisting France in building the national armies of the Associated States.

1/ Hammer, Ellen J. The Struggle for Indo-China. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1954, p. 315. Also, U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Indo-China, Report of Senator Mike Mansfield on a study mission to the associated states of Indo-China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos. October 27, 1953, p. 4.

In 1953 General Navarre, the French military commander, inaugurated a plan which he hoped would end the war. It entailed increasing the number of French forces and training more native troops, so that by the end of 1954 there would be 550,000 French Union troops compared with what was estimated to be 400,000 Viet Minh. To assist this plan, on September 30, 1953, the United States again announced that additional funds, not to exceed $385 million, would be made available. The announcement of increased assistance from the United States was coupled with a statement that the French government was "firmly resolved to carry out in full its declaration of July 3, 1953, by which it announced its intention of perfecting the independence of the three Associated States in Indo-China, through negotiations with the Associated States."[1/]

In 1953 it was anticipated that after the additional $385 million was allocated, the United States share of the cost of the war would rise from 40 to an estimated 60 percent of the total.[2/] In 1954 Christian Pineau, the spokesman of the Finance Committee of the French National Assembly, stated that the United States share of the cost was almost 80 percent.[3/]

As for the cost to France, President Eisenhower has stated that for the seven years of war in Indochina the total monetary cost to France was some $5 billion, and the total number of casualties suffered was approximately 150,000, including one-third dead or missing.[4/]

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1 / Department of State Bulletin, October 12, 1953, pp. 486-487.
2 / Report of Senator Mike Mansfield, October 27, 1953, op. cit., p. 5.
3 / Hammer, op. cit., p. 313. There are no firm estimates of total U.S. costs in the first Indochinese war. Most estimates range between $2 and $4 billion.
4 / Eisenhower, Dwight D. Mandate for Change, Garden City, Doubleday, 1963, p. 337.

IV. Events leading to the Geneva Conference, 1954

As part of the 1953 campaign to speed the war, the French launched an offensive against the Communist forces in central Vietnam. In November they occupied Dien Bien Phu, an isolated fortress ten miles from the Laotian border. Although the French had hoped that their action would draw out the guerrilla forces and lead to a battle which would be decisive in their favor, instead Viet Minh forces surrounded and outnumbered the French garrison.

In early 1954, with defeat at Dien Bien Phu threatening, the United States considered various means by which it could help. After considering and rejecting the dispatch of American troops or the employment of air strikes, the United States, according to a later account by President Eisenhower, concentrated its efforts on three approaches.[1/]

The first was to attempt to convince France and the United Kingdom of the necessity of forming a coalition of free nations which would give "moral meaning" to intervention, that is, prevent intervention from appearing as an example of imperialism. These efforts did not prove successful in time to prevent the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, but later culminated in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.

The second was to encourage measures to convince the Vietnamese and others of France's intention to grant complete independence to the Associated States. In this regard on April 28, 1954, France and Vietnam reached agreement to conclude a treaty recognizing the total independence of Vietnam and its full sovereignty.

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1 / Eisenhower, op. cit., pp. 340-341.

The third was to step up material aid as much as possible, although it was believed material aid was generally being sent as fast as the French could absorb it. As part of the last step, some B-26's were sent, along with 200 technicians, on a temporary basis.

Meanwhile, however, pressures were growing within France to negotiate a settlement. In February 1954 the Foreign Ministers of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France agreed to a conference in Geneva beginning on April 26, 1954, to discuss problems of Korea and Indochina. The Foreign Ministers also agreed to invite representatives of other interested states, including Communist China.

On May 7, 1954, the day before the Geneva discussions on Indochina itself began, Dien Bien Phu was captured. The next day, May 8, 1954, the French government submitted new proposals for the cessation of hostilities, based on regrouping the opposing forces into zones. Shortly afterwards, during the course of the negotiations at Geneva, the French Prime Minister, Joseph Laniel, was defeated on a vote of confidence after a debate on Indochina. He was succeeded on June 18, 1954, by Pierre Mendes-France, who pledged to obtain a settlement of the Indochinese situation before July 20 or resign.

The United States, concerned at the course of the negotiations, had at one point reduced the status of its delegation at Geneva to that of an observer.[1/] Later full diplomatic participation was restored after

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1 / Ibid., pp. 365-369.

President Eisenhower reached agreement first with Prime Minister Churchill and then with Prime Minister Mendes-France on conditions the United States would find acceptable. These included that Laos and Cambodia be left as free and independent states and that if Vietnam was partitioned, the half of the country south of the 18th parallel would remain non-Communist. 1/

1/ Ibid., p. 368.

V. The Geneva Agreements: 1954

The negotiations at Geneva led to the signing of agreements on July 20, 1954, for the end of hostilities in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The agreement for Vietnam was signed by representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the French Union Forces in Indochina. It provided for the partitioning of Vietnam along the seventeenth parallel, with a small demilitarized buffer zone. The forces of the People's Army were to regroup within 300 days to the north of the line, and the forces of the French Union to the South.

The agreement provided for an International Commission for Supervision and Control composed of representatives of Canada, Poland, and India, with the Indian representative as Chairman. In addition, a Joint Commission composed of representatives of both sides was established to help carry out the agreement.

A ban was placed on the introduction of any troop reinforcements or additional military personnel, with the understanding that the rotation of units or the arrival of individuals on a temporary basis would be permitted under certain conditions. Similarly, the introduction of reinforcements of arms and other war material was prohibited, again with the understanding that worn-out material could be replaced on a piece-for-piece basis. Points of entry for permitted replacements of men and material were established, to be supervised and inspected by teams of the International Commission.

The establishment of new military bases throughout all Vietnam was prohibited, along with the establishment of any military base under foreign control. Both sides pledged to ensure that their zones did not adhere to any military alliance and were not used for the resumption of hostilities or to further an aggressive policy. All

prisoners of war and civilian internees were to be liberated and repatriated.

In addition to the three agreements ending hostilities in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, the Geneva Conference concluded with a Final Declaration, dated July 21, 1954. This noted that representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Vietnam, the U.S.S.R., the U.K, and the U.S. had taken part. In regard to Vietnam, the Declaration noted that the essential purpose of the agreement was to end hostilities and "that the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary." It expressed the conviction that execution of the agreement and the cessation of hostilities would create the necessary basis for the achievement of a political settlement " in the near future."

The settlement of political problems, the Declaration stated, "shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot."

The Declaration also stated:

> In order to ensure that sufficient progress in restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the Member States of the International Supervisory Commission....Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from 20 July 1955 onwards.

Finally, the Conference members agreed to consult together on any matter referred to them by the International Control Commission. Later there evolved the practice of the International Control Commission's sending its reports or requests to the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, who had served as Co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference. The Co-chairmen then distributed the reports to the other members of the conference. Out of this practice grew a continuing role for the co-chairmen of representing, and sometimes attempting to mediate between, the Communist and non-Communist sides in Vietnam.

The United States refused to join in the declaration of the Geneva Conference on the grounds that it had not been a belligerent and the agreement contained features it did not like. President Eisenhower on July 21, 1954, issued a statement that the United States had not been a party to and was not bound by the decisions, but that the United States did hope it would lead to "the establishment of peace consistent with the rights and the needs of the countries concerned." In a unilateral declaration at Geneva by Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, the United States declared that (1) it would refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb the agreements, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, and (2) it would view any renewal of aggression in violation of the agreements with grave concern and as a serious threat to peace.

South Vietnam also dissociated itself from the agreements. On July 21, 1954, the South Vietnamese delegate protested against the "hasty conclusion of the Armistice Agreement by the French and

Viet Minh High Commands only" and "against the fact that the French High Command was pleased to take the right, without a preliminary agreement of the delegation of the State of Vietnam, to set the date of future elections." He objected to various provisions and stated that the State of Vietnam "reserves its full freedom of action in order to safeguard the sacred right of the Vietnamese people to territorial unity, national independence and freedom." 1/

1/ Vietnam and the Geneva Agreements. Documents concerning the discussions between Representatives of Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics held in London in April and May 1956. Cmd 9763. London, HMSO, May 1956, p. 9.

VI. Five years of relative peace: 1954-1959

The first five years after the Geneva accords provided a period of relative peace in which the United States sought to assist in the development of an independent and viable republic in South Vietnam. During the Geneva Conference, on June 4, 1954, the agreements between France and Vietnam establishing a "fully independent" state had been signed, and on June 16, 1954, Bao Dai had appointed Ngo Dinh Diem as President of the Council of Ministers. Thus it was under Ngo Dinh Diem that the development of South Vietnam as an independent state proceeded after the Geneva Conference.

Within two years after the Geneva Conference the remaining vestiges of French colonial status disappeared. Judicial and technical services were transferred to Vietnamese control in September 1954. The Pau Conventions of 1950, which placed economic restrictions on Vietnam, were revised in Paris on September 21, 1954. The military command was transferred from French to Vietnamese authorities in February 1955, and the French Union High Command was dissolved and the remaining elements of the expeditionary force left in April 1956.

The first two years of independence also brought a series of political clashes among various factions in South Vietnam. These led to the deposition of Bao Dai as Head of State and the consolidation of authority by Ngo Dinh Diem. A referendum was held on October 23, 1955, on whether Bao Dai should continue as Head of State. The vote was over five and a half million to 63,000 to depose Bao Dai.[1/] Subsequently on October 26, 1955, the Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed with Diem as its President. On March 4, 1956, elections were held for a Constituent Assembly and a constitution was proclaimed on October 26, 1956. It provided for universal suffrage to elect a President for a five-year term, with Diem President until April 30, 1961.

Another major political development in South Vietnam in the period immediately after the Geneva Conference was the influx of large numbers of refugees from North Vietnam. Article 14 of the Geneva

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1/ The handling of the election by the Diem government had been designed to secure an almost unanimous vote: the government-controlled press showered abuse on Diem's opponent, former emperor Bao Dai; the number of votes cast in some cases exceeded the number of names on the electoral rolls, as in Saigon where 600,000 votes were cast although there were only 450,000 registered voters; everywhere the votes were counted by government officials without any kind of supervision. Buttinger, Joseph. Vietnam: A Dragon Embattled. Vol. II. New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1967. pp. 889-892.

Agreements had provided that any civilians who were residing on one side of the partition line could, if they chose, go and live on the other side. By the end of the time limit set for making the move, extended to July 20, 1955, almost 900,000 civilians had moved from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. In contrast, less than 5,000 had moved from the south to the north.

Meanwhile, the United States continued its efforts to build military security in the area and to help in the economic development of the Republic of Vietnam. One of the first steps was to conclude the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (SEATO). This was signed by Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States on September 8, 1954. The treaty had a protocol which designated Cambodia, Laos, and the free territory of Vietnam as part of the area in which aggression by armed attack would be considered as endangering the safety of each member. In the event of armed aggression each treaty power pledged to "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." There was a special understanding that for the United States this applied only to Communist aggression. In the event of threats to security by means other than armed attack, under the treaty the members of SEATO were to consult on measures which should be taken. This protocol also included the free territory of Vietnam as eligible for economic and technical assistance under the treaty.

A second step to help strengthen both the security and economy of Vietnam was the continuation of American aid. A Franco-American communique of September 29, 1954, announced that in the future aid would be given directly to Vietnam rather than through the French. On October 23, 1954, President Eisenhower wrote Diem that the United States would examine with him how direct American assistance could help Vietnam, provided the Diem Government gave assurances on the standards of performance it would maintain if such aid were supplied and in the expectation that the Vietnamese government would undertake needed reforms. The direct aid began on January 1, 1955.

The policies of the United States during this period were summarized by Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Walter S. Robertson as:

> To support a friendly non-Communist government in Vietnam and to help it diminish and eventually eradicate Communist subversion and influence.
>
> To help the Government of Vietnam establish the forces necessary for internal security.
>
> To encourage support for Free Vietnam by the non-Communist world.
>
> To aid in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of a country and people ravaged by 8 ruinous years of civil and international war. 1/

For these purposes the United States gave budgetary support and equipment for internal security forces, including the army, a civil guard, and local defense units; provided a mission to assist in the training of the army; helped to organize, train and equip the police

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1/ Address of June 1, 1956, Department of State Bulletin, June 11, 1956, pp. 972-974.

force; provided assistance for the resettlement of the refugees from North Vietnam; and provided assistance to strengthen the economy "and provide a better future for the common people of the country."[1/]

In May 1957 President Diem visited President Eisenhower in Washington. A communique issued at the conclusion of the visit noted the "remarkable achievements of the Republic of Vietnam," although concern was expressed over continuing Communist subversive capabilities in the area and the continued military buildup of the Chinese Communists. In the three years since the Geneva Conference, it was stated, chaos had been replaced with progress and stability; the refugees from North Vietnam had been settled; internal security had been established; a constitution had been promulgated and a national assembly elected; plans for agrarian reform had been launched, and a program to promote a higher standard of living and meet economic and social problems had been developed. President Eisenhower assured President Diem of the willingness of the United States to continue its assistance.

A. Unification by elections not achieved. Throughout this period the Diem government held that it was not bound by the Geneva Agreements since it had not been a signatory. Particularly it was unwilling to hold the general election along with North Vietnam which the Geneva Declaration said should be held in July 1956. Diem said on July 16, 1955:

> Now, faced with a regime of oppression as practiced by the Viet Minh, we remain skeptical concerning the

1/ Ibid.

> possibility of fulfilling the conditions of free elections in the North. We shall not miss any opportunity which would permit the unification of our homeland in freedom, but it is out of the question for us to consider any proposal from the Viet Minh if proof is not given us that they put the superior interests of the national community above those of Communism; if they do not give up terrorism and totalitarian methods; if they do not cease violating their obligations, as they have done by preventing our countrymen of the North from going South. 1/

The United States position was similarly that it would favor elections if they could be free, but that elections under the Communist regime in North Vietnam would not be free and would produce a victory for the Communists. Assistant Secretary of State Robertson said in 1955:

> Red-style elections in the more populous north, accompanied by thought control, distortion of the facts, coercion, and intimidation, would unquestionably produce a Communist victory, thus achieving by seemingly legal means the subjugation of Free Vietnam to Communist slavery. Elections under totally free conditions would, on the other hand, undoubtedly result in a unified and independent nation. 2/

North Vietnam, in this same period, favored holding the elections provided for in the Geneva Declaration, confident that Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh would win. They protested South Vietnam's position to the International Control Commission and in February 1956 the Democratic Republic of Vietnam proposed that a new conference of the Geneva powers should be held.

On March 30, 1956, the Soviet Union sent a note to the United Kingdom stating the support of the Communist nations involved for

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1/ United Kingdom. Central Office of Information. Vietnam. Prepared for the British Information Service R.5193/65. London, HMSO 1965, pp. 24-25.

2/ Department of State Bulletin, October 31, 1955, p. 693.

such a conference. The Soviet note accused the South Vietnamese of sabotaging national unification by means of free elections and of openly breaching the military articles of the Geneva agreement by the introduction of new armaments, ammunition, and foreign military personnel. It also accused South Vietnam of violating the articles concerning democratic liberties by repression of individuals taking part in the movement for unification.

In its reply of April 9, 1956, the United Kingdom rejected the Soviet allegations, stating that French forces had been reduced by 100,000, and Vietnamese forces by 20,000. It countered that in North Vietnam there had been no reduction in military strength but on the contrary the size of the Viet Minh army had risen from seven to twenty divisions. The British note said that although Britain considered it desirable to hold elections for reunification and had advised the Vietnamese government to enter into consultations with Viet Minh authorities for this purpose, it did not agree that the Republic of Vietnam was legally obliged to follow this course.

The proposal of the Communist nations to hold another conference of the Geneva powers was not supported by the other nations involved. However, representatives of the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union held discussions on the complaints and on the difficulties being met by the Control Commission in South Vietnam as the French withdrew.

The Co-chairmen on May 8, 1956, sent notes to the governments of both Vietnamese republics, the members of the Control Commission

(India, Poland, and Canada) and the French government asking the Control Commission to persevere, and the other parties to cooperate, pending the holding of free elections for reunification. Subsequently the International Control Commission did continue to function, with France continuing to supply certain assistance, such as transportation, to them in their activities in South Vietnam.

B. Failure of applications for membership in the United Nations. Neither North nor South Vietnam succeeded in obtaining membership in the United Nations, although applications from both were pending for many years and several votes on the question were taken between 1952 and 1958. The application of the Republic of Vietnam was always vetoed by the Soviet Union, and the application of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam never received enough votes.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam had first applied for membership in a letter of November 22, 1948, but this letter was not circulated as a Security Council document until September 17, 1952, when it was circulated at the request of the Soviet Union. The Republic of Vietnam applied for United Nations membership on December 17, 1951. Following this, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam submitted another application on December 29, 1951.

The first vote by the Security Council, which must make an affirmative recommendation on membership to the General Assembly, was taken in 1952. The position of the United States at that time was "that the Viet Minh regime was not a state and that the so-called

application of this regime should not even be considered."[1/] The Soviets, on the other hand, contended that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was the only legitimate government of Vietnam. The vote for the Republic of Vietnam was 10 in favor to 1 opposed, but the single opposing vote was that of the Soviet Union and it therefore constituted a veto. The vote on the application of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was 10 opposed to 1 in favor. That same year the General Assembly passed a resolution noting that the admission of Vietnam was being blocked by a veto and deeming Vietnam qualified for admission.

In 1955 a resolution to include the Republic of Vietnam in a package with other states to be admitted was vetoed by the Soviet Union, and in 1957 the General Assembly again passed a resolution deeming Vietnam qualified for membership and noting its exclusion because of the veto. At one point early in 1957 the Soviet Union introduced a draft resolution which would have the Assembly recommend to the Security Council that it reconsider the applications of North and South Vietnam and North and South Korea with a view to recommending their simultaneous admission. However, the United States objected to linking the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Vietnam, which had been endorsed for membership by the General Assembly, with "two other political entities which, it is generally conceded, do not meet the standards of the Charter" and "have never been found qualified by either the Assembly or by the Security Council."[2/]

1/ Participation in the U.N. Report by the President to the Congress for the year 1952, p. 91.

2/ U.S. Participation in the U.N. Report by the President to the Congress for the year 1956, p. 135.

Later in 1957 the Soviets again proposed simultaneous admission for North and South Korea but called for postponing the consideration of admission of Vietnam until the elections provided for in the Geneva Agreements had been held and the country had been unified. When the question was not postponed, the Soviets again vetoed the application of the Republic of Vietnam, as it did again in 1958. No further votes on the applications have been taken.

VII. Intensified Communist activity and increased American assistance: 1959-1963

At the time of the cease-fire in 1954, many members of the Viet Minh and Communist guerrilla bands had remained in South Vietnam rather than move north, and some had waged a continuing campaign against the government of Vietnam since that time. In the latter half of 1957 activity by the Vietcong (a term coined to mean the Vietnamese Communists and used to cover all guerrilla opposition) noticeably increased and over 400 minor officials were assassinated. By 1959 terrorism had become a serious problem, with frequent guerrilla raids against army and security units and assassinations of village leaders. During 1960 Vietcong armed units and terrorists assassinated or kidnapped more than 3,000 local officials, civilians, or military personnel. There were armed attacks or sabotage against isolated garrisons, newly established towns, roads and canals, bridges, public works, and communication lines.

The increasing guerrilla activity appeared to the United States to be part of a planned campaign by North Vietnam to bring about a Communist revolution in South Vietnam.

On September 10, 1960, the Third Congress of the Lao Dong (Communist) Party of North Vietnam adopted a resolution which stated:

> In the present stage, the Vietnamese revolution has two strategic tasks: first, to carry out the socialist revolution in North Viet-Nam; second, to liberate South Viet-Nam from the ruling yoke of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen in order to achieve national unity and complete independence and freedom throughout the country...

> The immediate task of the revolution in the South is to achieve unity of the whole people, to fight resolutely against the aggressive and war-mongering U.S. imperialists, to overthrow the dictatorial Ngo Dinh Diem ruling clique, lackeys of the democratic coalition government in South Vietnam....1/

In December 1960 it was announced in Hanoi that a "National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam" (NFLSV) had been formed in South Vietnam, claiming to be composed of a large number of political, ethnic, and functional groups. In late 1961 the Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party was established and this group, which appeared to be a Communist organization, became a leading element in the NFLSV. The NFLSV claimed to represent all South Vietnam and administered the areas under Vietcong control.

In response to the intensified guerrilla activity and the stated intention of the Communist Party in North Vietnam to bring about the overthrow of the South Vietnamese government, the United States increased its military and economic support to South Vietnam. In May 1960 the United States announced that at the request of the South Vietnamese government it was going to increase the U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Group from 327 to 685 at the end of the year. The Vietnamese government told the International Control Commission that this number would still be under the 888 MAAG and French instructors present in Vietnam at the time of the Geneva accords.

1/ U.S. Department of State. A Threat to the Peace. North Vietnam's Effort to Conquer South Vietnam. Part II, p. 2. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., December 1961.

In the spring of 1961 Vice President Johnson visited Saigon and following his visit a communique was issued stating that United States assistance would be further increased and accelerated by building upon existing military and economic aid programs, increasing the regular armed forces of Vietnam, and collaborating in the use of military specialists to assist the Vietnamese armed forces in welfare, health, and public works activities in the villages.

The military situation continued to deteriorate, however, and in October 1961 President Kennedy sent General Maxwell D. Taylor to Vietnam for consultations and a survey of needs. Subsequently, on November 17, 1961, Secretary of State Rusk stated that there was expected to be some change in the type of equipment delivered and in the nature of training under the military advisory and training program.

On December 7, 1961, President Diem wrote President Kennedy that "the forces of International Communists now arrayed against us are more than we can meet with the resources at hand. We must have further assistance from the United States if we are to win the war now being waged against us."

The next day, December 8, 1961, the State Department issued a report entitled, "A Threat to the Peace. North Vietnam's effort to conquer South Vietnam." The report described the pattern of Vietcong activity in South Vietnam, the increased use of terror as a method after 1958, the support the Vietcong received from North Vietnam, and the use of Laos as a base and route for the Vietcong It concluded, "The Communist program to take over South Vietnam has moved into a new and more dangerous phase....It is impossible to look

at South Vietnam today without recognizing the clear and present danger of Communist conquest."[1/]

A week later, on December 14, 1961, President Kennedy replied to President Diem's letter of the previous week. He said that the United States would view any renewal of aggression in violation of the Geneva Agreements with grave concern and, in response to Diem's request, would increase its assistance to South Vietnam's defense efforts. If the Communist authorities in North Vietnam stopped their campaign to destroy the Republic of Vietnam, he said, the measures to assist the defense efforts would no longer be necessary.

Shortly afterward, on February 8, 1962, the American Military Assistance Command (Vietnam) was established to help in the planning of military operations and to supervise American military personnel. By mid-1962 American strength in Vietnam totaled 12,000.

Simultaneously economic aid was intensified. On January 4, 1962, the United States and Vietnam jointly announced a broad economic and social program aimed at improving the standard of living of the Vietnamese people. A comprehensive program, intensifying and enlarging earlier efforts, had been worked out by the two governments following a study made by a joint group of experts headed by Dr. A. Eugene Staley of the United States and Professor Vu Quoc Thuc of Vietnam.

The expanded economic effort included programs in community development, health, education, communications, transportation, agriculture, flood control, and industrial development. Many of the programs were to be concentrated in areas relatively free from Viet-cong domination and extended as the Vietcong was suppressed.

1/ U.S. Department of State. A Threat to the Peace. Part I. [illegible]shington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1961. pp. 49 and 51.

A. Findings of International Control Commission. Meanwhile during this period both North and South Vietnam continued to lodge complaints with the International Control Commission that the other side was violating the Geneva Agreements. South Vietnam charged North Vietnam with aggression and subversion, stating that North Vietnam was being used to support hostile activities in the South in violation of the Geneva accords. North Vietnam charged that South Vietnam was violating the provisions relating to additional troops, reinforcements of armaments, and military alliances.

On June 2, 1962, the International Control Commission submitted a report in which the representatives of India and Canada accepted the conclusions of the Legal Committee that there was sufficient evidence to show beyond reasonable doubt that North Vietnam had violated certain articles of the Geneva Agreement, but from which the Polish representative dissented. These were the articles which stated that the parties should enforce the complete cessation of hostilities, that the territories should not be used to further an aggressive policy, that neither side should commit any act against the other, and that the commanders had the responsibility for insuring full compliance with all the provisions of the agreements by all elements under their command.

As for North Vietnam's charges against South Vietnam, the Commission's report of June 2, 1962, stated that since December 1961 the Commission's teams in South Vietnam had persistently been denied the right to control and inspect the quantity and nature of military

material introduced into South Vietnam. However, based on observations and statements made in both the United States and South Vietnam, the Commission concluded that the Republic of Vietnam had violated the articles prohibiting troop and material reinforcements. It also stated the view that, although there might not be any formal alliance between the Republic of Vietnam and the United States, the establishment of a U.S. Military Assistance Command in South Vietnam, and the introduction of a large number of United States military personnel beyond the stated strength of the Military Assistance Advisory Group, amounted to a "factual military alliance which is prohibited under Article 19 of the Geneva Agreement."[1/]

1/ International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam. Special Report to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China. Saigon, June 2, 1962. London, HMSO. 1962. CMND. 1755.

VIII. End of Diem regime: 1963

The second national elections on August 30, 1959, had given pro-government political parties an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly. On April 9, 1961, President Diem had been re-elected for a second five-year term by a majority of almost six out of seven million votes. Nevertheless, throughout this period there had also been signs of opposition by non-Communists as well as Communists. On November 11, 1960, a group of non-Communist opponents unsuccessfully attempted a coup and some of the opponents who had been previously tolerated, such as Dr. Phan Quang Dan, leader of the Free Democratic Party, were arrested. The next year, with guerrilla activities increasing, a state of emergency was declared on October 15, 1961, and Diem was voted power to make laws by decree in matters concerning national security.

In 1963 a strong Buddhist opposition to Diem became an important factor. Buddhist leaders charged that discrimination was practiced against them by the Ngo ruling family, which was Catholic, and demanded an end to discrimination, and equality with Catholics. On May 8, 1963, the Buddhists of Hue in a huge demonstration protested against a decree which would have prevented a display of religious flags on Buddha's birthday. Deaths resulted when security forces fired on the crowd. Further incidents followed, including the public self-immolation of Buddhist monks. Although a compromise agreement was reached on June 16, with both sides promising to moderate their positions, on August 21 government forces raided the pagodas in principal cities. Protest demonstrations by students and others were followed by large numbers of arrests.

Meanwhile United States officials were making clear their concern over the Buddhist incidents. After the pagoda raids, on September 2, 1963, President Kennedy stated in a television interview that, "I don't think that the war can be won unless the people support the effort and, in my opinion, in the last 2 months, the Government has gotten out of touch with the people."1/

On October 2, 1963, the White House issued a statement of United States policy which reiterated the intention to work with the government and people of South Vietnam to deny that country to communism but also stated that major United States assistance was needed only until the "insurgency has been suppressed or until the national security forces of the government of South Vietnam are capable of suppressing it." Completion of the major part of the United States military task by the end of 1965 was foreseen in the following statement:

> Secretary McNamara and General Taylor reported their judgment that the major part of the U.S. military task can be completed by the end of 1965, although there may be a continuing requirement for a limited number of U.S. training personnel. They reported that by the end of this year, the U.S. program for training Vietnamese should have progressed to the point where 1,000 U.S. military personnel assigned to South Vietnam can be withdrawn. 2/

1/ Department of State Bulletin, September 30, 1963, pp. 498-500.
2/ Ibid., October 21, 1963, p. 623.

The statement also described the political situation in South Vietnam as serious, and reiterated continuing opposition to any repressive actions in South Vietnam, stating that "while such actions have not yet significantly affected the military effort, they could do so in the future." On October 22, 1963, the United States announced it would not support any elements of the Vietnamese special forces (e.g. commandoes) uncommitted to field operations or training programs.

Meanwhile, on October 4, 1963, the Diem government invited the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to investigate charges of government oppression of Buddhists. On October 8 the General Assembly agreed to send such a mission. The problem was already being considered by the General Assembly which, at the request of 14 African states, had voted on September 20, 1963, to include an item entitled "The Violation of Human Rights in South Vietnam" on the agenda.

Earlier, on August 31, 1963, the Secretary General had written President Diem at the request of Asian and African members expressing grave concern over the situation and asking him to insure the full exercise of human rights. President Diem had replied to the Secretary General that there had been no suppression of Buddhist rights but that the situation was "a growing-pain of Buddhism" in an underdeveloped country, and the actions of the government had the object of shielding the development of Buddhism from any external influence working against the higher interests of Buddhism and the State.[1/]

1/ United Nations Yearbook, 1963, p. 48.

The Mission, composed of representatives of Afghanistan, Brazil, Ceylon, Costa Rica, Dahomey, Morocco, and Nepal, arrived in Saigon on October 24, 1963. While it was conducting its investigation, however, on November 1, 1963, a coup overturned the government of Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu were killed. Although the fact-finding mission submitted a report, the General Assembly decided that in view of recent events it was not necessary to discuss the question further.

IX. Post-Diem turmoil: 1964

After the overthrow of Diem, governmental power was in the hands of a military junta. A provisional government with a former Vice-President, Nguyen Ngoc Tho, as Premier was established and it was recognized by the United States on November 7, 1963. In the same month President Kennedy was assassinated. One of President Johnson's early acts was to send Defense Secretary McNamara and CIA Director John A. McCone to evaluate the new Saigon government's war effort. After their return President Johnson sent a New Year's message on December 31, 1963, to Gen. Duong Van Minh, Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council of the Republic of Vietnam, in which he assured the new government that the United States would continue to furnish its support and to maintain American personnel and material in Vietnam as needed.

In this message President Johnson also stated American policy on neutralization of Vietnam, a course which had been chosen for Laos at a second Geneva Conference in July 1962 and which had been suggested by President de Gaulle at a press conference in November 1963. President Johnson's message stated:

> The United States Government shares the view of your government that "neutralization" of South Vietnam is unacceptable. As long as the Communist regime in North Vietnam persists in its aggressive policy, neutralization of South Vietnam would only be another name for a Communist takeover. Peace will return to your country just as soon as the authorities in Hanoi cease and desist from their terrorist aggression. 1/

1/ Department of State Bulletin, January 27, 1964, pp. 121-122.

On January 30, 1964, however, the junta government which had been formed after Diem's overthrow was in turn overthrown by a military coup led by Gen. Nguyen Khanh. Subsequently on February 8, 1964, Khanh became Premier.

Following another study mission to Vietnam by Secretary McNamara and General Taylor, the White House on March 17, 1964, issued a statement that the situation might now improve although the Vietcong had taken maximum advantage of the two changes in government and setbacks since October had occurred. The statement said General Khanh's government had produced a sound central plan for the prosecution of the war which recognized "to a far greater degree than before the crucial role of economic and social, as well as military, action to insure that areas cleared of the Viet Cong survive and prosper in freedom." General Khanh, the statement continued, had proposed a national mobilization plan, steps to build up a highly trained guerrilla force, and "limited but significant additional equipment...for the air forces, the river navy, and the mobile forces. In short, where the South Vietnamese Government now has the power to clear any part of its territory, General Khanh's new program is designed to clear and to hold, step by step and province by province."

The statement further said:

> This program will involve substantial increases in cost to the South Vietnamese economy, which in turn depends heavily on United States economic aid. Additional, though less substantial, military assistance funds are also needed, and increased United States training activity both on the civil and military side. The policy should continue of withdrawing United States personnel where their roles can be assumed by South Vietnamese and of sending additional men if they are needed. It will remain the policy of the United States to furnish assistance and support to South Vietnam for as long as it is required to bring Communist aggression and terrorism under control.

> Secretary McNamara and General Taylor reported their overall conclusion that with continued vigorous leadership from General Khanh and his government, and the carrying out of these steps, the situation can be significantly improved in the coming months. 1/

During 1964 an attempt was made to get additional international support for the struggle in Vietnam. In April 1964 a communique issued after the SEATO Ministerial Council in a paragraph on which France abstained declared that the struggle in Vietnam was an "aggression, directed, supplied and supported by the Communist regime in North Vietnam in flagrant violation of the Geneva accords of 1954 and 1962" and that "the defeat of the Communist campaign is essential not only to the security of the Republic of Vietnam but to that of Southeast Asia."

In July 1964 Premier Khanh sent personal appeals to 34 nations for material assistance. Subsequently military contingents were sent from New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, and some form of aid, such as medical supplies in various amounts, from approximately thirty other countries.

That same month, on July 7, 1964, Britain rejected an appeal from the Soviet Union that both nations, as Co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, demand the United States withdraw its arms and forces from South Vietnam.

1/ Department of State Bulletin, April 6, 1964, pp. 522-523.

Some activity on Vietnam was also apparent in various organs of the United Nations. On June 17, 1964, the UN Special Fund approved a project for the study of the development of the Mekong River Delta in South Vietnam and Cambodia. On July 8, 1964, Secretary-General U Thant urged the reconvening of the Geneva Conference on Vietnam, stating that the United Nations could not effectively intervene because more than one party to the dispute was not a member of the United Nations, but that the United Nations might properly play a role in seeing that any agreement reached was observed.

The Vietnam problem was also touched upon by the United Nations Security Council when Cambodia lodged complaints against the United States and the Republic of Vietnam. Cambodia charged on April 16, 1964, that a Cambodian village had been the subject of air and ground attacks by South Vietnamese forces accompanied by United States forces, and on May 13, 1964, it alleged further attacks and requested a meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation. The Council voted, with the United States in favor, to send a mission to consider measures which might prevent a recurrence of the incidents.

The mission subsequently recommended that the Council establish and send to Cambodia a group of United Nations Observers and entrust the Secretary General with the implementation of the decision in consultation with members of the Council. The United States supported the proposal. On September 9, 1964, however, Cambodia protested that the mission had exceeded its terms of reference by devoting itself largely

to a consideration of the dispute between Vietnam and Cambodia and had not named those responsible for the incidents. It rejected the mission's recommendations and requested that its complaints "should simply be placed on file." Subsequently Cambodia filed with the Council additional complaints of violations of Cambodian territory and air space, and in May 1965 broke diplomatic relations with the United States. 1/

1/ Diplomatic relations were reestablished in July 1969.

X. Crisis in August 1964

A. The Gulf of Tonkin Incidents. On August 2, 1964, a United States destroyer, the USS Maddox, which was on routine patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin, some 30 miles off the coast of North Vietnam, reported being attacked by three North Vietnamese torpedo boats. The Maddox returned gunfire, and aircraft from the United States carrier Ticonderoga also fired upon the torpedo boats. On August 4 the Maddox along with another destroyer, the C. Turner Joy, again reported being attacked by torpedo boats. On August 5, at President Johnson's orders, patrol-boat bases and an oil depot in North Vietnam, the supporting facilities for the torpedo boats, were bombed in retaliation.

North Vietnam claimed the events occurred in North Vietnam's territorial waters and protested to the International Control Commission and the Geneva Co-chairmen, and this claim was supported by Communist China, which on August 6 stated that aggression by the United States against North Vietnam meant aggression against China.

At the request of the United States, a meeting of the United Nations Security Council was held on August 5 and the United States drew attention to the attacks by North Vietnam and emphasized that the steps which had been taken by the United States in response had been carefully measured. On August 7, the Security Council, without a vote, agreed to invite both North and South Vietnam to provide information. Although South Vietnam indicated its acceptance, North Vietnam refused, issuing a statement on August 9 claiming that the Geneva Conference powers, not the United Nations, had the right to examine the dispute.

Meanwhile, on August 5, 1964, President Johnson delivered a message to Congress asking for a resolution expressing the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in Southeast Asia. He said, "We seek the full and effective restoration of the international agreements signed in Geneva in 1954, with respect to South Vietnam, and again in Geneva in 1962, with respect to Laos."

The joint resolution was passed on August 7, 1964, by a vote of 88-2 in the Senate and 416-0 in the House and became law (P.L. 88-408) on August 10, 1964, when it was signed by the President. It resolved:

> That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression;
>
> The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia....the United States is...prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom. 1/

The duration of the resolution was until "the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress."

1/ Department of State Bulletin. August 24, 1964, p. 268.

B. Political crisis in Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin incidents were accompanied and followed by renewed political upheaval in the government of South Vietnam. General Khanh proclaimed a state of emergency on August 7, 1964, and on August 16 the Military Revolutionary Council announced that a new constitution had been installed and that General Khanh was replacing Duong Van Minh as Chief of State. Turmoil continued, nevertheless, as a result of which a civilian government was reinstated. Phan Khac Suu was elected as Chief of State under a new constitution on October 24 and Tran Van Huong, former mayor of Saigon, was named the new Premier on November 1.

Rioting and pressures still continued. In January 1965 the Armed Forces Council asked General Khanh, who had become the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, to solve the political crisis. As a result on February 16, 1965, a new government was formed with Dr. Phan Huy Quat, a physician, as Premier. Dissidence by regional groups soon brought about objections to his regime, however, and he resigned on June 12, 1965, stating that responsibility was being handed back to the armed forces. Following this, Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky accepted appointment as Premier on June 19, 1956. The new government immediately declared a state of war with stringent controls in various fields.

XI. Escalation of the war: 1965-1968

Meanwhile, hostilities were also intensifying and a new phase began in February 1965. On February 7, 1965, Vietcong forces carried out intensive attacks on several South Vietnamese air bases, barracks and villages. In retaliation, the United States and South Vietnamese Air Forces launched joint attacks against barracks and staging areas in the southern part of North Vietnam.

On that same day, the United States complained of the Vietcong attacks to the United Nations Security Council. The letter by Ambassador Stevenson to the Security Council President stated that since 1959 up to 34,000 armed and trained soldiers had infiltrated into South Vietnam from the north, that during 1964 the rate of infiltration had increased sharply, and that virtually all infiltrators at the present time were natives of North Vietnam. Therefore, the United States asserted, the infiltration was not indirect aggression but rather was "a sustained attack for more than six years across a frontier set by international agreement."[1/] Further retaliatory air attacks were carried out by the United States on February 11, 1965, and on February 24 it was announced that at the request of the Government of Vietnam United States jet aircraft had participated in a number of combined operations against North Vietnam.

1/ Department of State Bulletin, February 22, 1965, pp. 240-241.

On February 27, 1965, the State Department released a White Paper entitled "Aggression from the North" describing the conflict in Vietnam as a totally new kind of war, in which a Communist government had "set out deliberately to conquer a sovereign people in a neighboring state" using every resource in a "carefully planned program of concealed aggression." North Vietnam's commitment to sieze control in South Vietnam, the report stated, was no less total than that of North Korea in 1950, but in view of the failure of North Korea the North Vietnamese had attempted to disguise their aggression. The bulk of the report was "a summary of the massive evidence of North Vietnamese aggression obtained by the Government of South Vietnam." This evidence showed, the report stated, that the hard core of the forces attacking South Vietnam were trained in the North and ordered into the South by Hanoi; that much of the supplies used by the Vietcong had been sent from Hanoi; and that the directing force was the Lao Dong, or Communist party. The report was forwarded to the President of the UN Security Council. In sending the report, the United States also stated that if aggression was ended by Hanoi, the United States, as it had said before, would be happy to withdraw its forces.

In addition to inaugurating air strikes against North Vietnam, the United States began introducing combat troops in March, and the first marine battalion landed in Vietnam on March 8. Throughout 1965, 1966, 1967, and into 1968 the war escalated in intensity and United States participation increased. Except for a few brief pauses, regular bombing of

North Vietnam continued until the partial halt announced on March 31, 1968, and the complete halt announced on October 31, 1968. U.S. troops from 1965 to 1968 took over an increasing role in preventing a Vietcong/ North Vietnamese military victory.

XII. Vietnamization: 1969-1970

An effort to increase the effectiveness of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and gradually to reduce the role of United States combat units was accelerated in 1969 under the "Vietnamization" program. Secretary of Defense Laird said in Feburary 1970 that the program had been instituted as of July 1, 1969, to accomplish "an orderly transfer to the South Vietnamese, within a reasonable time frame, of the major responsibilities that the United States has assumed." He said the objective was to increase the South Vietnamese capability to the level where it "would be adequate to defeat not only the Vietcong but the invading North Vietnamese forces as well." This program had three phases, he said:

(1) transfer of U.S. ground combat role to the forces of South Vietnam;

(2) transfer of logistics and support activities to the Republic of Vietnam;

(3) a small U.S. military advisory group remaining in South Vietnam.

Laird said that he had concluded, after his trip to South Vietnam, that the Vietnamization objectives were valid and the military aspects of the program were "proceeding satisfactorily. As regards the military aspects of Vietnamization, we are on schedule or ahead of schedule in every major category." Laird also said that the pacification program involving economic development and village and rural security was making encouraging progress. 1/

1/ Laird made the above statements, after a trip to South Vietnam, February 10-14, 1970, to the Department of Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

The first announcement of U.S. troop withdrawals came on June 8, 1969, at a conference between President Nixon and President Thieu on Midway Island, with a total of 25,000 to be withdrawn by the end of August. A second withdrawal of 35,000 was announced on September 16, with the authorized troop ceiling to be lowered to 484,000 by December 15. On December 15, President Nixon announced a further reduction of 50,000, to be reached by April 15, 1970. President Nixon on April 20, 1970, announced plans to withdraw an additional 150,000 American troops "to be completed during the spring of next year". This would reduce the ceiling to 284,000. He stated that this withdrawal plan was based entirely on progress in the Vietnamization program. He added that when "viewed against the enemy's escalation in Laos and Cambodia and, in view of the stepped-up attacks this month in South Vietnam, this decision clearly involves risks." He again warned North Vietnam, in stronger terms than previously, that if increased enemy action jeopardized U.S. troops, "I shall not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation."

The Cambodian crisis in the spring of 1970 apparently has led the United States to broaden the goals of Vietnamization. Statements by U.S. and South Vietnamese officials now indicate that South Vietnam will help in the defense of Cambodia in addition to eventually assuming its own defense. President Nixon has said that if it became necessary to undertake future attacks against Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia, South Vietnamese forces would handle the assignment alone. President Thieu

has said that Cambodia had requested South Vietnamese assistance and both countries stated on May 27 that the troops would remain as long as necessary. Most reports indicate that South Vietnamese units have performed well in Cambodia.

President Nixon on April 30 described the Cambodian operations as necessary "to protect our men who are in Vietnam and to guarantee the continued success of our withdrawal and Vietnamization program." In a news conference on May 8, the President said that the 150,000 men whose withdrawal was announced on April 20 would "come home on schedule" and the Vietnamization program would not be affected. 1/ A major factor in the decision was the threat to the Lon Nol government from North Vietnamese/Vietcong forces in eastern Cambodia. President Nixon said the action was not taken to expand the war but to move more rapidly to end the war. There was mixed reaction in the Congress to the Cambodian operations, with opponents claiming that United States action did widen the war and was in direct contradiction to the Nixon doctrine and to the overall Vietnamization program.

Critics of the Vietnamization program stress that the South Vietnamese armed forces remain for the most part untested. The chief problem continues to be a lack of leadership rather than a lack of fighting equipment; another major stumbling block is the limited South Vietnamese capability to use and maintain properly the advanced equipment the ARVN has received and will continue to receive. Critics

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1/ President Nixon on June 3 said that 50,000 of the 150,000 would be out by October 15.

of the Vietnamization program also charge that it reduces the chances for a negotiated settlement and as now constituted, without a firm withdrawal schedule, lessens the pressure on the Thieu government to face up to the necessity of bringing all elements of South Vietnamese society into the political system.

XIII. Statistics

Total United States forces in Vietnam grew from about 23,000 in January 1965, to approximately 184,000 at the end of 1965, to 385,000 at the end of 1966, to 486,000 at the end of 1967, and to 537,000 at the end of 1968. With the Vietnamization program under way, total troop strength was reduced to 474,000 at the end of 1969 and to less than 430,000 as of May 1970.1/

Total strength of the Republic of Vietnam armed forces have grown steadily, to a figure between 1.1 and 1.2 million.2/ This compares to a strength of approximately 1,100,000 in the second half of 1969, 1,000,000 at the beginning of 1969, about 800,000 in early 1968, about 700,000 from 1965 to 1967, some 600,000 in 1964, 500,000 in 1963, 465,000 in 1962, and 335,000 in 1961.3/

The strength of the Vietcong-North Vietnamese forces - main forces, local forces and guerrillas - was reported by the Department of Defense as 221,000 at the end of 1965. The Pentagon in December 1969 said that revised estimates placed enemy strength at 290,000 in the fall of 1968. The same Department of Defense estimate placed

1/ Monthly troop strength figures since the high of 543,000 was reached in April 1969 are: 1969: May, 540,000; June, 539,000; July, 537,000; August, 510,000; September, 510,000; October, November, 480,000; December, 474,000. 1970: January, 473,000; February, 467,000; March, 439,000; April, 428,000.

2/ This figure includes regular forces, full-time regional and popular forces, and paramilitary forces. At the end of fiscal year 1970, South Vietnam expects to have almost 1.2 million under arms (regular forces: 470,000; regional/popular forces: 515,000, and paramilitary/security forces: 215,000).

3/ Other allied troop strength in Vietnam totaled about 69,000 in May, 1970. This includes: South Korea, 49,000; Thailand, 11,500; Australia, 7,500; New Zealand, 500; Philippines, 100. (From the Department of Defense, May 28, 1970.)

Vietcong-North Vietnamese strength in December 1969 at 240,000, the figure which apparently continues to apply at the present time. There have been a number of conflicting estimates and revised estimates: Secretary of Defense Laird has said "it's not an easy task" to estimate enemy troop strength.

With the escalation, casualties also mounted, with some 1,369 U.S. troops killed in action in 1965, 5,008 in 1966, 9,378 in 1967, 14,592 in 1968, and 9,414 in 1969. South Vietnam's battle deaths were 11,243 in 1965, 11,953 in 1966, 12,716 in 1967, 16,353 in 1968, and 21,758 in 1969. The total number of U.S. troops killed in combat from 1960 through 1969 totalled 40,028, while the total for South Vietnam reached 109,391. Enemy deaths in the same period were reported as 593,487.

Precise figures are lacking on the cost of the war to the United States, but the total figure now is about $100 billion. Official totals for fiscal 1966 were approximately $6 billion; for fiscal 1967, $20 billion; for fiscal 1968, $26.5 billion; and for fiscal 1969, $28.8 billion. An early estimate for fiscal 1970 was $23.2 billion. The 1971 budget estimates (public) for the Department of Defense do not include an estimate for the Vietnam war; however, Secretary of Defense Laird has said that at the end of fiscal 1970 the expenditure rate for the Vietnam war on an annual basis "will be about $17.5 billion".

The number of civilian casualties - killed and wounded - in Vietnam has been high, but no precise figures are available. The

Department of State and AID have indicated that over 200,000 Vietnamese civilians were admitted to South Vietnamese and United States military hospitals from 1967 through 1969 for war-related reasons. A number of estimates have placed casualties at over 100,000 a year for the last four years. Senator Edward Kennedy, chairman of the subcommittee on refugees of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, in December 1969 said his subcommittee estimated there have been more than one million civilian casualties in Vietnam since 1965, including 300,000 killed. Kennedy quoted Mr. John Hannah, Administrator of AID, as stating that a large percentage of all civilian deaths and injuries were caused by attacks of the North Vietnamese and Vietcong, while the military response from U.S. and other allied forces contributed to the casualty figure.1/

State Department figures list 19,157 South Vietnamese civilians killed by Vietcong terrorists from 1965 through 1969, with 32,174 abducted.2/ Nearly 36,000 civilians were wounded from 1967 through 1969 in acts of Vietcong terrorism. Estimates indicate that between 3000 and 6000 residents of Hue alone were killed by the Vietcong, in a planned and systematic way, during the 1968 Tet offensive. There have been reported instances of killings of South Vietnamese civilians by U.S. soldiers, with a massacre allegedly occurring at Mylai hamlet (in Songmy village) in March 1968. Lt. General William Peers, heading an Army investigating team, on March 17, 1970, refused to characterize publicly what happened but added "that a tragedy of major proportions occurred" at Mylai.

1/ Congressional Record, December 22, 1969. p. S17510.
2/ Excludes February 1968 (during TET offensive, for which no reliable statistics are available).

XIV. Political Development, 1966-1970

In the midst of the intensification of the war, a new framework for a representative government in South Vietnam was built. The United States supported progress in this direction and has sought a continuing broadening of the base of the South Vietnamese government. There are limitations, however, on the extent to which the United States can affect the political processes in South Vietnam. 1/

1/ President Nixon in his first major speech on Vietnam on May 14, 1969, said: "The South Vietnamese government recognizes, as we do, that a settlement must permit all persons and groups that are prepared to renounce the use of force to participate freely in the political life of South Vietnam." United States, Department of State Bulletin v. LX, no. 1562, June 2, 1969. p. 460.

Vice President Agnew, speaking to reporters on Guam on December 28, 1969, said "We have always encouraged President Thieu to have the broadest based government that he can have" but added that the idea of United States pressure on Thieu to change his government would violate the President's doctrine of Asia for Asians. Washington Post, December 29, 1969.

Secretary of State Rogers, in an interview on "Meet the Press" on October 12, 1969, in reference to the cabinet changes in South Vietnam in August and September, said: "President Thieu tried to broaden the government; he asked several people to serve as ministers who refused. I think we would have preferred a broader based government. He knows our view on that. It may be well that as time goes on he can bring in more representative politicians from other groups." United States, Department of State Bulletin, v. LXI, no. 1583, October 27, 1969. p. 348.

In February 1966 President Johnson and Premier Ky of South Vietnam met in Hawaii and in the "Declaration of Honolulu," issued on February 8 (1966), proclaimed the purposes of each nation. The purposes stated by the Government of Vietnam were to defeat the Vietcong and those fighting with them, to eradicate social injustice, to establish a stable, viable economy, and to build true democracy, including a democratic constitution and an elected government. The United States stated as its objectives to prevent aggression and to help a country which was determined to help itself; to fulfill the principles of self-determination, therefore supporting free elections and amnesty for all who turned toward peace; to support the social revolution; to help improve the material well-being of the people, and to press for a peaceful settlement. As their common commitment, the two governments pledged themselves "to defend against aggression, to the work of social revolution, to the goal of free self-government, to the attack on hunger, ignorance, and disease, and to the unending quest for peace."[1/]

1/ U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam. (5th Revised Edition), 91st Congress, 1st session, Committee Print, March 1969, pp. 184-186.

After Buddhist demonstrations in Saigon and protests in Hue and Danang over the dismissal of Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chan Thi as District Commander in Hue, Premier Ky on March 25, 1966, announced that a committee would be appointed to draft a constitution to be followed by elections. After additional riots in Hue and Buddhist demonstrations in Saigon in May, ten civilians were added to the ruling military Committee for the Direction of the State, and a People's and Armed Forces Council was established to advise the Prime Minister on economic and social problems. Premier Ky also signed a decree setting September 11, 1966, as the date for the election of a 117-member constituent assembly, and the turmoil gradually subsided.

More than four million of a total registered electorate of five million, or 80 percent, voted in the elections for delegates to the constituent assembly. The delegates drafted a new Constitution which was promulgated on April 1, 1967. This Constitution vested legislative authority in a National Assembly composed of a Lower and Upper House and executive authority in a President. It prohibited "every activity designed to propagandize or carry out communism."

The next major steps were the elections for the Presidency and the National Assembly in the fall of 1967. Although Premier Ky had announced his candidacy for President, on June 30 he announced that instead he would run for vice president on the ticket headed by Chief of State Nguyen Van Thieu. In the election held on September 3, Thieu and Ky received some 1,600,000 votes (35 percent of the total), defeating 10 civilian slates to win a plurality victory. 1/ President Johnson, who had made known to the government in Saigon the importance the United States attached to free elections, sent a 22-man team to observe the election at the invitation of Premier Ky. There was general agreement among the observers that the balloting on the whole was conducted honestly. Nevertheless, there were certain limitations in the election which prevented it from being a fully free test of opinion. Under the election law Communists, pro-Communists, and neutralists were barred from the ballot, and the Constituent Assembly

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1/ The Presidential Election Law passed by the Constituent Assembly on June 15, 1967, contained the following sentence: The candidates on the list which receive the greatest number of votes will be declared elected. See New York Times, June 11 and 18, 1967, Washington Star, June 14, 1967 and Washington Post, May 17, 1967.

The ticket headed by Truong Dinh Dzu finished second, with over 17 percent of the vote (over 817,000 votes). The ticket headed by Phan Khac Suu received nearly 11 percent of the vote (over 513,000 votes), while Tran Van Huong's ticket received 10 percent of the vote (over 474,000 votes).

eliminated one of the strongest challengers of the Thieu-Ky ticket and also dropped plans for a presidential runoff election.[1/] In addition, the civilian candidates complained that the Ky government had made it difficult for them to campaign on a basis of equality - e.g., by denying them equal access to communications media.

Nevertheless, United States officials regarded the elections as a substantial and encouraging step in the political development of South Vietnam. President Johnson said in a press conference of November 17, 1967:

> To think that here in the midst of war, when the grenades are popping like firecrackers all around you, that two-thirds or three-fourths of the people would register and vote and have five elections in 13 months -- and through the democratic process select people at the local level, a Constituent Assembly, a House of Representatives, a Senate, a President and a Vice President -- that is encouraging. [2/]

1/ Thieu and Ky rid themselves of a difficult rival when General Duong Van Minh (Big Minh) was eliminated from the race by the Constituent Assembly. The Government had described him as a "security risk" and had indicated that he would not be allowed to return from Thailand to campaign whether the Assembly accepted his candidacy or not. Another possible strong contender, Au Truong Thanh, was eliminated as a result of charges that he was "pro-Communist and neutralist." Thanh had served as Economics Minister in the Ky cabinet. New York Times, July 19, 1967, Washington Star, July 22, 1967 and Washington Post, July 18, 1967.

2/ Department of State Bulletin, December 11, 1967, p. 776.

Three cabinets have been installed in South Vietnam since the 1967 election, but there has been only limited movement toward a government incorporating all groups in Vietnamese society. The Thieu government has become more effective, but critics claim it has become more narrowly based, with Thieu depending on a tight circle of close confidants. Part of the fault for this situation lies with the non-Communist political groups, who are not willing to cooperate with the Government because they are opposed to it in principle and unwilling to share power or to accept what they consider to be minor cabinet posts. The tendency toward fragmentation has prevented significant cooperation among opposition groups, with no emergence thus far of a broad opposition coalition. The great majority of the political groups in the South remain held together by personal ties and loyalties rather than by the sharing of programs or objectives.

In the past six months the opposition to the Thieu government -- from militant Buddhists, students, some veterans, numerous politicians and several newspaper editors -- has become noisier. But most of these groups have not been able to approach any kind of consensus, usually limiting their protests and opposition to policies affecting their own particular group. The Thieu government has made some concessions, to students for example, but other groups, such as the politicians, have not been able to enlist public enthusiasm and support.

There have been manifestations of arbitrary use of power that illustrate the limitations of democracy in South Vietnam. 1/ A staff report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1970 noted that "many Vietnamese consider that Thieu is heavy-handed and tactless in dealing with the Assembly." A military court in July 1968 sentenced Truong Dinh Dzu, who finished second to Thieu in the Presidential race, to five years in prison. Dzu was charged with advocating the formation of a coalition government as a way of ending the war. In March 1969 a military court sentenced Thich Thien Minh, a leader of a militant Buddhist faction, to ten years at hard labor for "harboring rebels and concealing weapons and illegal documents." 2/ In another case, Thieu successfully demanded that the parliamentary immunity of two deputies, Tran Ngoc Chau and Huang Ho, be revoked because of Communist activities. The Assembly refused to remove the immunity of a third man accused by Thieu. The first two were

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1/ It should be remembered, however, that the Saigon government is operating under unusual, very difficult conditions, confronting Vietcong/North Vietnamese military/political/terrorist units throughout South Vietnam.

2/ Thich Thien Minh was released on October 30 when 310 political prisoners were set free in honor of South Vietnam's National Day on November 1.

In November 1969, 41 of 43 defendants were found guilty in a spy trial before a military court in Saigon. They received jail sentences ranging from three months to life, with one of the stiffest sentences going to a former assistant to President Thieu, Huynh Van Trong. The defendants were reported to be "happy" with their sentences, convinced that they would be freed in a matter of months due to the imposition of a coalition government in Saigon.

tried in absentia by a military court on February 25, 1970. Ho, reportedly out of the country, was sentenced to death; Chau, who maintained that his contacts with a Communist (his brother) had been made with the approval of the American Embassy, was first sentenced to 20 years. In a second trial in early March, his sentence was reduced to 10 years. 1/ President Thieu's handling of the Chau case was criticized in both the United States and South Vietnam. 2/

The Government in the past frequently suspended newspapers for publishing offensive material; a new press law has given Vietnam a freer press than it has ever had before, but still subjects them to censorship and confiscation on issued deemed to be too critical. The law also allows the Government to seize newspapers for news stories "harmful to the national security" or to the "discipline and morale of the armed forces." A Ministry of Information official in June said that it wasn't worth the effort to try to close a paper permanently through the courts. All papers must submit page proofs to the Government and editions of offending newspapers are confiscated. But

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1/ One of the points made by the prosecution was that Chau had failed to report his contacts with his brother to Vietnamese authorities. Chau said American officials had told him they would tell appropriate Vietnamese.

2/ A special session of South Vietnam's Senate on March 23 concluded that Chau should have been tried by a civilian court instead of a military tribunal. The Supreme Court of South Vietnam, which has shown considerable independence in recent months, on March 25 ruled that a House petition originally used to allow prosecution of Chau was unconstitutional. The Court on May 5 ruled that Chau's trial was illegal and that the military court that tried him had operated unconstitutionally. But the Court did not overturn his conviction.

because of the time it takes for a decision to be made to confiscate, copies of the paper concerned are often already on the street. 1/

The cabinet installed in November 1967, headed by Nguyen Van Loc, showed little efficiency and was replaced in May 1968 by a new cabinet headed by Tran Van Huong. Tran Van Huong (a highly respected politician who had finished fourth in the 1967 presidential race) and a majority of the cabinet members were southerners. Two generals were ministers:

1/ Washington Post, June 14, 1970.

Nguyen Van Vy as Minister of Defense and Tran Thien Khiem as Minister of the Interior. A year later Huong was under heavy attack from a majority of the members of the Assembly, who demanded his dismissal. [1/] A petition in August 1969 by President Thieu's political alliance calling for Huong's replacement apparently had Thieu's advance approval. Huong had been subjected to heavy criticism because of his economic policies, with the sharp increase in import taxes a major issue. Thieu then moved to consolidate his position by appointing a military academy classmate he trusted.

General Tran Thien Khiem [2/] was named premier on August 23, 1969, and members of the new cabinet were named in September. The new cabinet consisted primarily of trusted civil servants and military men. A number of prominent South Vietnamese political leaders turned down cabinet posts because they wanted more prestigious positions. The reshuffles in 1968 and 1969 weakened the position of Vice President Ky.

President Thieu in April 1969 announced his intention of creating a strong, two-party system for South Vietnam as part of the effort to increase the country's political viability. In the one year that has elapsed since, neither a strong pro-government party nor a united opposition have been formed. The new pro-government party, the National Social Democratic Front (NSDF), organized in May 1969, was vague in its program on the Paris talks and on the organization of elections after the war. The NSDF was a collection of six parties, one of which has since left the Front; half the

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1/ Ninety of the 135 members of the Assembly had signed a petition in June 1969 asking President Thieu to dismiss Huong.

2/ Khiem had been named Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Pacification in March 1969. He retained the portfolio of Minister of Interior.

leadership of two other Front parties had deserted. The Front failed to attract significant political figures. Plans to train political cadres and organize the countryside have apparently never been implemented.

The opposition groups have found it equally difficult to form a united group. A number of political leaders opposed to President Thieu have met regularly since the summer of 1969, but have been unable to agree on either a platform or a course of action. They do not advocate the violent overthrow of the Thieu government, but believe it should undergo extensive reshuffling. They do agree that the factions in South Vietnam must organize themselves if they are to compete in a political confrontation with the Communists. These leaders represent a number of political groups, including the National Salvation Front headed by Senator Tran Van Don.

Some political leaders argue that the Political Parties Law promulgated by President Thieu on June 19, 1969, was designed to retain tight central control of the political scene by making legal validation of parties extremely complicated. Parties had six months to comply with the requirements; after that they would become illegal. Many of the parties apparently have not complied and are technically illegal. 1/

Two former generals, Duong Van Minh (Big Minh) and Senator Tran Van Don, lead important groups opposed to the Thieu government. Big Minh, who had led the coup against the Diem regime in 1963, returned home in

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1/ The parties must submit, for each claimed member, a birth certificate, a certificate of military status, certificate of residence, and a membership application. Article 9 of the law gives the Ministry of the Interior the power to refuse even a temporary permit to any party whose executive committee contains "Communist elements or elements with a record of pro-Communist activities." The Law also provides for new parties, which are given a period of 18 months to comply with the registration r ul tion

October 1968 after four years in exile in Bangkok. In November he proposed a national referendum to decide whether the South Vietnamese people supported Thieu; he also called for a national convention or congress to work toward a "truly representative government" for South Vietnam. On October 30, 1969, Tran Van Don advocated the founding of a "third force." He said that South Vietnam should "put an end to...this shameful reliance on foreign powers" and choose a middle path between the Communist and capitalist worlds. He was critical of the United States.

XV. Pacification and Land Reform

The United States has been heavily involved in the "pacification" program in South Vietnam, a coordinated process combining military operations and civil nation-building programs. Pacification programs aim to achieve security for the rural population, to identify and neutralize members of the Vietcong infrastructure (the Phoenix program), to cause defections from the Vietcong (the Chieu Hoi or Open Arms program) [1/] and to strengthen the local government structure and generate economic and social development programs (revolutionary development or RD). Progress in the pacification program has been measured since 1967 by the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES), an evaluation plan administered by the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MACV). The HES ratings have frequently been criticized for presenting an over-optimistic picture of developments; however, most observers believe that substantial progress was made in pacification in

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1/ The Chieu Hoi program began in 1963 in an effort to cause Vietcong members to defect to the Government. The program had a record 47,000 returnees in 1969; the total since 1963 is reported to be over 150,000.

1969. [1] The HES system was revised in early 1970 in an effort to increase accuracy and reduce the optimistic bias of past reporting; the first report reduced the number of hamlets said to be relatively pacified from 92.7 percent to 89.9 percent. This figure dropped to 88.9 percent in April. [2]

The pacification program has had its ups and downs - making steady progress in 1967, then receiving a major setback in the 1968 Tet offensive, recovering slowly in 1968 and making rapid progress in 1969. In May 1967

1/ A report issued by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1970, based on a trip to South Vietnam by Committee investigators in December 1969, concluded that while there had been progress, there was also "considerable skepticism regarding the accuracy of some of these indicators and the significance of others." The report noted that "virtually all" Americans and Vietnamese "to whom we talked believe that the pacification program...is better organized than it has been in the past, has profited from previous mistakes and is producing considerable evidence of progress." On the other hand, the report said that Committee staff members had been told by one U.S. officer that the figure should be at least 15 percent lower at midnight, and by a Vietnamese official that only 60 percent of the population was secure both day and night. U.S. Congress. Senate. Foreign Relations Committee. Vietnam: December 1969. February 2, 1970. 91st Congress, 2d session. Washington, D.C., U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1970. p. 4.

2/ The number of South Vietnamese listed as living in areas rated in the three most secure categories dropped to 15,792,300 [out of a total South Vietnamese population of about 17,500,000]. New York Times, May 26, 1970.

the pacification effort of the United States was put under military control on the grounds that local security was the first requirement for pacification, that the greater part of the United States assets involved in support of revolutionary development belonged to the Military Assistance Command, and that a more effective effort could be made by uniting the civilian and military aspects of the program. The new structure was named the Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS).

As noted above, the Tet offensive in January-February 1968 resulted in a considerable setback to the pacification effort. However, there has been a gradual recovery with a new willingness by the South Vietnamese government to assign a higher priority to the program.

The Tet offensive caused many of the Revolutionary Development teams to move back into the cities and only gradually did the teams return to the countryside. The setbacks caused a major overhaul of the 1968 program and a reshuffling of priorities: pacification officials concentrated on the building of security in each hamlet with less stress on development of schools, dispensaries, roads and agriculture. Other priorities in the revised program are: rooting out the Vietcong political infrastructure, purging corrupt and incompetent officials, arming the people, reviving village government and the rural economy, and bettering the lot of refugees and Vietcong defectors. The militia is being given a more important mission in the security program.

An accelerated pacification campaign was begun by Saigon in November 1968, with increased use of regional and popular force militia, to gain control of contested hamlets. Officials said that in three months the program added more than one million South Vietnamese to those under "relatively secure" control of the Saigon government - with over 76 percent of the total population "relatively secure." 1/ The program was extended through 1969, with a goal of bringing 90 percent of the population under government control. William E. Colby, chief of the U.S. pacification effort (of CORDS), told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 17, 1970, that the South Vietnamese government had made substantial headway during 1969 toward restoring security to many areas of the country: "Except in one or two areas...The large enemy battalions, regiments and divisions are in the border sanctuaries. The roads are open to many markets...throughout the countryside where families are once again tilling their long abandoned farms." Colby was noncommital about the future of the pacification program: "I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic about the future." The chief of the pacification program in the Mekong Delta, John Paul Vann, told the Foreign Relations Committee on February 18 that since 1968 "I have become increasingly convinced, with the changes being made, that...our objectives will be achieved." Vann claimed that the NLF, which had preponderant support in 1965, now had the backing of less than 10 percent of the South Vietnamese. Vann said that there was more popular participation in the governing of villages and hamlets "than at any time in the past 100 years." He added

1/ This compares with a figure of 67 percent used just before the 1968 Tet offensive.

that "I think the biggest difference we have is the changed attitude of the population of South Vietnam." Senator Fulbright said the testimony was "very encouraging" but recounted past optimistic statements that had proved false and said "we are made skeptical by past events." 1/

One important part of the overall pacification effort - the Phoenix program, aimed at "neutralizing" the Vietcong infrastructure - has had mixed results. The program was reportedly organized by the CIA in late 1967 to weed out an estimated 75,000 Vietcong political leaders and agents from the civilian population and was in full operation by mid-1968. U.S. intelligence officials define Phoenix as "a systematic effort at intelligence coordination and exploitation," one purpose of which was to end competition between official groups. Under the Ministry of the Interior, administrative committees and intelligence-gathering centers were set up in the 44 province capitals and most of the country's 242 districts. Over 400 Americans serve as advisers. The CIA's role has been gradually taken over by U.S. military officials. The operation, however, is executed primarily by Vietnamese troops. The most controversial arm of the Phoenix program in each province is a group called the Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU), serving under the province chief as the major "action arm" of the program. 2/

1/ Washington Post, February 18, 1970, New York Times, February 19, 1970.
2/ New York Times, August 19, 1969 and February 18, 1970; Washington Post, December 20, 1969 and February 17, 1970; Wall Street Journal, September 5, 1968, and March 25, 1969.

According to official figures, a total of 19,534 suspected Vietcong "political cadres" were "neutralized" in 1969. That number included 8,515 reportedly captured, 6, 187 killed and 4,832 who defected. 1/ Newspaper reports indicate that American officials have been unhappy with the progress of the program and of the abuses that have occurred. 2/ There have been a number of reports that the Phoenix program at one stage had degenerated into a counter-terror program. Ambassador Colby told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February that "there was a counter-terror program, but it has been discarded as a concept." He acknowledged that "aberrations do occur" in the program but said they were infrequent. 3/

A major facet of the South Vietnamese official effort to increase its strength in the countryside is the move to implement a new land reform program. President Thieu unveiled the new program in February 1969; 4/ a bill entitled "Land to the Tiller Policy" was approved by the Cabinet

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1/ Washington Post, February 18, 1970. Of the 15,000 neutralized in 1968, reportedly some 15 percent were killed, 72 percent captured and 13 percent defected.

2/ New York Times, February 18, 1970.

3/ Ibid. Washington Post, February 18, 1970.

4/ Distribution of lands taken by the Diem government accelerated in 1968 and 1969. Some 60,000 acres were distributed in 1968 and it is estimated that 180,000 acres were distributed in 1969. President Thieu decreed that beginning in July 1969 distribution would be free. In 1968 he declared that the processes by which landlords evicted occupants and collected rents in newly "secured" areas would be ended. In late 1968 and early 1969 three additional decrees were issued to protect the rights of tenants. See Congressional Record, December 11, 1969, pp. S16518-S16521.

and sent to the National Assembly on July 2; the House passed the bill on September 9, the Senate passed it on March 6, 1970, and on March 16 the House approved the Senate version; on March 26, 1970 the bill became law. 1/ The estimated cost of the new land reform program is between $400 and $500 million. U.S. assistance has been given to the program in fiscal 1970 and additional funds are being requested in fiscal 1971. 2/

If carried out in accordance with the new law, the land reform program will transfer ownership of some 2.5 to 3 million acres of land to the peasants who now cultivate it. About 800,000 families will be affected. The maximum land-holding will be limited to 37 acres. 3/ President Thieu has stated that about 500,000 acres will be distributed in 1970 and that the remainder will be distributed before the end of 1973. In the Mekong Delta, individual tenants will receive 7.4 acres, while those in the farmlands along the east coast will get 2.4 acres. Land will be free to those receiving it, no tax will be paid relating to land transfer, and no land tax will be paid in the first year of

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1/ At the Midway Conference in June 1969, President Thieu in discussions with President Nixon "laid particular stress on his pursuit of a vigorous land redistribution program that would give the land to those who work it."

2/ Resolutions have been introduced in the Congress calling for a much higher expenditure than AID has programmed.

3/ Less than 10 percent of Vietnam's land owners or tenants farmed more than 37 acres when the law went into effect.

ownership. Landlords - about 16,000 are involved - will receive in cash about 20 percent of the value of expropriated land with the remainder paid in bonds redeemable over eight years and bearing 10 percent interest.

Some critics, citing the ineffectiveness of previous land reform programs, remain skeptical of how effective the implementation of the program will be. In 1956, President Ngo Dinh Diem decreed a 247-acre limit to riceland ownership, but this made only one million acres available for redistribution. Land redistribution proceeded slowly under Diem and under successor governments until 1968, with only about 100,000 out of one million tenant families in the Delta area benefiting.

The extent of the land tenure problem has been demonstrated by studies undertaken in the last three years by the Department of Agriculture and the Stanford Research Institute. 1/ These showed that tenant farmers and their families comprised well over 50 percent of the rural population. The Stanford study showed that in the Mekong Delta, landlords supplied their tenants with virtually no agricultural inputs: no credit, seeds, implements or fertilizers. Approximately half the landlords were absentees and spent little time on their farms. The landlords collect rents ranging from one-third to one-half of the gross crop and can evict tenants at will. This situation has made the Government's pacification problem more difficult,

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1/ The Stanford Research Institute survey of land tenure in Vietnam was undertaken for AID in 1967-1968.

particularly in view of the land reform program of the Vietcong. 1/ The Government's land reform program, if implemented successfully, could stabilize Government control in the countryside. The Stanford study reinforces the views of many observers that land reform constitutes a basic factor in peasant attitudes toward the war and a reason for the growth of Vietcong strength in South Vietnam. 2/

1/ In December 1966, Le Duan, first secretary of the North Vietnamese Communist party, said: "Without solving the problem of land it would be impossible to attract all agriculture laborers to enthusiastically rise up and oppose the imperialists." In that same year, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge declared that Communist promises of "land to the tiller" were "perhaps the greatest appeal the Vietcong have."

2/ The Stanford group found in its interviews that tenant farmers in the Delta regarded land ownership as a paramount concern five times as frequently as they regarded physical security as a paramount concern, and rated agricultural credit as a paramount concern four times as frequently as security. (See also Mitchell, Edward J. Land Tenure and Rebellion...in South Vietnam. The Rand Corporation, June 1967; Land Reform in Vietnam, a special issue of the Vietnam Bulletin, March 1970, published by the Embassy of Vietnam in Washington.)

XVI. Peace Efforts: 1965-1970

In 1964, before the major U.S. buildup in Vietnam began, neither side placed much stress on a negotiated settlement. The Communists were winning on the ground and apparently saw no need to negotiate. South Vietnam, clearly losing, was in poor bargaining position and likely to come out on the short end of a negotiated settlement. In 1964 and early 1965 the U.S. Government rejected several attempts made by UN Secretary-General U Thant to get negotiations started.[1/] The official U.S. position was that Hanoi was violating existing agreements and that there was no point in negotiating a new agreement.

The United States has since the spring of 1965 publicly pursued a policy aimed at a negotiated settlement of the war. This policy was carried out in conjunction with a steady buildup of U.S. military strength in South Vietnam until the spring of 1969. President Johnson on April 7, 1965, called for unconditional discussions, and in the summer of 1965 the United States softened its stand on a role for the Vietcong in negotiations and a settlement. Though the Administration in 1967 indicated an even more moderate approach to the NLF, U.S. officials have hesitated to be

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1/ In regard to one highly publicized incident in the fall of 1964, the United States decided that a hint that Hanoi wanted to talk carried no real weight and that the North Vietnamese did not want to talk on terms acceptable to the United States. UN Secretary-General U Thant was the intermediary in this case and he suggested a meeting in Rangoon. Secretary of State Rusk made the following comment on this peace feeler: "It seems clear beyond a peradventure of doubt that Hanoi was not prepared to discuss peace in Southeast Asia based upon the agreements of 1954 and 1962 and looking toward the lifting of aggression against South Vietnam." Department of State Bulletin, December 13, 1965, p. 931.

specific about the role the Vietcong will play in South Vietnam politics and government, to avoid prejudicing the allied negotiating posture and also because of the effect this would have on the South Vietnamese government. Despite the concessions that resulted in the admittance of the NLF to the expanded talks in Paris in January 1969, the United States has, like Saigon, insisted that the NLF is not independent but was established, and is controlled, by Hanoi.

Many unsuccessful efforts were made from 1965 to 1968 to get talks under way. There were numerous obstacles: the sharply divergent goals of both sides that left little room for negotiation, the suspicion and mistrust on all sides, and North Vietnam's insistence on acceptance of conditions before beginning negotiations. The United States halted the bombing of North Vietnam for almost a week in May 1965 and for 37 days in December 1965-January 1966. A major effort was made by the United States during the 37-day bombing halt to begin negotiations, culminating in the presentation of a draft resolution to the United Nations. Nothing positive happened. Some critics have claimed that the United States government, either through carelessness or design, missed several signals from Hanoi that might have resulted in negotiations. Administration spokesmen and supporters answered this charge by stating that negotiations without conditions could begin anytime, but that agreement to prior conditions, such as acceptance of Hanoi's Four Points as a basis for settlement or a complete halt to the bombing of North Vietnam, would have prejudiced the course of the negotiations and the terms of a settlement.

The United Kingdom, as Co-chairman with the U.S.S.R. of the 1954 Geneva Conference, made a number of unsuccessful attempts to reconvene the Geneva Conference. In March 1965, seventeen non-aligned countries appealed to the parties concerned to start negotiations without posing any preconditions. The Commonwealth countries in June 1965 appointed a mission to make contact with the countries concerned to arrange a conference, but the Soviet Union, Communist China and North Vietnam all refused to meet with the Commonwealth mission. Other efforts, by Asians, Africans, Europeans, U Thant, Pope Paul, and groups and individuals in the United States and Canada, all failed.

The United States in January 1966 introduced a draft resolution before the Security Council calling for immediate discussion among the "interested governments" to arrange a conference on Vietnam. But North Vietnam and the NLF were quick to declare that the UN had no competence to deal with the Vietnam problem and that any UN action would be "null and void." The UN resolution was placed on the Security Council agenda, but no meaningful debate was held, apparently because of Soviet threats to block any action by the Security Council. The United States Senate on November 30, 1967, passed by a vote of 82-0 a resolution calling on the President to "consider taking the initiative in bri[ng] the Vietnam question before the UN Security Council." Senat[or] on introducing the resolution in the Senate, said "it is [time] we find out...where the members of the Security Council [stand] question." Administration officials, according to a number [of reports] still saw little prospect of getting any constructive action [taken] in the Security Council.

U.S. officials have stated that the United Nations has "a responsibility...under the charter" to maintain peace and security in Southeast Asia and that the United States would like to see the Security Council "assume jurisdiction" there, but have added that existing conditions make this unlikely. U Thant has stated that the United Nations was not likely to be involved in negotiations in view of the fact that "more than one" of the parties concerned did not belong to the UN and "are not accountable to this organization." Despite this, U Thant was a leading figure in the effort to get the combatants around a conference table.

United States officials have indicated that the United Nations might eventually be involved in some phase of an overall settlement. It seems likely that some international group, either the United Nations, one established by a new Geneva-type conference or possibly some all-Asian group, will have to assist in execution of agreements that may be reached, including such activities as supervising departure of all foreign troops, providing reassurances against resumption of hostilities, refereeing and conducting interim administrative arrangements and the holding of elections, policing the 17th parallel and other border areas, and helping to restore the Vietnamese economy and perhaps providing for development of all of the Indochina area.

All efforts to begin negotiations failed until the spring of 1968. President Johnson in his speech of March 31 announced a partial halt in the bombing of North Vietnam and asked North Vietnam to begin talks at once. Hanoi announced on April 3 its willingness to send representatives to discuss the unconditional cessation of the bombing. After a month of haggling over the site of talks, North Vietnam on May 3 offered to meet in Paris on May 10 and President Johnson promptly accepted. Two procedural meetings were held in Paris on May 10-11 and the first formal negotiating session was held on May 13. No movement occurred in the negotiations in the summer of 1968, as Hanoi continued to demand an unconditional halt in the bombing; but in September Hanoi began to indicate interest in a compromise arrangement on the bombing issue and intense bargaining took place in October. This culminated in agreement to halt the bombing on November 1 as part of a package deal to bring Saigon and the NLF into expanded talks. Under an "our side-your side" arrangement, each side was allowed to constitute its side as it wished, with all parties free to continue to denounce the others, thus allowing the United States and Saigon to continue to refuse to recognize the NLF as an independent entity. President Johnson, in a speech on October 31, added that "We have made clear to the other side that such talks cannot continue if they take military advantage of them. We cannot have productive talks in an atmosphere where the cities are being shelled and where the demilitarized zone is being abused."

The expanded talks began on January 25, 1969, with representatives of the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the NLF. Although meetings have usually been held once a week since that time, little or no progress has been made. All sides have called for observance of the 1954 Geneva agreements. The United States has called for all external forces to be withdrawn, North Vietnam has never admitted it has forces in South Vietnam and simply calls for U.S. withdrawal, South Vietnam has called for an end to "armed aggression" by North Vietnam, the NLF has called for withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases. Both the United States and South Vietnam have argued that a political settlement in South Vietnam should be determined by a free expression of the will of the South Vietnamese people. President Nixon, for example, said on May 8, 1970: "We are not prepared...to seek any settlement in which we or anyone else imposes upon the people of South Vietnam a government that they do not choose. If the people of South Vietnam choose a coalition government, if they choose to change the leaders they currently have, that is a decision we will accept. President Thieu has indicated he will accept it." Both Hanoi and the NLF have called for the establishment of a "provisional coalition government" which would prepare the grounds for "free and democratic general elections" for a constituent assembly and implement signed agreements for a total American troop withdrawal.

The United States in 1969 inaugurated a two-track policy in the effort to end the war, with increasing stress on Vietnamization as a means of reducing the United States role as the prospects for an immediate negotiated settlement dimmed. President Nixon in February 1969 indicated that U.S. troops would begin returning when the South Vietnamese army was able to assume a greater role in the defense of South Vietnam. When President Nixon in June 1969 announced the first withdrawal schedule he stressed three criteria in regard to troop replacement: progress in the Paris peace talks, progress in the training and equipping of South Vietnamese forces, and the level of enemy activity. In subsequent announcements regarding troop withdrawal, President Nixon has repeated that there has been no progress in Paris. Critics have argued that the Vietnamization program makes a negotiated settlement less likely.

President Nixon on May 14, 1969, summarized the United States position in an eight-point peace package, which he described as "made on the basis of full consultation with President Thieu." 1/ It provided for the withdrawal of "the major portions of all U.S., allied and other non-South Vietnamese forces" over a twelve-month period. At the end of this period,

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1/ All sides had published summary statements of their goals during the Johnson Administration. The United States, for example, in January 1966 had issued a 14-point outline of its position on a negotiated settlement. Saigon in June 1965 had listed four major conditions required in the "search for peace." Hanoi in April 1965 had issued its four points, and the NLF in March 1965 its five-point program for a settlement. These goals were again outlined in the first plenary session of the expanded talks in Paris on January 25, 1969.

the remaining troops would be moved into designated areas and would subsequently be withdrawn. An international supervisory team would verify the troop removals and would help arrange cease-fires. After the international body began functioning, elections would be held under agreed procedures and under the supervision of the international body. The two sides would arrange for the release of prisoners of war, and all parties would agree to respect the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962.

President Thieu of the Republic of Vietnam on July 11 challenged the Communists to compete in an internationally supervised election. Both the North Vietnamese and the NLF -- who still refuse to deal directly with the Saigon government -- quickly rejected Thieu's proposal. Thieu's proposal called on the NLF to renounce violence and accept the results of an election. An electoral commission -- representative of all political parties and groups, including the NLF -- would be established to see that the election was fairly conducted. Thieu said that the South Vietnamese government was willing to discuss "with the other side" the procedures for holding elections, pledged that it would abide by the election results, and affirmed that there would be no post-election reprisals.

The NLF on May 8, 1969, presented in Paris a ten-point proposal which remains the basis of the Communist approach to a settlement. 1/ The plan repeated the DRV/NLF demand for an unconditional U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam, but said that the "question" of Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam would be resolved by the Vietnamese. The NLF called for the establishment of a "provisional coalition government" which would prepare the grounds for "free and democratic general elections" for a constituent assembly and implement signed agreements for a total American troop withdrawal. The constituent assembly would, in turn, draft a constitution and work out procedures for the establishment of a permanent coalition government. The program asserted that negotiations to set up the provisional coalition government would take place among "the political forces representing the various social strata and political tendencies in South Vietnam that stand for peace, independence and neutrality." The proposal declared South Vietnam would follow a neutral foreign policy, that reunification of Vietnam would be achieved "step by step, by peaceful means, through discussions and agreements between the two zones, without foreign interference." The proposal called for international supervision of the withdrawal of U.S. and other allied troops. The NLF proposal did not mention international supervision in connection with a political settlement.

1/ The new proposal came shortly after North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho had returned to Paris after nearly three months in Hanoi.

Perhaps the major political development on the Communist side was the formation in June 1969 of a Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) of the Republic of South Vietnam composed of the NLF, the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces, and other "patriotic organizations." The new PRG took the place of the NLF at the Paris talks. Within a week of its establishment, all Communist governments had extended diplomatic recognition to the PRG. Some 10 non-Communist governments have recognized the PRG. Both the United States and South Vietnam claimed that the PRG contained no new political leaders and was just a new name for the NLF.

Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, who had replaced Ambassador Harriman as chief of the U.S. delegation in January 1969, concluded his service in Paris in early December. He stated that while no progress had been made in Paris, "I continue to be an optimist." President Nixon on December 15 announced that Acting Chief Delegate Philip Habib had been appointed head of the American delegation. The talks were then boycotted by the chief North Vietnamese delegate, Xuan Thuy, in protest against what Hanoi called U.S. "downgrading" of the talks. NLF/PRG chief delegate Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh in February 1970 joined Xuan Thuy in boycotting the talks. 1/ Pham Dang Lam was named the chief delegate of the Republic of Vietnam in January 1969. The talks have continued, despite the boycotts, with lower-level officials.

1/ Mme. Binh had replaced Tran Buu Kiem in June 1969.

A major hurdle in the negotiations will be how to enforce the overall settlement. Enforcement procedures established under the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Agreements and the 1953 Korea Armistice agreement failed to prove effective. Whether a new Vietnam settlement is to be enforced by a strengthened International Control Commission or by some other international group is unclear. The United States at the expanded talks in Paris has stressed that more effective methods would be necessary for supervising agreements made. There have been many suggestions that the major powers guarantee the neutralization of Vietnam, of all of Indochina or even of a broader area in Southeast Asia.

The Soviet Union has been careful in its public statements on negotiations and a settlement in Vietnam, to support Hanoi's stance. Moscow, as noted above, blocked attempts to get the Security Council involved; Moscow turned down all British efforts to reconvene the Geneva Conference. The reason for this "hands off" stand was given by Premier Kosygin (in January 1968) when he stated: "To conduct talks one has to have the authority of those involved in the war. The Vietnamese side has not given us any authority to do so." 1/

1/ The Vietnam war has presented the Soviet Union with something of a dilemma. On the one hand, it has offered substantial gains -- a strengthened position in North Vietnam, improvement in Moscow's position in Southeast Asia and in the world Communist movement, and the damage to U.S. prestige, as well as the domestic political and economic strains, which the prolonged American involvement has brought about. On the other hand, Soviet support of North Vietnam has involved a significant economic commitment and has served to exacerbate the already very troublesome dispute with Communist China. The improved relations between Hanoi and Peking in the past year have complicated Soviet efforts to play both sides of the street in Asia, as a major supporter of North Vietnam and of national liberation movements, but at the same time desirous of broadening economic and political ties with Japan, Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries.

The developments in Laos and Cambodia in the first half of 1970 fostered renewed interest in reconvening the Geneva Conference to arrange an overall settlement of the Indochina problem, to work out guaranteed arrangements for Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. On April 1, 1970, France called for a general conference on Indochina to make the area as a whole "a zone of neutrality and peace." [1/] The statement issued by the cabinet said the Vietnamese war was spreading into Laos and Cambodia and that all foreign intervention had to end if peace and neutrality were to prevail. The United States subsequently called on the signatories of the Geneva Agreements to assume their responsibilities in Indochina. [2/] On April 6, Soviet UN Ambassador Yakov Malik agreed that "only a new Geneva Conference could bring a new solution" in Indochina. Malik later backed away from this position, calling the proposal "unrealistic," a view that was echoed by the Vietcong and North Vietnamese on April 20. President Nixon on April 20 expressed "interest" in Malik's call for a new conference.

Communist China has consistently espoused a hard line on the Vietnam war, opposed negotiations, and stressed that the only solution is for the United States to pull all troops out of Vietnam. Peking became more circumspect after the opening of the talks in Paris; such caution may

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1/ Maurice Schumann, the French Foreign Minister, said on April 2 that the UN would not provide an appropriate framework for such a conference because it would be "unthinkable" for Communist China not to participate.

2/ President Nixon said on March 6 that he had written letters to British Prime Minister Wilson and Soviet Premier Kosygin asking their help in restoring the 1962 Geneva agreements on Laos.

have reflected an effort by Communist China to have the door kept open so that it could join in an eventual settlement in Vietnam and in any overall Southeast Asia arrangement made by the major powers. However, Peking's improved relations with Hanoi in 1969 and 1970, its increased influence on Hanoi's Indochina strategy, and the continuing stress on protracted war do not indicate that prospects for a compromise negotiated settlement are good.

Peking reacted to the spread of the war to Cambodia beginning in late April 1970 with harsh criticism of the United States. Mao Tse-tung on May 20 called for world revolution against U.S. "imperialism" and said that the U.S. "invasion" of Cambodia had "aroused the furious resistance of the three Indochinese peoples." 1/ In April and May Peking encouraged a united front movement in Indochina, hosting a meeting between Prince Sihanouk and the leaders of North Vietnam, the NLF, and the Pathet Lao in late April. 2/

1/ Peking International Service in English, May 20, 1970.

2/ Communist China has begun to display a regard for its foreign image that was absent during the height of the cultural revolution from 1966 to 1968. This has been due in part to the gradual realization that Communist China's position in Vietnam, in Southeast Asia, and throughout the world had, in relation to the Soviet Union, suffered considerably since 1966. Peking has also become increasingly concerned over Soviet intentions since the occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and the enunciation of the "Brezhnev doctrine" to justify Soviet domination over other Communist states. The resumption of the Warsaw talks with the United States in January 1970 is indicative of a shift in Peking's attitude.

XVII. The Vietnam War and the Problem of Cambodia and Laos

Developments in both Cambodia and Laos in 1970 brought these countries more directly into the Vietnam war-- and the actions and words of the participants in the war increasingly point to a settlement involving not just the two Vietnams but also Cambodia and Laos. Both countries have been used by the Vietcong/North Vietnamese forces as sanctuaries; Laos has been and continues to be the main infiltration route used by North Vietnamese troops entering South Vietnam.

The coup in Cambodia on March 18, which replaced Prince Sihanouk with a government determined to get Vietnamese Communist troops out of Cambodia, was followed almost immediately by a widening of the war. The Vietnamese Communists moved to protect and extend their sanctuaries and United States/South Vietnamese forces reacted, seeking not only to prevent extension but to clean out the existing sanctuaries to eliminate threats to Saigon and the Mekong Delta. United States action was precipitated partly because of the threat posed by the movement of Communist troops to the West and their effort to link the major border sanctuaries. U.S. officials describe the Cambodian operations as successful; however, the situation remains fluid and future developments depend heavily on North Vietnamese intentions. As of early June 1970, their intentions are unclear.

In Laos an offensive launched by North Vietnamese forces in February threatened to upset the precarious balance established there. Action in Laos eased off, but then increased again in May as Communist forces seized territory in southern Laos near the Cambodian border. Communist forces in northeastern Cambodia also moved forward close to the Laotian border where they could threaten other previously safe areas in Laos. Some North Vietnamese forces previously in Cambodia apparently are being used in the Boloven Plateau area in Laos.

A. Cambodia [1/]

With the increasing intensity of the Vietnam war in the mid-sixties, there was some spillover into Cambodia as Vietcong/North Vietnamese forces retreated across the border to escape the pursuing United States/South Vietnamese troops. The Cambodian government made no effort to stop this use of Cambodian territory. Prince Sihanouk for years denied the presence of Communist forces in eastern Cambodia but was eventually compelled to admit it by the overwhelming weight of evidence presented. He did, on the other hand, frequently complain of border "violations" by Allied troops.[2/]

1/ For other details of recent developments in Cambodia, and their impact on U.S. policy see LRS multilith number 70-107F, "Cambodia: A Situation Report," June 3, 1970.

2/ Beginning in 1962, Prince Sihanouk made a concerted effort to get the major powers to convene an international conference to guarantee the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia. Prior to 1965, the United States balked at another conference on Indochina, while the Communist powers favored it. In April 1965, however, the United States altered its position and announced support of Sihanouk's plan. Washington apparently viewed this as a means of initiating talks on Vietnam. The Communists also reversed their policy on a conference and stated they would not negotiate with the United States unless their terms for a settlement of the Vietnam war were accepted. Another reason for the Communist switch apparently was a hesitancy to get involved in discussions on Cambodia which might jeopardize the use of Cambodia as a sanctuary for hard-pressed Vietcong forces.

In May 1965, Sihanouk broke relations with the United States, charging that American forces had repeatedly violated the Cambodian border. The U.S. State Department in December 1967 denied that U.S. policy approved of pursuing Vietcong guerrillas into Cambodia. The Bowles Mission in January 1968 gave additional assurances to Sihanouk. The Prince, for his part, agreed to the strengthening of the International Control Commission, but Soviet pressure on Cambodia and India prevented any enlarging of the I.C.C. Prince Sihanouk in October 1969 asked the I.C.C. to leave Cambodia by the end of the year, stating that his country could no longer afford to maintain it.

The United States, at the Paris peace talks, has stressed that a Vietnam settlement must include guarantees for the neutrality of both Cambodia and Laos. On March 27, 1969, Secretary of State Rogers told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that one of the U.S. objectives was to secure respect for the territorial integrity and neutrality of Cambodia. After long negotiations, Sihanouk in April 1969 accepted a U.S. statement that it "recognizes and respects the sovereignty, independence, neutrality and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia within its present frontiers." Sihanouk then reversed himself, citing the interpretations of the statement in U.S. newspapers, but after U.S. officials assured him that the United States stood by the statement, he reaffirmed his intention to reestablish diplomatic ties. Diplomatic relations were resumed on July 2, 1969.1/

1/ The United States on March 19, 1970, said that its recognition of Cambodia continued, unaffected by the March 18 coup. A State Department spokesman said: "Our position is that the question of recognition does not arise."

Border incidents continued,[1] but Sihanouk now directed more of his protests against the increasing number of Communist troops and installations within Cambodia's borders. He can be credited with helping to create the recent upsurge of hostility in Cambodia toward the Vietnamese Communists. The coup came while Sihanouk was on a trip to Moscow and Peking to seek their support in getting the Vietnamese Communists out of Cambodia.

The ouster of Sihanouk was unexpected even though there were clear signs that opposition to his policies had been increasing in the army, in professional groups, and among intellectuals and students. Domestic issues, such as Sihanouk's economic policies and alleged corruption in his family and among his advisers, played a part in the unrest; the continuing presence of Vietnamese troops in eastern Cambodia was an element precipitating the coup.

The future course of developments in Cambodia is dependent on a number of factors: the intentions and capabilities of the North Vietnamese/Vietcong forces, the resistance of the Cambodian army, the durability of the Lon Nol government, future actions by the United States and South Vietnam, and the role played by other states in the area. The military situation is unsettled: Communist forces moved out of their sanctuaries after Sihanouk's ouster and controlled large areas east of the Mekong, but United States/South Vietnamese operations

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1/ The U.S. Command said that "if fired upon from enemy positions outside South Vietnam, United States forces are authorized to return fire. This is an inherent right of self-defense against enemy attacks."

ended the immediate threat to the Lon Nol government. United States forces have not gone beyond the 21-mile limit set by President Nixon; South Vietnamese forces have penetrated almost to Phnom Penh on the ground, and a South Vietnamese naval flotilla at one point proceeded past Phnom Penh into the interior. United States forces are scheduled to be out of Cambodia by June 30, while South Vietnamese leaders have indicated their forces will stay as long as necessary. The Cambodian army apparently is a long way from being able to fight the Vietnamese Communists on even terms. However, the Cambodian leadership expects to improve the performance of its army with the addition of several thousand ethnic Cambodians(trained by U.S. Special Forces units) brought in from South Vietnam, by the receipt of captured Communist arms, and by the use of arms supplied by the United States and South Vietnam. Despite historic animosities between Cambodians and Vietnamese, the Cambodian leadership is apparently prepared to let the South Vietnamese stay as protection against the North Vietnamese.[1/]

1/ A number of incidents occurred after the March 18 coup in which hundreds of Vietnamese civilians were killed by the Cambodian army, exacerbating tensions between South Vietnam and the new government. The fact that Communist forces in the border areas had received active assistance from some Vietnamese civilians made all Vietnamese civilians suspect. The South Vietnamese flotilla which moved up the Mekong in May had as one of its objectives the removal of Vietnamese refugees. The evacuation was halted, however, with many thousands still in assembly areas. General Do Cao Tri, commander of most South Vietnamese troops which entered Cambodia, said on May 22 that "if the Cambodians should continue to mistreat our compatriots, then our army will have an appropriate reaction." A Cambodian official, described as a "principal government spokesman" by the Washington Post, said on May 21 that Cambodians "prefer death to being dominated by Vietnamese... This applies to all Vietnamese". There have been some reports of South Vietnamese abuse of Cambodian civilians and of Cambodian concern about South Vietnamese intentions. Washington Post and New York Times, May 23 and Washington Post, May 22, 1970.

The Cambodian government has made little public comment about the United States and South Vietnamese operations. Phnom Penh apparently believes that defeat cannot be prevented without outside forces: Cambodia asked countries at the Asian conference in Djakarta to send troops to help repel North Vietnamese/Vietcong attackers. President Thieu of South Vietnam said on May 8 that Lon Nol had given approval "in principle" for the sanctuary operations and had requested South Vietnamese support for general defense of its territory east of the Mekong River.

Discussions between Saigon and Phnom Penh led to the reestablishment of diplomatic relations on May 27. Documents signed by the foreign ministers of both countries gave South Vietnam a broad mandate for continued military operations in Cambodia, and included agreements on economic cooperation and on the treatment of Vietnamese residents in Cambodia. The communique issued said that South Vietnamese military forces "which had come with the agreement of the Cambodian Government, to help Cambodian troops to drive out the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces, will withdraw from Cambodia when their task is completed." President Thieu, in an interview broadcast on May 27, said that South Vietnamese troops would continue to operate in Cambodia for an indefinite period and would require continued American logistical and combat support to sustain those operations.1/

1/ New York Times, May 28, 1970.

The United States has indicated that air and logistical support for U.S. and South Vietnamese troops will end on June 30, with the proviso that air missions will continue to interdict movements of enemy troops and material. President Nixon on May 8 said that when U.S. forces left Cambodia (by the end of June), he "would expect that the South Vietnamese would come out approximately at the same time... because when we come out our logistical support and air support will come out with them."[1/] Secretary of State Rogers on May 24 said he was "not concerned at all" about reports that South Vietnam would continue operations in Cambodia after U.S. forces left.[2/] Rogers said that such operations fell under the Nixon Doctrine that "Asians work together to solve Asian problems." Herbert Klein, President Nixon's director of communications, said on May 24 regarding air support to South Vietnamese troops after U.S. withdrawal from Cambodia, "I couldn't rule in or rule out" the possibility of air support."[3/] Secretary of Defense Laird has recommended keeping up air strikes against Communist bases in Cambodia after the U.S. withdrawal.[4/] White House press secretary Ziegler on June 1 indicated that U.S. logistical and tactical air operations would stop in Cambodia with the withdrawal of U.S. forces. But he added that he "reserved comment" on any air support following June 30 and that any

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1/ Congressional Record, May 11, 1970, p. S6916.
2/ New York Times, May 25, 1970.
3/ Ibid.
4/ New York Times and Washington Post, May 23, 1970, New York Times, May 25, 1970.

action would be "in relation to security" of U.S. forces. President Nixon on June 3 again stated that U.S. forces would be out of Cambodia by the end of June but that South Vietnamese activities in Cambodia, after their withdrawal from the sanctuaries, would be "determined by the actions of the enemy." He said that all American air support, logistics, and military advisory personnel would be withdrawn and that "the only remaining American activity" in Cambodia after July 1 would be "air missions to interdict the movement of enemy troops and material where I find this is necessary to protect the lives and security of our forces" in South Vietnam.1/

Secretary of State Rogers on June 7 said that no American forces would be used to protect the Lon Nol Government and that while a Communist takeover in Cambodia would be an "unfavorable development" it would not be "unacceptable".2/ While he said that the United States had no intention of returning U.S. forces to Cambodia after the end of June, he declined to call the decision completely "irrevocable", indicating that President Nixon would retain his option to take any action "if it is necessary to protect the lives of American forces right on the border." Rogers conceded that the U.S. would have to bear "a substantial part" of the cost of the defense of Cambodia by South Vietnamese and Thai forces, but said it would be considerably less than the expense of maintaining U.S. combat troops there.

1/ New York Times, June 4, 1970.

2/ In the Washington Post on June 9, Chalmers Roberts reported, however, that the Administration was trying to reach a decision on how important the survival of the Lon Nol government is to the accomplishment of President Nixon's aims in South Vietnam. Roberts said that a National Security Council study was hampered by the lack of hard intelligence on the North Vietnamese threat.

The United States-South Vietnamese military operations met less resistance from North Vietnamese/Vietcong forces than expected, but reports from the field claimed considerable success was achieved in the capture of enemy supplies and military equipment. The performance of South Vietnamese forces was better than expected. President Nixon on June 3 claimed the Cambodian action was "the most successful operation of this long and difficult war... all our major military objectives have been achieved," and that the arms, equipment, ammunition and food captured was "nearly equal to what we captured in all of Vietnam all last year."[1/] President Nixon said that one of the

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1/ The Administration initially placed considerable stress on the need to destroy the Communist headquarters for South Vietnam, called COSVN (Central Office for South Vietnam), but, as the operation progressed, the emphasis fell on capturing or destroying supplies and destroying bunker networks. President Nixon in his April 30 statement announcing the entry of U.S. troops said: "American and South Vietnamese units will attack the headquarters for the entire Communist military operation in South Vietnam. This key control center has been occupied by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong for years in blatant violation of Cambodia's neutrality." In his press conference on May 8 and in his progress report on Cambodia on June 3, President Nixon did not refer to this headquarters. Reports from Saigon indicate that many military officials no longer refer to COSVN as a sort of guerrilla Pentagon but as a dispersed, floating operation, consisting largely of leaders of the Vietcong and the People's Revolutionary Party, the Communist element of the NLF.

most "dramatic" developments had been "the splendid performance of the South Vietnamese Army in the field."[1/]

1/ New York Times, June 4, 1970. A staff report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee issued on June 7 concluded that Cambodia has "now been linked inextricably" to the war in Vietnam and that the terms of reference of that war have been "permanently changed." The report was based on a trip to South Vietnam by two Committee staff personnel who spent four days in South Vietnam and six days in Cambodia in the first half of May. They spent two days in United States-South Vietnamese areas of operations inside Cambodia. The report noted that there would be some military benefits in the short run, with substantial amounts of military equipment and supplies captured. Cambodian government forces, according to "virtually everyone with whom we talked," could not hold out against the enemy without sizable military and economic assistance. Many Cambodians stressed that a civil war was a virtual certainty, with Sihanouk retaining the capability of rallying large numbers of peasants. The prospects for a negotiated settlement appeared worse, with South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the NLF/PRG less disposed to compromise. The North Vietnamese apparently believe that the upsurge of anti-war sentiment in the United States would eventually bring major concessions. The report noted that "in the opinion of most observers" the likelihood of a Soviet contribution to a political settlement had "been severely reduced in the past few months." U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. Cambodia: May 1970. A Staff Report. June 7, 1970. 91st Congress, 2nd Session. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

Cambodia sent appeals to the United Nations and to the United States, South Vietnam and other countries for help against the North Vietnamese/Vietcong action. On April 14 Cambodia appealed "to all countries of all blocs" for assistance and followed this up with direct requests to the United States. On April 23 the U.S. announced that the Allies would provide Cambodia with captured Communist arms and on April 30 President Nixon promised that the United States would provide "small arms and other equipment." He said that the United States would not send "massive amounts of military assistance."1/

United Nations Secretary General U Thant on May 5 called for a new international conference of all parties to the Vietnam war to deal with the situation in Cambodia and in all of Indochina. He said that the United Nations had been unable to play a decisive role in Indochina because several of the parties concerned were not U.N. members and many U.N. members were not in favor of U.N. involvement. Private efforts by U Thant to bring about revival of the three-nation International Control Commission in Cambodia were unsuccessful and the May 5 statement indicated that return of the I.C.C. would not be feasible without a new Geneva-type conference of those involved in the war.

1/ In a news conference on May 25, Cambodian Foreign Minister Yem Sambaur said that he would ask President Nixon to keep American troops fighting in Cambodia; the State Department said no such request had been made officially by the Cambodian government; White House spokesman Ziegler said the June 30 pullout date remained firm. Washington Post, May 26, 1970. The State Department, in a letter to the Senate Foreign Relations committee delivered on May 22, said that the United States had decided to give Cambodia about $7.5 million worth of arms. The letter was accompanied by a document signed by President Nixon stating that it had been determined that such military aid was important to the security of the United States. New York Times, May 26, 1970.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik in April called for an Asian conference to be held in Djakarta to find a solution for the Cambodian situation.[1] The conference was to be held under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Some twenty nations were invited, and twelve attended.[2] The goal, Malik explained, was for the Asian nations to reach a consensus on three points: protection of the independence, integrity and neutrality of Cambodia; declaration of the principle of nonintervention by foreign forces; and the need for reactivation of the International Control Commission. Malik said he believed it unlikely that the Soviet Union or the other Communist countries would agree to reactivation of the ICC and therefore the Asian countries should form their own commission to survey the problem. Malik also declared that Indonesia would send troops abroad to fight Communists if the Indochina war spread to Thailand and Malaysia.

The Asian conference was held in Djakarta on May 16-17, with Cambodia as a "special invitee". Participated in by the foreign ministers of its eleven countries, it called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodian territory. There was no suggestion

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1/ Malik on May 11 said that the idea had been suggested to him by U Thant in Manila in April.

2/ Those attending were Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

of military or economic aid from the conference,[1] nor was there condemnation of North Vietnam and the Vietcong for aggression in Cambodia. The conference, organized by Indonesia, did, however, establish a "task force" (consisting of Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia) to start immediate consultations with the Co-chairmen of the Geneva conference to seek reactivation of the International Control Commission for Cambodia. The task force also was to press for early convening of a new international conference to resolve the conflict in Indochina.

Prince Sihanouk established headquarters in Peking after his ouster and from there, on March 23, he proclaimed the formation of a National Liberation Army. Hanoi immediately announced support for Sihanouk and called for the "overthrow" of the Lon Nol government. North Vietnam and the Vietcong on March 25 announced they were recalling all their diplomats from Cambodia. On May 5, Sihanouk announced the formation of a government in exile. Communist China and North Vietnam recognized this government on May 6 and broke relations with the Lon Nol government.

1/ However, on June 1 Thailand's Premier Kittikachorn said that volunteers would be sent from Thailand to Cambodia, and would go "a battalion at a time" with the first contingent leaving "as soon as possible". The troops will reportedly operate in Phnom Penh, in Kompong Cham and in two provinces adjoining Thailand, Battambang and Siem Reap. The Thai cabinet on June 2 said that volunteers would be Thais of Cambodian descent. The State Department said on June 2 that the United States would provide arms and equipment for the volunteers. Thailand had announced in late May that it would send gunboats, uniforms and other equipment, and train noncommissioned officers for the Cambodian army. The two countries resumed diplomatic relations on May 23.

B. Laos [1/]

The 1954 Geneva Agreements in effect divided Laos between Communist and non-Communist areas. Laos remained a kingdom, but the ruler was only a figurehead in the government structure. Under the Accords, the Pathet Lao, a Communist movement created in 1950 with North Vietnamese backing, was to regroup its forces in two provinces in the northeastern part of Laos pending integration of the Communists into the Lao political system. The accords did not make clear how the royal government was to take control of these two provinces prior to the elections which the agreements stipulated should take place in 1955. The Pathet Lao interpreted the armistice agreement as awarding them political control of the provinces and proceeded to set up all the trappings of a permanent administration.

Laos has been divided by a civil war of varying degrees of intensity most of the time since. When national elections were held in 1955, the Communists refused to take part. Negotiations between the two sides continued into 1956, with a preliminary agreement (August 7, 1956) providing for the integration of the two northern provinces into the administration of the royal government, the integration of Pathet Lao forces and civilian officials into the royal army and government, cessation of hostilities, and supplementary elections. After another year of discussion, Princes Souvanna Phouma and Souphanouvong signed a joint communique (November 1, 1957) which, in substance,

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1/ For other details of recent developments in Laos and their impact on U.S. policy, see LRS multilith number 70-108F, "The United States and Laos," June 1, 1970.

covered the same ground as the August 1956 agreement. They agreed on a neutral Laos under a coalition government which would include Pathet Lao members. The National Assembly was called into special session and approved the new government headed by Souvanna Phouma and including two Pathet Lao members (one of whom was Souphanouvong). The United States had opposed the establishment of the coalition.

In January 1958, Laotian armed forces moved into the two Pathet Lao provinces, with over 1500 Pathet Lao soldiers integrated into the royal army and another 4000 discharged. In elections held in May 1958 the Neo Lao Hak Xat (NLHX, or Laotian Patriotic Front), the political arm of the Pathet Lao, won nine of the 21 contested seats while a neutralist party won another four seats. However, this gave the Pathet Lao and its allies only 13 seats out of 59. Souvanna Phouma on May 22 notified the chairman of the ICC that Laos had fulfilled the obligations of the Geneva Conference and requested withdrawal of the ICC. Souvanna then resigned and a new government was formed by Phoui Sananikone on August 18, 1958. Members of a young elite group, the Committee for the Defense of National Interests (CDIN), occupied key posts in the new government and by early 1959 had gained complete control over Sananikone and the government. The CDIN, according to Bernard Fall, had American backing.1/

1/ The CDIN members included young diplomats, civil servants and army officers. The other major group in the 1958 cabinet was the Rally of the Laotian People (RPL). A military member of the CSIN, a colonel who was later to become a general and emerge as the "strong man" of Laos for a short while, Phoumi Nosavan, later received the post of Secretary of Defense. Fall, Bernard. Anatomy of a Crisis. New York; Doubleday and Co., 1969, pp. 93-95.

Efforts to complete integration of Pathet Lao forces failed in May 1959; Souphanouvong and other major Pathet Lao leaders were arrested. In the summer of 1959 the civil war had broken out again in earnest, with the Pathet Lao army expanding from two battalions that had balked at being integrated. In May 1960, Souphanouvong and his aides escaped from Vientiane.

In August, 1960, Captain Kong Le, a battalion commander, staged a military coup and seized power in Vientiane. Prince Souvanna Phouma formed a new neutral government. There was considerable debate in U.S. government echelons over whether to support Souvanna or to back Phoumi, who took Vientiane and the government. Souvanna Phouma was forced to flee to Cambodia. A Pathet Lao offensive in 1961 succeeded in driving government troops from key strategic positions in the Plain of Jars. The Kennedy Administration shifted U.S. policy from diplomatic support of the rightists and called for a neutral and independent Laos. This sparked a series of diplomatic exchanges which resulted in the convening of the 14-nation Geneva conference in May 1961.[1/]

1/ In the spring of 1962 General Phoumi began large-scale reinforcement of an outpost and was defeated by a Pathet Lao military thrust. The Pathet Lao forces pressed their offensive and U.S. and Thai officials were concerned about ultimate Communist intentions. President Kennedy on May 15, 1962, said that at the request of the Thai Government, and "because of recent attacks in Laos by Communist forces and the subsequent movement of Communist military units toward the border of Thailand," he had ordered U.S. military forces to Thailand. Ambassador Unger on November 10, 1969, in a statement prepared for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that the U.S. deployed about 10,000 ground and air force personnel to Thailand in the spring of 1962. Withdrawal of U.S. troops from Thailand began in July 1962 and all the ground forces had left by the end of the year. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. Hearings on U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. Kingdom of Thailand. Part 3. 91st Congress. 1st Session. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970, pp. 614-615.

Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, France, the United Kingdom, India, Canada, Poland, the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the United States met from May until September and again briefly in November. In December 1961 they approved the drafts of a Declaration of Neutrality and its attached Protocol. From January to July 1962, the conferees met only informally while the Laotian factions arranged the coalition government called for in the cease-fire. On July 23, 1962, the final Declaration and the Protocol were signed in Geneva, and after fourteen months the conference came to an end.

The Geneva participants agreed to "..recognize and..respect and observe in every way the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Laos." As a means of assuring the neutrality of Laos, it was agreed that "All foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel shall be withdrawn from Laos in the shortest possible time." Furthermore, "the introduction of foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign para-military formations and foreign military personnel into Laos.." was prohibited. Investigation of violations of Laotian neutrality was once again, as in the 1954 agreement, consigned to the International Control Commission (ICC).

Under ICC observation, the United States withdrew 666 men, the Philippines 403, and North Vietnam 40. In October 1962 the

United States called for an investigation of the several thousand North Vietnamese still believed to be in Laos. The ICC later reported that North Vietnam claimed that it had withdrawn all its personnel, but noted that it had received reports from newspapers that thousands of foreign troops still remained in Laos.

Developments since 1962 have caused the "neutralist" Souvanna to orient "neutral" Laos toward the United States. Hanoi's refusal to remove North Vietnamese troops has been primarily responsible for Souvanna's current attitude. Souvanna believes most of Laos' difficulties, economic and political, would end if North Vietnamese troops left the country. Estimates of the number of North Vietnamese troops in Laos have risen since 1962 to almost 70,000 in 1970.

1. Political Developments Since 1962

The coalition government established by the 1962 Geneva conference was supposed to combine rightist, leftist and self-styled neutralist elements. But Pathet Lao members withdrew from the tripartite coalition in 1963 and have refused to participate in the government. The Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma, still holds the Pathet Lao posts vacant in case they decide to return and assume them.

In elections to the National Assembly in July 1965, the Pathet Lao refused to participate. In September 1966, a political crisis caused Souvanna to dissolve the Assembly and call for new elections, which were held in January 1967. The Pathet Lao again boycotted the elections. The base of Souvanna's support began to change: in 1960

his power had rested on Kong Le's neutralist army, but after 1964 he began to depend more on rightist backing, with the division between the neutralists and rightists beginning to fade. The new National Assembly elected in 1967 lacked any division between rightists and neutralists. The neutralist army began to be merged into the Laotian armed forces; by June 1970 this process was nearly complete. Souvanna has called for restoring the coalition government but has refused to negotiate the composition of the government, stating that this had been established by the 1962 accords. He has insisted that elections could be held only after "the complete integration of the Pathet Lao into the national community."

In talks between Souvanna and North Vietnam's Ambassador Lien in May 1969, Souvanna responded to requests for a halt in the bombing by promising that he would remain neutral if Hanoi withdrew its forces from Laos. He openly pledged that he would support the Communist position at the Paris negotiations if North Vietnam took this step. The Communist position toward Souvanna hardened and in July 1969 the Pathet Lao issued a statement that Souvanna "was no longer the Prime Minister of the Tripartite National Coalition Government nor the leader of the Neutralist Party."1/

1/ Radio Pathet Lao, July 8, 1969.

In February 1970, Souvanna proposed a bombing halt in northern Laos if North Vietnam withdrew from that area. He said the issue of the Ho Chi Minh trail should be settled between Hanoi and Washington. On March 6, 1970, the Pathet Lao announced a five-point peace proposal, stating that an end to the United States bombing was necessary before negotiations could begin. The Pathet Lao was backed by North Vietnam, Communist China and the Soviet Union. Premier Kosygin wrote President Nixon in mid-March that:

> It is necessary first of all for the United States to stop speedily the escalation of the war and stop fully and unconditionally the bombings of Laotian territory. Only this can create conditions for the interested Laotian sides to meet.1/

The Laotian cabinet on April 1 formally rejected Pathet Lao demands on the bombing, calling instead for "conversations without preconditions."

The Pathet Lao five-point program apparently seeks to alter fundamentally the tri-partite settlement of 1962. Its proposal for an interim coalition government followed by elections entails, in effect, a rejection of a return to the tri-partite coalition as a final solution to the problem. To back up this approach, one of the goals of military operations in 1970 apparently has been to occupy as much of the neutralist zone as possible in order to strengthen the claims of the neutralists who have gone over to the Communist side. Despite its

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1/ Washington Post, March 16, 1970.

military weakness, most observers agree that the Pathet Lao has a superior political organization, perhaps even in the Mekong Valley area which they do not control. The Pathet Lao reportedly has established a strong infrastructure in the Valley, while the Government presence has deteriorated.

Basically the United States and the United Kingdom seek a return in Laos to the 1962 accords, including preservation of the tripartite coalition and the withdrawal of all foreign troops. A French proposal of March 11, 1970, indicated a similar view. The Soviet Union, however, in backing North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao, has refused to endorse the calls for Geneva-type consultations. President Nixon in his March 6 statement noted that he had written to both Prime Minister Wilson and Premier Kosygin "asking their help in restoring the 1962 Geneva agreements for that country."

2. Military Developments: U.S. Assistance

A distinct pattern of warfare emerged in May 1964 when Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces attacked and drove Kong Le's army from the Plain of Jars. Government forces did not regain the Plain until 1969. From 1964 to 1968, the North Vietnamese, with progressively less assistance from the Pathet Lao, attacked and captured Government positions in both the north central and southern portions of Laos during each dry season (October to April). Government forces, armed and supplied by the United States, generally won back the lost territory in the wet season.

After this period of patterned, seasonal warfare from 1964 to 1969, the war intensified in 1969 as the North Vietnamese attempted to pressure the Government into asking the United States to stop the bombing. In June 1969, in a major battle, the North Vietnamese took Muong Suoi, and cut the road between Vientiane and Luang Prabang. The Laotian army of Meo tribesmen under General Vang Pao, with heavy backing from United States air strikes, counterattacked and in August 1969 took the Plain of Jars from the Communists. The Communists retook the Plain in February 1970.

The Allied attack on North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia in April and May 1970 increased the importance of southern Laos to Hanoi as an infiltration route into Cambodia and South Vietnam. North Vietnamese forces have seized territory in the South to open up new access routes to Cambodia.

There have been a number of unconfirmed reports that Thai troops have been used in Laos. Thailand reportedly has for years been providing the Laotian government with advisers and military specialists. Reports last September claimed that 5000 Thai troops were integrated into Laotian combat and training units.1/

1/ New York Times, September 23, 1969. The Thai troops reportedly are volunteers from the northeast who are of Laotian stock. Washington Post, March 22, 1970.

Both Vientiane and Bangkok denied reports that two battalions of Thai troops had been airlifted in March 1970 into the Long Tieng area.[1] White House spokesman Ziegler confirmed some Thai involvement but said the reports were "grossly exaggerated" and that there was only "limited Thai involvement."[2] A Washington Star report on March 24 said that 1000 Thais were reinforcing General Vang Pao and that they were a group which entered Laos periodically under a contract with the Lao government.[3] Ambassador Sullivan, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last October, said the Thais had supplied aircraft to the Laotian air force but that the United States had subsequently replaced these aircraft.[4] Ambassador Sullivan's reply to a question as to whether there were "5000 new Thai troops" in Laos was deleted in the published transcript.[5]

Since 1962, United States involvement in Laos has evolved into a limited but still a crucial military support role for the Lao Government. The United States role there is based in part on a policy objective of maintaining the non-Communist area of Laos as a buffer to protect Thailand and other nearby countries from North Vietnamese and Chinese attempts to push "wars of national liberation." Moreover, assistance to the Laotian government is to facilitate the

1/ Washington Star, March 20, 1970, Washington Post, March 21, 1970, New York Times, March 21 and 23, 1970.
2/ New York Times and Washington Post, March 21, 1970.
3/ Washington Star, March 24, 1970.
4/ U.S. Congress. Senate.Committee on Foreign Relations. United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad: Kingdom of Laos. Hearings before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. 91st Congress, 1st Session. Oct. 1969, pp. 408, 517. Hereafter referred to as Hearings.
5/ Hearings, p. 553.

air interdiction of the infiltration routes through Laos into South Vietnam. Air strikes against the Ho Chi Minh trail, discreetly authorized by Souvanna Phouma, have been carried out for over five years.

The available evidence indicates that the United States carried on clandestine operations after the 1962 agreements, continuing to supply the Meos with various types of supplies, although it remains unclear if American advisers remained with Vang Pao's army.[1/] The United States responded affirmatively to Souvanna Phouma's request in 1962 for military assistance; much of the aid was handled by the Lao Defense Ministry. In a statement on Laos on March 7, 1970, President Nixon asserted that the United States had responded to a Lao government appeal for assistance in May 1964 "by increasing our training and logistic support." In May 1964, U.S. Air Force attaches were assigned to Lao air bases or air operation centers. Actual bombing began in June 1964 under a policy of "protective reaction" following the shooting down of a United States reconnaissance plane by Pathet Lao batteries near the Plain of Jars. Bombing missions in the north- other than the protective reaction type - began in December 1964 in response to requests from Souvanna Phouma for increased pressure against the North Vietnamese in that area. In January 1965, systematic interdictory bombing began against the Ho Chi Minh trail.

1/ Ibid., pp. 398-404.

President Nixon in his statement on Laos on March 6 indicated there were 1040 Americans (directly employed or on contract) in Laos, with 320 of these "engaged in a military advisory or military training capacity" and 323 as logistics personnel. He stated that there were no American ground combat troops in Laos and that "We have no plans for introducing ground combat forces into Laos". Total American expenditures in Laos run in the hundreds of millions of dollars per year. Of that, only the technical aid budget- usually between $50 million and $60 million annually- is made public. The rest goes almost entirely for military purposes.1/ In a closed Senate session last December on the defense appropriations bill, statements were made that approximately $90 million in the bill was to support the Royal Laotian Army.2/ Senator Fulbright said on October 28, 1969, that the United States is spending $150 million a year to supply, arm, train and transport the 36,000-man Meo army.3/ In the Laos hearings, Senator Fulbright said that the total U.S. assistance to date had been "over a billion dollars."

Nearly all U.S. activities in Laos since the signing of the 1962 accords have been clandestine, in part because the accords prohibit

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1/ Abrams, Arnold. Washington's Dilemma. Far Eastern Economic Review, January 1, 1970, p. 19.
2/ Congressional Record. January 21, 1970, p. E159.
3/ Washington Post, October 29, 1969.

foreign military personnel, because North Vietnam has not admitted its large military presence there, because of the effect open operations might have on the Soviet Union's position on Laos, because it helps Souvanna Phouma maintain his neutralist credentials, and because this limits the U.S. commitment and would make U.S. withdrawal easier if the situation there became untenable. Ambassador William Sullivan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, told the Symington subcommittee in October 1969 that the United States had no commitment to defend Laos and could terminate its activities at any time.1/

1/ Hearings, p. 399,543. AID Administrator John Hannah on June 7, acknowledged that the aid program in Laos was being used as a cover for operations of the CIA. He said such an arrangement stemmed from a 1962 decision that such activity was in the national interest. Hannah added: "Our preference, is to get rid of this kind of operation." New York Times and Washington Post, June 8, 1970.

XVIII. Effects of the Vietnam War on Future U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia

The Nixon Administration has pursued a policy -- usually referred to as the Guam or Nixon Doctrine for Asia -- which basically aims at limiting or ending the use of U.S. combat troops on the Southeast Asian mainland. 1/ President Nixon has described the primary purpose of his doctrine as the avoidance of another Vietnam-type war. This approach calls on the nations of Southeast Asia to provide the manpower in combatting Communist-backed guerrilla insurgencies, with the United States providing advice, arms and supplies. President Nixon has emphasized, however, that the United States will continue to play a significant role in Asia and will keep its treaty commitments. The doctrine is a response to a growing feeling in the United States that this country is overcommitted in Asia and that the United States should not carry assistance to allies to the point of fighting their wars for them. Administration officials have stated that America's allies have become so conditioned to U.S. defense guarantees that they have no incentive to contribute appreciably to a collective defense effort.

Domestic factors in the United States contributing to this approach include disillusionment with a continuing Vietnam war; the impact of the war on the economy; and the increasingly complex problems of the environment, the cities, race, and poverty, which have stepped up pressures to reduce defense spending.

1/ The doctrine enunciated at Guam was concerned with U.S. policy toward Asia, but the Nixon doctrine is now applied by the Administration to overall U.S. foreign policy. President Nixon in his foreign policy message to Congress on [illegible] stated: "Its central thesis is that the U.S. will participat[illegible] [illegible]ment of allies and friends, but that America can [illegible] all world."

President Nixon on July 25, 1969, on the island of Guam - as he began a trip through Asia - laid down the guidelines for future United States policy in Asia. He repeated the three key elements of the Doctrine in his November 3, 1969, speech and in his February 18, 1970, report to the Congress on "U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's":

(1.) the United States would keep all its treaty commitments,

(2.) the United States would "provide a shield" if a nuclear power threatened an ally or country whose security the United States considered vital to its own security,

(3.) in cases involving "other types of aggression we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested and as appropriate." But here the nation threatened would "assume the responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense."

President Nixon has attempted to maintain his options in case of either direct conventional attack or externally-supported subversion, indicating that the United States would judge each situation individually before determining a response. Such a judgment would consider several factors, such as the extent of external Communist aggression (including support to insurgents), the efforts made by the local government to meet the threat, the response of other Asian nations, and overall U.S. interest and capabilities.

The Nixon Doctrine is long-range in nature, to be implemented over a number of years during which the Administration expects (or hopes) that the non-Communist nations of Asia will attain the capacity to defend themselves against non-nuclear conventional aggression. 1/ The President emphasized in his Guam statement that he was attempting to define the U.S. role in Asia after the end of the Vietnam war. He has described the attainment of this posture as "a goal - a goal that we can achieve." President Nixon has spoken of the Asian countries as "increasingly" shouldering the responsibility for their own defense.

1/ George Ball, former Under Secretary of State and long a critic of U.S. policies in Southeast Asia, appearing on May 26 before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, was critical of the assumption underlying the Nixon Doctrine that the "combined action of regional powers can supplant United States effort." At the same time, Ball argued that U.S. preoccupation with Southeast Asia encouraged the Soviet buildup in the Middle East, that the destruction of Israel could turn "the whole southern littoral of the Mediterranean into a Soviet sphere of influence; it would shift the balance of power catastrophically against the West." Ball argued for what he called "practical guidelines" rather than a formal doctrine, guidelines which would assess whether the geographical area at issue was vital to U.S. interests, whether U.S. military power could be effectively used on the physical terrain, whether the government supported had a solid base and whether the struggle involved significant expansion of one of the great Communist powers. Congressional Record, June 2, 1970. pp. E5084-E5085.

Central to the new approach is the type of settlement to be reached in Vietnam. President Nixon in his November 3 speech said that three Presidents had "recognized the great stakes involved in Vietnam and understood what had to be done," adding that a U.S. defeat "would result in a collapse of confidence in American leadership, not only in Asia but throughout the world." He argued that precipitate withdrawal would be "a disaster of immense magnitude," and that a U.S. defeat would promote recklessness by those powers "who have not yet abandoned their goals of world conquest" and would "spark violence wherever our commitments help maintain peace." 1/ In his foreign policy

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1/ President Johnson, like Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, stressed the argument that if South Vietnam fell under Communist domination, then adjacent states would become extremely vulnerable to Communist penetration. The basic argument of the Johnson Administration on U.S. policy was that the achievement of an honorable peace in Vietnam and of peace and security in Southeast Asia was vital to the national interests of the United States. Officials of the Johnson Administration stated that the United States had made binding commitments to South Vietnam and that if the United States defaulted, then "the credibility of the pledged word of the United States under our mutual security treaties would subject this nation to mortal danger." Other reasons given for the steadily expanding U.S. role in Vietnam were that the United States had to demonstrate that aggression across international frontiers could not be permitted, even in the form of a "war of national liberation," that U.S. policy was aimed at containing China, and that the United States had guaranteed the right of self-determination to the South Vietnamese people.

United States officials have claimed that the determination of the United States in honoring its commitments to South Vietnam has produced a new spirit in Southeast Asia. Former Secretary of State Rusk declared that because of the continued U.S. presence in Vietnam, "Red China is no longer the wave of the future. Confidence and hope for the future marks the free nations." The actions taken by some states and the statements by some Asian leaders tended to support this argument while others did not.

message to Congress, President Nixon said that during his trip through Asia in the summer of 1969 "I did not meet a single Asian leader who urged a precipitate U.S. withdrawal." 1/

The program of Vietnamization has been described by Administration officials as an essential element not only in achieving a Vietnam settlement but in implementing the Nixon Doctrine. Testifying before a House subcommittee in October 1969, Secretary of Defense Laird described Vietnamization as the "first step" in the Nixon Doctrine. He said: "I do not believe that the Nixon Doctrine will be a credible doctrine if we fail in Vietnam in this new program."

The Cambodian crisis which began in the spring of 1970 provided what may be considered as the first test of the Asian Doctrine. The Cambodian request for military assistance confronted the United States with a difficult dilemma: dispatch of troops would undercut President Nixon's goal of having Asian nations handle regional security problems. On the other hand, if the North Vietnamese were able to control all of Cambodia, this too could be seen as jeopardizing the Nixon Administration policy of Vietnamization and of achieving a lower profile in Asia. A decision to enter Cambodia also would be likely to significantly increase opposition in the United States to

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1/ The withdrawal of British forces from the area by 1971 and the debate in the United States over America's foreign commitments, particularly as they relate to Asia, have forced Southeast Asian leaders to take a harder look at the future. Several apparently believe that the best guarantee for moderate Chinese policies and for stability in the area would be the involvement of as many outside powers as possible -- but without outside domination of the area by any one power or combination of powers -- to preserve some kind of balance.

Southeast Asia policy and thereby jeopardize the carrying out of the long-range policy charted by the Administration.

President Nixon justified the attacks on Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia by claiming that it would strengthen the Vietnamization program in South Vietnam and protect the lives of American troops there. He has said that the United States will withdraw from Cambodia by the end of June and that other military assistance to that country will include only small arms. Secretary of Defense Laird stated that "Cambodia presents an opportunity for application of the Nixon Doctrine," which he said meant "a reduction not only in American involvement in Asian combat but an increase in military assistance to our Asian friends so they can defend themselves." 1/ Critics, however, charged that involvement of U.S. troops in Cambodia meant a widening of the Vietnam war and contradicted the basic tenets of the Nixon Doctrine.

President Nixon in a news conference on May 8 indicated that once U.S. troops were withdrawn from Cambodia by the end of June, they would not be sent back:

> The United States is, of course, interested in the future of Cambodia, and the future of Laos, both of which, as you know, are neutral countries. However, the United States, as I indicated in what is called the Guam or Nixon Doctrine, cannot take the responsibility and should not take the responsibility in the future to send American men in to defend the neutrality of countries that are unable to defend themselves. 2/

1/ In an interview in U.S. News and World Report, May 11, 1970.
2/ Congressional Record, May 11, 1970. p. S6917.

He added that the proper course for ensuring the neutrality of countries like Cambodia and Laos was to guarantee by diplomacy the "neutrality of countries that are unable to defend themselves" without having foreign forces intervene. President Nixon said the United States was "exploring" this possibility with the Soviet Union, with Great Britain, with the Asian countries who met in Djakarta in May, and "through every possible channel."

Indications are that if diplomatic guarantees are not possible in the short run, the Nixon Administration is attempting to put the Nixon Doctrine into operation by converting any future anti-Communist military operations in Cambodia into an essentially Asian operation with American backing. The burden of ground warfare in Cambodia would thus shift primarily to South Vietnamese troops with assistance from Thailand and possibly other Asian nations. The South Vietnamese have signified that they are not bound by the U.S. withdrawal deadline. Thailand has indicated it will send volunteers and military equipment to Cambodia.

President Nixon has stressed the need for the development of regional cooperation for security in Asia and the role such cooperation will play in the U.S. effort to achieve a lower profile in Asia. Statements by President Nixon and his Assistant on National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry Kissinger, 1/

1/ In his article in the Brookings Institution's Agenda for the Nation, Dr. Kissinger listed as one of the four conditions for an effective alliance "a penalty for noncooperation...That is, the possibility of being refused assistance must exist...otherwise protection will be taken for granted and the mutuality of obligation will break down." Kissinger also wrote: "Because the United States has often seemed more eager to engage in the defense of its SEATO and CENTO allies than they themselves, they have become convinced that noncooperation will have no cost. In fact, they have been able to give the impression that it would be worse for us than for them if they fell to communism. SEATO and CENTO have become, in effect, unilateral American guarantees." Gordon, Kermit, (ed.). Agenda for the Nation. Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1968. pp. 593-594.

have clearly indicated that the United States will not in the future embark on unilateral military involvement in Asia while the countries of the region do little or nothing. President Nixon declared in an article in Foreign Affairs in October 1967 that an Asian collective security system could be forged "if the need for a regional alliance is put in sufficiently compelling terms." In a 1968 campaign speech, he repeated this theme and stated: "If the other nations in the free world want to remain free, they can no longer afford the luxury of relying on American power." 1/ In the Foreign Affairs article, he argued:

> But other nations must recognize that the role of the United States as world policeman is likely to be limited in the future. To ensure that a U.S. response will be forthcoming if needed, machinery must be created that is capable of meeting two conditions: (a) a collective effort by the nations of the region to contain the threat by themselves; and, if that effort fails, (b) a collective request to the United States for assistance.

The growing strength and stability of the non-Communist nations of Asia, particularly the economic strength and potential of Japan, and their increased regional consciousness constitute the fundamental underpinning of the Nixon Doctrine. In his foreign policy message to Congress, President Nixon emphasized the United States relationship with Japan as "crucial in our common effort to secure peace, security and a rising living standard" in the Pacific area. He added that the United States would not ask Japan "to assume

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1/ The New York Times, October 20, 1968.

responsibilities inconsistent with the deeply felt concerns of its people," apparently referring to the reluctance of many Japanese to assume a significant military security role in Asia. Japan's Premier Sato has stressed that an increasing Japanese role in Asia will be in the fields of economic and technical assistance, not as a military power. The extent of Japan's involvement in Southeast Asia in the immediate future remains unclear. The antagonisms created during World War II are not stilled; there is some misgiving on the part of Southeast Asian countries about Japan's suitability to assume a major role in Asia. But, at the same time, Southeast Asian nations want increasing Japanese investment and economic assistance.

The Nixon Doctrine contains several broad assumptions concerning the future policy of Communist China and other Asian Communist states in Southeast Asia. Basically, these are as follows:

(1) Communist China is not likely to launch a direct conventional attack in the area. There are several factors involved here: China's internal problems are believed to have reduced Peking's capabilities in either conventional wars or in supporting wars of national liberation. The nearly decade-long Soviet arms embargo has substantially reduced the level of modernization of the People's Liberation Army. Further, China's concern over the security of its northern border will make more unlikely a military thrust in the opposite direction. Many specialists also argue that China has been and will continue to be prudent in carrying out its foreign policy, even though its revolutionary rhetoric would suggest otherwise. Secretary

of Defense Laird, however, warned in his annual (1970) defense posture statement that, while Communist China had shown military restraint in Asia for a number of reasons:

> Nevertheless, Chinese Communist ambitions for great power status and regional hegemony are recognized by the nations of Asia as well as ourselves, and China's geographical position and potential for realizing its ambitions pose a pervading psychological and actual threat to the peace and security of the Asian area. 1/

President Nixon has attempted to reduce the level of hostility between the two countries, and the Administration may have either accepted or may be testing the argument often voiced by American critics of U.S. China policy that much of China's hostility toward the United States stems directly from the American policy of diplomatically isolating China and from Peking's concern about U.S. intentions in Asia.

(2) Direct North Vietnamese military operations outside of Indochina is not expected.

(3) The major threat to the non-Communist nations of Southeast Asia lies in Communist-backed "wars of national liberation." The most likely targets will be Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, and Indonesia; the Administration has indicated it expects these countries to have time to react positively to prevent any real threat. Officials have stated that threatened countries such as Thailand and Malaysia have shown substantial internal cohesiveness,

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1/ Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird before a Joint Session of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations on the Fiscal Year 1971 Defense Program and Budget, February 20, 1970. p. 55.

economic progress and a sense of positive nationalism. The insurgency problem in Thailand, for example, appears to be under control after an intensive five-year effort by the government in Bangkok.

There have been many, in Congress and around the country, who have questioned the rationale and value of the United State presence in Vietnam. This questioning has grown as the war has continued and become the longest war in U.S. history since the Revolutionary War.[1/] The cost of the war, in men and money, has far exceeded the estimates made when heavy U.S. involvement began in 1965. The United States has now lost over 42,000 men killed in combat and the war has cost approximately $100 billion.[2/]

Some critics of present policy argue that there are major elements of a civil war in Vietnam and that the United States should not have intervened. Some contend that U.S. objectives, whether or not they were or are valid, cannot justify the costs to the United States or the high level of casualties among civilians or the destruction in the cities and countryside of South Vietnam. Others argue that Communist China is not directly involved in the war, that China does not present a threat to the United States, and that the United States has not been bound,

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1/ Major U.S. involvement in men and material began in February-March 1965.

2/ In addition, there have been 8000 other deaths in non-hostile action; about 280,000 have been wounded. By way of comparison, total U.S. battle deaths in the Korean War were 33,629; there were 20,617 other (non-combat) deaths. The Korean War lasted from June 25, 1950, until July 27, 1953. Estimates of its cost vary widely, but the highest estimate is substantially below the $100 billion figure for Vietnam.

unilaterally, to assist past governments or the present government of South Vietnam. Major political figures in the United States have challenged the basic argument that defending Vietnam is vital to the U.S. national interest and have called for a reexamination of the American role on the Asian mainland. The United States, according to some, should shift the emphasis of its policy from military assistance to economic development, and away from bilateral commitments toward giving assistance through regional organizations controlled by Asian countries.

The arguments are raised that the present government of South Vietnam is not representative, that corruption is rampant, and that this situation necessitates a change in the U.S. approach. Some maintain that the United States made its biggest mistake by assuming the major burden of fighting the war, thereby giving rise to the Vietcong charge that the United States merely succeeded to the French role. It has been argued that the mounting cost of the war in lives, in national wealth, and in the fissures it has caused in American society make necessary an exhaustive reappraisal of U.S. objectives.

The opposition to the war reached a peak in October-November 1969 during the Moratorium and Mobilization demonstrations in Washington and in other cities. The purpose of the anti-war activity was to place increasing pressure on President Nixon to change his Vietnam policy and accelerate the withdrawal of troops. President Nixon on November 3 gave his second major address on Vietnam, a speech which is generally credited with strengthening support for his Vietnam policies and correspondingly weakening the anti-war movement.

The Congress became more directly involved by introduction and passage of legislation relating to United States policies in Southeast Asia in the winter and spring of 1969-1970. The House of Representatives on December 2 passed a resolution by a vote of 333-55 backing the President's "efforts to negotiate a just peace in Vietnam." The Senate considered measures directed at increasing its role in foreign policy formulation, passing on December 15 an amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act which prohibited use of funds appropriated by the act to finance introduction of United States ground combat troops into Laos or Thailand. President Nixon told Republican leaders that the amendment was "definitely in line with Administration policy." 1/ Several other resolutions introduced called for repeal of the Tonkin Gulf resolution; the Administration at first opposed such resolutions, but reversed its position in 1970.

1/ The amendment became part of Public Law 19-171, December 29, 1969.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1970 began a new series of hearings on Vietnam, and considered a number of pending resolutions which if passed could affect the course of U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. Several members of the Senate in March and April warned against deepening American involvement in Laos and urged full disclosure by the Administration of U.S. plans in the area. The Symington subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 19 released testimony from hearings held on Laos in October 1969; the release of the transcript had been delayed because of wide differences between the Committee and the State Department over what information could be released. 1/ The testimony disclosed a substantial military support effort in Laos. However, President Nixon on March 6 stated that "there are no American ground combat troops in Laos."

1/ Six days of hearings were also held last November on U.S. commitments and involvement in Thailand. The basic U.S. commitments to Thailand are under the SEATO treaty and the 1962 Rusk-Thanat agreement, which assured Thailand that the treaty obligation was "individual as well as collective" and did not depend on prior agreement of all parties to the treaty. The hearings dealt with these commitments, a 1966 military contingency plan, and the stationing of nearly 50,000 American troops in Thailand in connection with operations in Vietnam and Laos. According to the hearings, published on June 7, the United States has been paying Thailand $50 million a year since 1966 to support Thai forces in South Vietnam. U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. Hearings. United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad: Kingdom of Thailand. Part 3. 91st Congress, 1st session. Washington, D.C., U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1970. pp. 613-618, 657.

The United States-South Vietnamese operations in Cambodia, which began in late April, sparked another nationwide reaction and wide-ranging Congressional debate over U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. The House of Representatives on May 6 rejected amendments (to the $20 billion military authorization bill) designed to restrict the President's authority to introduce American combat troops in Cambodia, Laos or Thailand. In the Senate, however, intensive debate centered around resolutions aimed at placing restrictions on the President's use of defense funds in Southeast Asia.