

REMARKS OF HONORABLE BOB DOLE
RNC PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONFERENCE
MARRIOTT TWIN BRIDGES MOTEL
WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1972

AS YOU MAY HAVE OBSERVED, THE DEMOCRAT PRESIDENTIAL SWEEP-STAKES IS UNDER WAY. IF MR. MUSKIE'S DECLARATION THAT NOTHING IN AMERICA IS GOOD ENOUGH, AND MR. KENNEDY'S PERSONAL SLURS AGAINST PRESIDENT NIXON ARE ANY INDICATION, THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE IN THE COMING MONTHS WON'T BE VERY HIGH. AT THIS POINT, WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR IT TO BOTTOM OUT. THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN CALLED A BARBARIAN, NOT BY THE USUAL SCREWBALLS IN THE STREET, BUT BY A CONGRESSMAN. EVIDENTLY THIS IS WHAT PASSES FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE DEMOCRAT PARTY. MR. KENNEDY CHOSE TO ATTACK HIS COUNTRY FROM THE ALIEN PRECINCTS OF A UNITED NATIONS DINNER, PRESUMING TO OUTLINE AMERICA'S MORAL OBLIGATIONS.

WAR PARTY

THE FACT THAT THE DEMOCRAT PARTY -- TRADITIONALLY THIS NATION'S WAR PARTY -- IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A CONFLICT WHICH HAS COST THE LIVES OF OVER 55,000 AMERICANS IS A SOURCE OF SOME DIS-

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TRESS TO THE PRESENT CROP OF DEMOCRAT HOPEFULS, PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY ARE EACH INDIVIDUALLY SO DEEPLY IMPLICATED IN THAT CONFLICT. THEY HAVE OBVIOUSLY CONCLUDED THAT A GOOD OFFENSE IS THE BEST DEFENSE IN THIS MATTER, AND IT IS DIFFICULT SOMETIMES TO KEEP IN MIND HOW THE WAR IN VIETNAM STARTED AND HOW IT IS BEING ENDED -- WHO STARTED IT, AND WHO IS STOPPING IT.

SENATOR EDMUND MUSKIE INFORMED THE NATION RECENTLY THAT "IT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH -- INDEED IT IS INDEFENSIBLE -- THAT PEOPLE ARE STILL DYING, AT OUR HANDS, IN A WAR THAT IS WRONG..... A WAR MOST AMERICANS REJECTED LONG AGO." SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY SAID A FEW WEEKS AGO: "I BELIEVE IN THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF ALL U. S. FORCES AS QUICKLY AS HUMANLY, TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE. I BELIEVE IN A TOTAL END TO THE WAR." SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY: "MY OPPOSITION TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM IS FULL AND UNQUALIFIED." AND SENATOR GEORGE MC GOVERN: "THE MOST TRAGIC DIPLOMATIC AND MORAL FAILURE IN OUR NATIONAL EXPERIENCE."

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IF YOU LISTEN TO ALL THIS, IF YOU READ THE AMENDMENTS THESE MEN INTRODUCE AND SUPPORT ON THE FLOOR OF THE CONGRESS TO TIE THE PRESIDENT'S HANDS IN HIS EFFORT TO GET US OUT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, YOU MIGHT THINK THAT PERHAPS IT WAS HUBERT HUMPHREY WHO IS CLEANING UP THE MESS IN VIETNAM, AND NOT RICHARD NIXON.

IF YOU READ THE EDITORIALS IN THE LIBERAL PRESS, YOU'D THINK SOMEHOW THAT THE 55,000 LIVES SACRIFICED IN VIETNAM WERE A CONSEQUENCE OF MISTAKES MADE OR SUPPORTED BY PRESIDENT NIXON -- INSTEAD OF PEOPLE LIKE GEORGE MC GOVERN AND HUBERT HUMPHREY AND EDWARD KENNEDY, AND ED MUSKIE.

THEY ALL SEEM TO HAVE A BETTER IDEA ABOUT HOW TO GET OUT OF VIETNAM THAN THE PRESIDENT. AND I CAN WELL UNDERSTAND HOW SOME OF THEM MIGHT REACH THAT CONCLUSION. YOU WOULD THINK THE PEOPLE THAT GOT US INTO VIETNAM WOULD KNOW HOW BEST TO GET US OUT -- BUT WAR ISN'T LIKE FOLLOW THE LEADER AND, AS I RECALL, THE ONLY DIRECTION THE PEOPLE WHO GOT US INTO VIETNAM SEEMED TO EVER TAKE WAS FURTHER INTO VIETNAM.

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THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR VIETNAM

SO WITH ALL THE ADVICE BEING HANDED ABOUT, AND ALL THE UNCONSCIOUSNESS COMING FROM MC GOVERN, AND ALL THE MORAL CERTITUDE OF TEDDY KENNEDY, AND ALL THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF MR. MUSKIE, AND ALL THE PROTESTATIONS OF VIRTUE BY HUBERT HUMPHREY AND THE REST --- I THINK IT IS TIME THAT WE MADE A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF ALL THE CLAIMS AND ADVICE AND ACCUSATIONS IN THIS ISSUE, AND THE PLACE TO BEGIN THAT ASSESSMENT, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS BY DETERMINING ONCE AND FOR ALL PRECISELY WHERE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR VIETNAM LIES. I THINK WE NEED TO REMIND OURSELVES WHOSE COUNSEL, WHOSE PLANS AND STRATEGEMS INVOLVED AMERICA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AT THE COST OF FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND AMERICAN LIVES, AT THE COST OF NEARLY A DECADE OF DOMESTIC TURMOIL, AND AT THE COST OF A DEVASTATED ECONOMY.

THE DEMOCRATS HAVE KEPT UP A CONSTANT FLOW OF CRITICISM AND CROCODILE TEARS FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS IN THE OBVIOUS HOPE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL FORGET THE SORDID ROLE THEIR OWN PARTY PLAYED IN DELIBERATELY PLUNGING US INTO THE VIETNAM QUAGMIRE.

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MANAGING THE PEOPLE

BUT THE PUBLIC WILL NOT FORGET THAT IT WAS THE SO-CALLED INTELLECTUALS OF THE EASTERN ESTABLISHMENT WHO PLUNGED THIS NATION INTO WAR AND ECONOMIC RUIN. THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT THE WAR COULD BE MANAGED -- AND THAT THE PUBLIC COULD BE MANAGED. THEY SOUGHT BY A VARIETY OF DEVICES TO MAKE THE VIETNAM WAR A "LOW-KEY" PROJECT, A PHRASE FAMILIAR TO PUBLIC RELATIONS MEN THE WORLD OVER. THE PEOPLE NEEDED ONLY TO PAY THEIR TAXES FOR THE WAR'S COST AND SEND THEIR SONS TO THE BATTLEFIELD -- LEAVING THE POLICY-SHAPING AND DECISION-MAKING TO THE "SCHOLARS" AND THE "WHIZ KIDS" IN WASHINGTON. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO LED THE WORLD'S GREATEST DEMOCRACY TO WAR IN A SHAMEFULLY UNDEMOCRATIC WAY. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE TODAY WHO HAVE THE GUTS TO STAND UP AND SAY RICHARD NIXON DOESN'T TRUST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

PRESIDENT NIXON HAS SHOWN RESTRAINT IN THE FACT OF THE RISING TIDE OF CRITICISM HE HAS RECEIVED FROM THOSE WHO NOW RUN FROM THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THEIR ARROGANT ACTIONS, AND WHO SEEK TO SADDLE OTHERS WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE ACTIONS. WITH

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STATESMANLIKE DETERMINATION, THE PRESIDENT HAS DEVOTED EVERY BIT OF HIS TIME, ENERGY AND ATTENTION TO THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS FACING HIM -- PUTTING AN END TO THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND REPLACING THE PHONY PROSPERITY OF WAR WITH LASTING PROSPERITY IN PEACE.

A NEW DIRECTION

PRESIDENT NIXON HAS OCCUPIED THE OVAL OFFICE FOR THREE YEARS, AND TODAY THIS NATION HAS NEW DIRECTION. IT HAS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF ITS ANCIENT POSSIBILITIES -- OF FREE MEN IN A FREE LAND. AMERICA HAS SEEN A NEW BIRTH OF HOPE THAT PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED AND PROSPERITY IN PEACETIME CAN BE ATTAINED. THOSE HOPES WILL BE FULFILLED. THE FOUNDATION HAS BEEN LAID, THE DIRECTION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, AND MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. BUT MUCH REMAINS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

ON THE AGENDA FOR PEACE ARE TWO HISTORIC TRIPS. ONE WILL TAKE THE PRESIDENT TO PEKING AND THE OTHER TO MOSCOW. BOTH WILL SEEK TO CONVEY THE SAME TRUTHS: THAT NATIONS DO NOT HAVE TO AGREE WITH EACH OTHER IN ALL RESPECTS IN ORDER TO AGREE NOT TO DESTROY EACH OTHER; THAT NATIONS DO NOT HAVE TO LOVE EACH OTHER IN ORDER TO LIVE IN PEACE.

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PRESIDENT NIXON HAS WORKED COURAGEOUSLY, SKILLFULLY AND LONG TO BRING THE WORLD TO A TIME WHEN HE COULD SAFELY SIT DOWN WITH THE LEADERS OF THE OTHER TWO WORLD SUPER-POWERS, CONFIDENT THAT HIS MOTIVES WOULD NOT BE MISINTERPRETED, AND THE WILL OF THIS NATION NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF VERY POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS ALONG THE WAY -- CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT THOSE CAPABLE OF DESTROYING THE WORLD ARE CONCERNED WITH PRESERVING IT.

THE ROAD TO PEACE

THERE IS A TREATY BARRING USE OF THE SEABEDS FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THERE IS A TREATY ON BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS HAVE BEEN PRODUCTIVE AND CONTINUE WITH THE HOPE OF AN ULTIMATE AGREEMENT IN THIS AREA. WE HAVE HAD AN HISTORIC AGREEMENT ON BERLIN.

SO THE ROAD AHEAD, HOWEVER LONG OR DANGEROUS, CAN BE TRAVELED WITH THE HOPE OF PEACE COMING AT THE END. THERE IS REASON FOR OPTIMISM. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN, FINALLY, REALIZE THE DREAM OF A GENERATION OF PEACE -- THAT WE CAN GIVE TO OUR CHILDREN AND OUR GRANDCHILDREN A WORLD WITHOUT WAR, AND THAT OUR GENERATION CAN EARN THE BENEDICTION AND THE BLESSINGS

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OF PEACEMAKERS.

ALL THIS HAS COME ABOUT IN AMERICA AND IN THE WORLD BECAUSE OF THE DEDICATION OF THE ONE MAN IN THE LAST TEN YEARS WHO DIDN'T SIMPLY TALK ABOUT PEACE, BUT MOVED TO ACHIEVE IT, AND IS ACHIEVING IT, AND THAT MAN IS RICHARD NIXON.

WE ARE TOLD THAT THOSE WHO IGNORE THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO RELIVE IT. IF WE SHOULD FORGET, IN THE COURSE OF TEN BLOODY YEARS, THE PAST WHICH HAS COST US MORE THAN 55,000 AMERICAN LIVES, THEN WE SHOULD BE CONDEMNED INDEED -- AS A NATION, AS A PEOPLE, AS HUMAN BEINGS. WE MUST NOT IGNORE, NOR PERMIT TO BE BURIED THE ORIGINS OF THIS TERRIBLE WAR.

THE PENTAGON PAPERS

RECENTLY, A SET OF DOCUMENTS WERE RELEASED WHICH MIGHT ENABLE US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM. THESE WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS BY A MAN WHO APPEARS TO SUFFER SOMEWHAT FROM A MESSIANIC COMPLEX, AND WITH THEIR RELEASE A VERY CURIOUS THING HAPPENED. THE LIBERALS WERE DELIGHTED AT THE PUBLICATION OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS -- AS MUCH AS ANYTHING, APPARENTLY, SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY WERE CLASSIFIED -- AND A GREAT DEAL OF HEAT WAS GENERATED OVER THE CONTENTS OF THOSE DOCUMENTS. BUT BEFORE

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ANY LIGHT COULD BE GENERATED, THE ENTIRE MATTER OF THE DOCUMENTS -- THE SO-CALLED PENTAGON PAPERS -- APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME A DEAD ISSUE. IT IS ASTONISHING THAT THE CONTENTS OF THESE PAPERS HAVE BEEN SO LITTLE DISCUSSED -- WHEN WE WERE LED TO SUPPOSE THAT THEY COULD TELL US SO MUCH. THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS THAT THEY TELL TOO MUCH -- FAR MORE THAN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS AND THEIR PUBLIC CLAQUES WANT TOLD.

BUT THE SO-CALLED PENTAGON PAPERS ILLUSTRATE, AS WELL AS ANYTHING CAN, THE BEGINNINGS OF VIETNAM, AND SO I THINK WE OUGHT TO REFER TO THEM. THIS IS A PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE TIME TO DO SO SINCE WE ARE SO RECENTLY PAST THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUP SPONSORED BY THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION WHICH SAW TWO MEN MURDERED -- ONE THE PRESIDENT OF VIETNAM -- BECAUSE THOSE MEN THOUGHT THEY KNEW BETTER THAN THE KENNEDY WHIZ KIDS WHAT WAS GOOD FOR THEIR NATION.

LAST NOVEMBER 1 MARKED THE EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION IN SAIGON OF PRESIDENT NGO DINH DIEM AND HIS BROTHER, NGO DINH NHU. THE ANNIVERSARY WAS RELATIVELY UNNOTICED, PERHAPS BECAUSE THIS BLOODY EPISODE IS ONE FOR WHICH AMERICANS -- THROUGH

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A DEMOCRAT ADMINISTRATION -- WERE PRINCIPALLY RESPONSIBLE, AND GUILT IS NEVER PLEASANT TO REMEMBER. MOREOVER, THE DECISION TO OVERTHROW PRESIDENT DIEM -- WHO WAS LARGELY AN AMERICAN CREATION TO BEGIN WITH, LOCKED THE UNITED STATES INTO THE DISASTROUS INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM.

"HICKORY HILL UNIVERSITY"

THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE BOTH FOR DIEM'S OVERTHROW AND FOR DEEPENING U. S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR, ARE NAMED IN THE PENTAGON PAPERS. THEY WERE THE PRINCIPAL ADVISORS OF JOHN F. KENNEDY: AVERELL HARRIMAN, ROGER HILSMAN, ROBERT KENNEDY, THE BUNDY BROTHERS, MC NAMARA, RUSK, MAXWELL TAYLOR. I KNOW YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THOSE NAMES. WE SHOULD REMEMBER THOSE NAMES AS WE LOOK AT THE LIST OF ADVISORS OF THE CURRENT DEMOCRAT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, AND AS WE CONSIDER WHOM THEY WOULD CHOOSE TO SERVE IN THEIR ADMINISTRATIONS. THIS IS THE SO-CALLED "HICKORY HILL UNIVERSITY" CROWD WHO WERE SO FASCINATED AT THE CONCEPT OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY WHICH THEY LEARNED AT SEMINARS HELD AT BOBBY KENNEDY'S HOME. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO PIONEERED -- LIKE GOOD NEW FRONTIERSMEN -- THE IDEA OF BEING WHAT THEY CALLED "TOUGH-MINDED." THEY CONGRATULATED EACH OTHER ON THEIR TOUGH-MINDEDNESS.

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IN THE LATE SPRING OF 1963, THERE WERE BUDDHIST GROUPS PROTESTING THE DIEM GOVERNMENT. THAT GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS LARGELY CATHOLIC, CONSIDERED THE PROTESTORS TO BE VIET CONG SYMPATHIZERS. IT WAS ALL VERY COLORFUL, WITH MONKS BURNING THEMSELVES, AND NOBODY KNOWING JUST WHAT WAS GOING ON; THE PRESS HAD A SPLENDID TIME -- THE TRUTH WAS ANYBODY'S GUESS, AND THEY COULD WRITE ALL SORTS OF STRANGE TALES AND THEY DID. DAVID HALBERSTAM AND NEIL SHEEAN AND MALCOLM BROWN WERE SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO TOOK A HAND IN DENOUNCING A SITUATION THEY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND TO BEGIN WITH, AND ALL THIS TURNED UP IN THE LIBERAL PRESS HERE AT HOME, WHICH NATURALLY CONCERNED THE KENNEDYS NO END.

EVEN THOUGH FREDERICK NOLTING, WHO WAS OUR AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON, NOTED THAT IN HIS TWO-AND-ONE-HALF YEARS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY RELIGIOUS SUPPRESSION, NEVERTHELESS DIEM WAS CHARGED WITH RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION, AND PRESIDENT KENNEDY, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, WAS COUNSELED AGAINST SEEMING TO SUPPORT A CATHOLIC REGIME IN VIETNAM.

BUT THIS WAS NOT THE ONLY PROBLEM. AN EVEN MORE SERIOUS

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PROBLEM WAS THAT DIEM WASN'T EVERYTHING THE ADMINISTRATION WANTED IN A PUPPET PRESIDENT. IN FACT, HE WASN'T ANYTHING THEY WANTED IN A PUPPET PRESIDENT, BECAUSE HE REFUSED TO BE A PUPPET. SOMETIMES HE HAD THE AUDACITY TO THINK HE KNEW MORE ABOUT VIETNAM THAN ARTHUR SCHLESINGER KNEW. AND WORST OF ALL, HE DIDN'T WANT U. S. COMBAT TROOPS IN HIS COUNTRY. HE ARGUED THAT THE WAR WAS VIETNAMESE AND THAT THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS WOULD VIOLATE THE GENEVA ACCORDS. IN SPITE OF THIS, THE DEMOCRAT ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON FELT IT WAS BEST TO INTRODUCE AMERICAN TROOPS IN VIETNAM.

NOW, DIEM WAS A BACHELOR AND AN ASCETIC. HIS BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW AND THEIR ENTOURAGE WERE ALLEGED TO BE INVOLVED IN VARIOUS SORTS OF CORRUPTION FROM WHICH THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE MADE LARGE PERSONAL FORTUNES. WITH HIS SENSE OF ORIENTAL FAMILY LOYALTY, DIEM RESISTED AMERICAN DEMANDS THAT HE REMOVE AND DISAVOW HIS BROTHER. AT THAT POINT, AMBASSADOR NOLTING WAS RECALLED TO WASHINGTON, AND HIS POST WAS GIVEN TO HENRY CABOT LODGE.

THE INSTRUCTIONS LODGE CARRIED TO SAIGON WERE QUITE SPECIFIC: EITHER DIEM WOULD MEND HIS WAYS, OR HE WOULD LOSE AMERICAN SUPPORT.

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AS BACKGROUND MUSIC TO THIS THREAT WERE THE CONSTANT MUTTERINGS OF COUPS AND COUNTER-COUPS BY AMBITIOUS MILITARY OFFICERS SEEKING GREATER POWER. THROUGH THE CIA, AMERICAN OFFICIALS GOT IN TOUCH WITH SOME OF THESE PEOPLE, AND BEGAN FUNNELING MESSAGES TO THEM. AT FIRST, THE POSTURE WAS ONE OF WATCHFUL WAITING. ONE COUP WAS CALLED OFF, AND IT BECAME CLEAR THAT A SUCCESSFUL COUP WOULD DEPEND UPON AMERICAN REACTION.

. CAMELOT COUP

THE AMERICAN COMMANDER IN VIETNAM, GENERAL PAUL HARKINS, ARGUED AGAINST AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR AN OVERTHROW, BUT BY NOW THE WHIZ KIDS IN WASHINGTON THOUGHT A COUP WAS JUST THE MOST EXCITING AND ROMANTIC AND "TOUGH-MINDED" THING THEY HAD EVER HEARD OF. AFTER ALL, EXCITEMENT AND ROMANCE WERE WHAT CAMELOT WAS ALL ABOUT. IT CERTAINLY WASN'T ABOUT GOOD GOVERNMENT.

THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION DIDN'T SEE ANY OF THIS AS A QUESTION OF MORALITY, NOR A QUESTION OF RIGHT OR WRONG, NOR EVEN, APPARENTLY, AS A QUESTION OF GOOD POLICY; THEIR BIGGEST WORRY WAS ONLY THAT THE TRUTH MIGHT GET OUT -- AS INDEED IT DID, YEARS LATER.

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A STATE DEPARTMENT CABLE TO LODGE REAFFIRMED THE OVERALL POSITION: "DIEM MUST BE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO RID HIMSELF OF NHU AND HIS COTERIE AND REPLACE THEM.....IF, IN SPITE OF ALL YOUR EFFORTS, DIEM REMAINS OBDURATE AND REFUSES, THEN WE MUST FACE THE POSSIBILITY THAT DIEM HIMSELF CANNOT BE PRESERVED."

ANOTHER WHITE HOUSE COMMUNICATION INDICATED THAT THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION WOULD SUPPORT A COUP WHICH PROMISED A GOOD CHANCE OF SUCCESS. ONE DAY LATER A STATE DEPARTMENT CABLE TO LODGE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT POLITICAL CHANGE WOULD HAVE TO COME THROUGH AMERICAN, NOT VIETNAMESE, EFFORT AND NOTED THAT PRESIDENT KENNEDY WAS GIVING THE PROBLEM HIS ALMOST FULL-TIME ATTENTION. INSTRUCTIONS WERE SENT TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR AMBASSADOR WAS ENGAGED IN AN ATTEMPT TO SALVAGE THE DIEM GOVERNMENT, NOT OVERTHROW IT.

BY LATE SEPTEMBER, THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS TALKING TO AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN SAIGON ABOUT A SUBSTITUTE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT, AND ASKING LODGE ABOUT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROTECTING HIMSELF AND THE EMBASSY. THERE WAS CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GENERAL HARKINS AND CABOT LODGE. HARKINS DIDN'T WANT A COUP, SO HE GOT SENT HOME.

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FINALLY, ON OCTOBER 29, THE WHITE HOUSE SENT A MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, SAYING, "IF YOU SHOULD CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS NOT CLEARLY A HIGH PROSPECT OF SUCCESS, YOU SHOULD COMMUNICATE THIS DOUBT TO THE GENERALS IN A WAY CALCULATED TO PERSUADE THEM TO DESIST AT LEAST UNTIL CHANCES ARE BETTER," ADDING THAT ONCE A COUP WAS UNDER WAY, "IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE U. S. GOVERNMENT THAT IT SHOULD SUCCEED."

THE MATTER OF ASYLUM WAS ALLUDED TO IN THE SAME MESSAGE. IT WAS TO BE GRANTED "TO THOSE TO WHOM THERE IS ANY EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED OBLIGATION." IT BECAME APPARENT LATER THAT PRESIDENT DIEM AND HIS FAMILY DID NOT QUALIFY.

DIEM'S LAST STAND

ON NOVEMBER 1, AT 1:30 p.m., WITH CIA AGENTS INSTALLED IN THEIR HEADQUARTERS, THE GENERALS MOVED AGAINST DIEM, ATTACKING THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. THE GENERALS BROADCAST DEMANDS FOR SURRENDER, AND DIEM INVITED THEM TO CONSULT WITH HIM AT THE PALACE. AT 6:00 P.M., DIEM TELEPHONED THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO INQUIRE ABOUT THE U. S. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COUP. THE AMBASSADOR, UNBELIEVABLY, SAID HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF IT. TWELVE HOURS LATER, DIEM AND HIS BROTHER OFFERED TO "SURRENDER WITH HONOR" TO THE GENERALS.

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THE CHIEF TRAITOR, "BIG" MINH, ACCEPTED THE OFFER, AND ASKED HIS CIA CONTACT FOR AN AIRCRAFT TO GET DIEM AND HIS BROTHER OUT OF THE COUNTRY. THE CIA MAN RELAYED THE REQUEST TO THE EMBASSY AND WAS TOLD THERE WOULD BE A 24-HOUR DELAY BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE AIRCRAFT, EVEN THOUGH THE EMBASSY HAD A PLANE AVAILABLE AT THAT MOMENT.

WHILE ALL THIS WAS TAKING PLACE, NHU AND DIEM ESCAPED TO A CATHOLIC CHURCH WHERE THEY WERE TAKEN PRISONER AND PLACED IN A TROOP CARRIER. BY THE TIME THE CARRIER REACHED SAIGON, BOTH MEN HAD BEEN MURDERED.

"BIG" MINH LASTED THREE MONTHS BEFORE BEING OVERTHROWN
BY A FELLOW PLOTTER, GENERAL KHANH, WHO WAS SUCCEEDED BY GENERAL KY,
WHO IN DUE COURSE WAS FOLLOWED BY GENERAL THIEU, THE CURRENT PRES-
IDENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

NIXON FORESIGHT

AS MR. NIXON HAD SAID IN PARIS, JUST SIX DAYS BEFORE THE COUP, THE CHOICE WAS BETWEEN DIEM AND SOMETHING INFINITELY WORSE. AND EVER SINCE, AMERICA HAS BEEN PAYING THE COST IN BLOOD.

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AT THE EXPENSE OF MURDERING A GREAT VIETNAMESE PATRIOT, THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION ACHIEVED WHAT IT HAD SET OUT TO ACHIEVE -- A GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM THAT WOULD BE UNDER ITS DOMINATION. AND WHEN THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION GOT A GOVERNMENT IT COULD DOMINATE IN SAIGON, IT ALSO GOT A GOVERNMENT THAT DEPENDED EXCLUSIVELY ON THE UNITED STATES FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT. FROM THERE ON, TOTAL MILITARY INTERVENTION WAS INEVITABLE.

SO THE NOBLE KNIGHTS OF CAMELOT GOT RID OF DIEM -- WHO DIDN'T WANT LARGE-SCALE AMERICAN TROOP INVOLVEMENT IN HIS COUNTRY -- AND SUBSTITUTED A SUCCESSION OF GOVERNMENTS THAT INSITED UPON IT.

TODAY'S CRITICS

AS AMERICAN TROOP STRENGTH IN VIETNAM GREW AND GREW THROUGH THE MID-SIXTIES, TODAY'S CRITICS OF THE WAR WERE LOYALLY SUPPORTING THE POLICIES OF THE WAR PARTY.

SENATOR GEORGE MC GOVERN HAD THIS TO SAY IN FEBRUARY, 1965, LONG AFTER THE CRUCIAL DECISIONS THAT LED TO THE ACCELERATION OF THE WAR HAD BEEN MADE: "I HAVE NEVER ADVOCATED RUNNING UP A WHITE FLAG AND I DO NOT ADVOCATE IT NOW." LATER THAT YEAR, WHEN AMERICAN TROOP STRENGTH HAD CLIMBED INTO THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS, SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY SAID OF CRITICS OF THE WAR: "SO QUICK TO CONDEMN THE U. S. FOR MILITARY ACTION, I WISH THEY HAD RAISED

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THEIR VOICES AGAINST VIET CONG TERRORISM, AGAINST VIET CONG MURDER, KIDNAPPING AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATION."

SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE TOLD THE SENATE IN 1966 THAT "CONTAINMENT OF EXPANSIONIST COMMUNISM REGRETTABLY INVOLVES DIRECT CONFRONTATION FROM TIME TO TIME AND THAT TO RETREAT FROM IT IS TO UNDERMINE THE PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY AND PEACE." AS LATE AS 1968, HE WAS PRESENTING PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S WAR PLANK ON THE FLOOR OF THE DEMOCRAT NATIONAL CONVENTION, SEEING AS ONE OF THE MAJOR ISSUES IN THE WAR "THE USE OF THE SO-CALLED NATIONAL WARS OF LIBERATION AS A TECHNIQUE OF COMMUNIST EXPANSION." TODAY, MUSKIE PROFESSES TO BE PENITENT. TODAY, HE ADOPTS THE ROLE OF SUPERDOVE.

AND FORMER VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY, WHO TOLD REPORTERS A FEW DAYS AGO THAT HIS NEW BELL-BOTTOM TROUSERS SHOULD HAVE CLUED THEM IN THAT THERE WAS A "NEW HUMPHREY," HAD THIS TO SAY IN 1967: "TODAY THE THREAT TO WORLD PEACE IS MILITANT AGGRESSIVE ASIAN COMMUNISM WITH ITS HEADQUARTERS IN PEKING, CHINA. THE AGGRESSION OF NORTH VIETNAM IS BUT THE MOST CURRENT AND IMMEDIATE ACTION OF THAT MILITANT ASIAN COMMUNISM. IF IT SHOULD SUCCEED IN ITS GOAL OF

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CONQUEST OF SOUTH VIETNAM, IT WOULD ADD STRENGTH TO THE COMMUNISTS OF ASIA AND EUROPE AND IT WOULD STIMULATE AN APPETITE FOR MORE AGGRESSION AND CONQUESTS. IT WOULD REPRESENT A DEFEAT -- NOT ONLY FOR AMERICA, BUT FOR FREEDOM EVERYWHERE."

IN FACT, HOWEVER, PROBABLY THE MOST DAMAGING BLOW TO THE FREEDOM AND INTEGRITY OF SOUTH VIETNAM HAD OCCURRED YEARS BEFORE, THROUGH A DECISION MADE IN THE GLAMOROUS SHALLOWS OF THE KENNEDY WHITE HOUSE, WHEN IT WAS CONCLUDED -- AS IT WAS CONCLUDED SO OFTEN DURING THE KENNEDY-JOHNSON YEARS IN BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY -- THAT THE GOVERNMENT KNEW WHAT WAS BEST FOR THE PEOPLE, BETTER THAN THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES; WHEN IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT AN ASIAN LEADER THEY DID NOT KNOW AND DID NOT TAKE THE TIME TO UNDERSTAND HAD TO DIE BECAUSE HE DID NOT FIT THEIR PARTICULAR IMAGE OF WHAT AN ASIAN NATIONALIST WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.

POLICY OF SUCCESS

AS VICIOUS AS IT IS, AS DISHONEST, AS SELF-SERVING AND OPPORTUNISTIC AS IT IS, IT WAS ALSO PREDICTABLE THAT THE VERY SAME PEOPLE WHO, BY THEIR CONSCIOUS ACTS, COMMITTED US TO A FULL-SCALE LAND WAR IN ASIA, ARE THE SAME ONES WHO ARE PRESENTLY CONDEMNING THE PRESIDENT WHO HAS DONE SO MUCH SO SUCCESSFULLY TO GET US OUT.

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IN THEIR ARROGANCE, THEY HAVE DECIDED THAT IF THEIR POLICIES DID NOT WORK, NOBODY'S CAN -- EVEN IF THEY MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO FULFILL THEIR OWN PROPHECY BY UNDERMINING THE PRESIDENT WHO IS PROVING THAT THE RIGHT POLICY CAN WORK. IN THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, THEY IGNORE THE IRONY IN THE FACT THAT THEY ARE CRITICIZING THE SAME MAN WHO ONCE ARGUED AGAINST THEIR TRAGIC MISJUDGMENT IN ENCOURAGING THE ELIMINATION OF NGO DINH DIEM, AND MAKING THE CHAOS WHICH FOLLOWED THE INEVITABLE.

I THINK THOSE WHO SUPPORTED THE ESCALATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, NOW OWE IT TO THE PRESIDENT TO SUPPORT THE DE-ESCALATION. I THINK THOSE WHO WRONGLY SENT OUR BOYS TO SOUTHEAST ASIA ARE UNDER OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT AS HE RIGHTLY BRINGS THEM HOME. I THINK THOSE WHO COOPERATED WITH THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS IN TRYING TO WIN THE WAR IN VIETNAM, MIGHT WELL COOPERATE WITH THE PRESIDENT WHO IS WINNING THE PEACE. I THINK THE EFFORT TO COVER THEIR TRACKS, WHICH IS SUCH A FULL-TIME JOB FOR SO MANY OF THESE PEOPLE, CAN END -- BECAUSE IT SHOULD BE APPARENT THAT THEY NEVER CAN COVER THEIR TRACKS.

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LIBERAL INTELLECTUALISM

THE NEW YORKER MAGAZINE SAGELY PUT THE BLAME WHERE IT BELONGS IN AN ARTICLE LAST JULY: "THE GREAT AND ENDURING POLITICAL DAMAGE OF THIS WAR WILL BE THE DAMAGE DONE TO THAT AMERICAN LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM WHICH LAUNCHED IT -- THAT MOVEMENT WHOSE LEADERS, IN A CLASSIC FOLLY OF PRIDE, SET THEMSELVES ABOVE A PUBLIC TO WHOSE DOUBTS THEY WERE INDIFFERENT, WHOM THEY REGARDED AS A SULKY AUDIENCE TO BE PRESENTED WITH 'STAGE-MANAGED' PROGRAMS OF WAR.....VIETNAM WAS CONSCIOUSLY MADE INTO A TEST OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL POLICY BY THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS -- OF LIBERAL 'NATION-BUILDING' CARRIED ON BEHIND A SHIELD OF GREEN BERET COUNTER-INSURGENCY WARFARE, AGAINST THE ASIAN COMMUNIST 'MODEL' OF RADICAL NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION. THIS IS, ONE MUST UNDERSTAND, THE LIBERAL'S WAR." AND IT IS A WAR THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAS DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO END:

NIXON ACTION

IN JANUARY OF 1969 WHEN THE PRESIDENT TOOK OFFICE, THE AUTHORIZED TROOP STRENGTH WAS 549,000. BY MAY 1, 1972, 87 PERCENT OF THAT NUMBER WILL HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN. THAT'S SOME 470,000 MEN.

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THREE YEARS AGO, THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF AMERICAN COMBAT DEATHS WAS 278 WEEKLY -- IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS THE NUMBER HAD DROPPED TO LESS THAN 10, THE LOWEST IN 5 1/2 YEARS. THE DECLINE HAS BEEN CONSTANT.

THREE YEARS AGO, THERE WAS NO COMPREHENSIVE ALLIED PEACE PLAN FOR ENDING THE WAR. NOW, AS THE RESULT OF SEVERAL INITIATIVES BY THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE PRESIDENT, WE HAVE LAID OUT A COMPREHENSIVE AND FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

THREE YEARS AGO, SUPPORT COSTS OF THE VIETNAM WAR WERE APPROXIMATELY 22 BILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR. TODAY, THEY ARE COSTING HALF THAT, AND THAT FIGURE, TOO, IS DECLINING CONSTANTLY.

THERE HAVE BEEN FOUR MAJOR WARS IN THIS CENTURY INVOLVING THIS COUNTRY -- WORLD WAR I, WORLD WAR II, KOREA, AND VIETNAM. ALL BEGAN UNDER DEMOCRAT ADMINISTRATIONS. THE DEMOCRAT PARTY CANNOT NOW LOSE ITS IMAGE AS THIS COUNTRY'S WAR PARTY BY HANDWRINGING AND NAME-CALLING, AND PIOUS DECLARATIONS OF PENITENCE.

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SELF-RIGHTEOUS DENUNCIATIONS ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE ANYONE FORGET THAT MC GOVERN AND HUMPHREY AND MUSKIE AND KENNEDY AND THE REST OF THE TRIBE BACKED THE EFFORT TO PUT THIS NATION INTO VIETNAM RIGHT UP TO THE HILT -- TO THE TUNE OF 55,000 AMERICAN LIVES, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VIETNAMESE LIVES, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE INDEPENDENT POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

LAST SUMMER'S PUBLICATION OF THE SO-CALLED "PENTAGON PAPERS" REVEALED EXACTLY WHERE THE FAULT FOR VIETNAM LIES. THESE DOCUMENTS CLEARLY TELL HOW AMERICA'S INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN AN ASIAN LAND WAR RESULTED FROM THE ARROGANCE AND POMPOSITY OF THE "POWER ELITE" WHICH INVADED WASHINGTON EARLY IN 1961. IT WAS THEY WHO HELD THEMSELVES OUT AS A NEW BREED. AND IT WAS THEY WHO PLUNGED THIS NATION INTO A MAJOR LAND WAR IN ASIA AND ARE TODAY TRYING TO BLAME PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM FOR THE INEVITABLE PROBLEMS THAT IRRATIONAL ACTION LED TO.

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WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

IT IS TIME TO PLACE THE RESPONSIBILITY WHERE IT LIES. MUCH MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT IS TIME WE STUDIED THE ORIGINS OF THE VIETNAMESE WAR IN A THOROUGH, COMPREHENSIVE, AND UNEMOTIONAL WAY SO THAT WE CAN FIND OUT WHAT REALLY LED TO THE DISASTER WHICH PRESIDENT NIXON FACED WHEN HE ENTERED THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1969. IT IS TIME WE EVALUATED THE MEN, THE THEORIES AND THE DECISIONS WHICH LED TO OUR EVER-HEIGHTENING INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, TO SEE WHERE WE WENT WRONG AND TO DETERMINE WHAT WE MUST NOT DO AGAIN.

I SHALL PROPOSE A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE, TO BE APPOINTED ON A BI-PARTISAN BASIS, BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE -- A COMMITTEE WHOSE PURPOSE WILL BE TO INVESTIGATE AND EVALUATE THE CAUSES AND CONDUCT OF THE VIETNAM WAR. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE HAD ENOUGH RUMORS, ENOUGH LEAKS, ENOUGH "INSIDE STORIES," ENOUGH LIES. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT THE TRUTH. IT IS TIME THE CONGRESS SHOWED THEM THE RESPECT THEY DESERVE AND GIVE THEM THE TRUTH.