

Under no circumstances should we escalate the war in Vietnam. Our position there is indefensible. Contrary to government propaganda we were not invited by, and have no obligation to any representative or responsible government of South Vietnam. We are there as an aggressor in violation of our treaty obligation under the United Nations Charter. We have not observed either the letter or the spirit of our obligations with respect to our actions in Vietnam. As a result, we have the opposition of not only the entire Communist World but the rest of the world as well, with the exception of a few states.

STATEMENT OF U. S. POSITION IN VIETNAM

BY

MARRINER S. ECCLES

The French affirmed the independence of the colonial government of Vietnam and called for an end to hostilities. The British and the Russians were Co-Chairmen of that conference. At that time, the French were agreed to withdraw from Vietnam. The U. S. Vietnam Lobby did not permit that election to be held knowing that Ho Chi Minh, the communist leader of the North, was so popular he would unquestionably win the election. As a matter of fact, John F. Kennedy, then Senator, in a major speech in the Senate in April, 1956, warned against any negotiated solution that would allow participation in the Vietnamese government by Ho Chi Minh. The communists, he said, would eventually take over the government. In the meantime, the U. S. would have to deal with the fact that Ho Chi Minh was the leader of the North, as provided in the Geneva accords, an estimated 80% of the population of Vietnam would have voted for Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader.

Ho Chi Minh was brought to the United States in 1950 for a 12 year self-imposed exile, under the auspices of Bishop John Joseph Dougherty, who was the first strong support in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the United States. Cardinal Spellman became a strong supporter, as did Justice Douglas, Joseph Kennedy and his son, John F. Kennedy. General Marshall (the C.I.A. man in Saigon), C.I.A. Director

Salt Lake City, Utah
December 22, 1965

Under no circumstance should we escalate the war in Vietnam. Our position there is indefensible. Contrary to government propaganda we were not invited by, and have no commitment to any representative or responsible government of South Vietnam. We are there as an aggressor in violation of our treaty obligation under the United Nations Charter. We have not observed either the letter or the spirit of our obligations with respect to our actions in Vietnam. As a result, we have the opposition of not only the entire Communist World but the rest of the world as well, with few minor exceptions.

The facts are, the Geneva Treaty of 1954, after the defeat of the French, affirmed the independence of the colonial government of Vietnam and called for an end to hostilities. The British and the Russians were Co-Chairmen of that conference. An interim trusteeship was agreed upon whereby the French would preside in the South and the Viet Minh in the North for two years, ending in a national election in 1956 when the Vietnamese people would choose their own government. The U. S. Vietnam Lobby did not permit that election to be held knowing that Ho Chi Minh, the communist leader of the North, was so popular he would unquestionably win the election. As a matter of fact, John F. Kennedy, then Senator, in a major speech in the Senate in April, 1954 warned against any negotiated solution that would allow participation in the Vietnamese government by Ho Chi Minh. The communists, he said, would eventually take over because they were so popular. In his memoirs Eisenhower stated that had an election been held in Vietnam, as provided in the Geneva accord, an estimated 80% would have voted for Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader.

Diem was brought to the United States in 1950 from a 17 year self-imposed exile, under the auspices of Michigan State University, and here he found strong support in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, his brother being a Catholic Bishop. Cardinal Spellman became a strong supporter, also Justice Douglas, Joseph Kennedy and his son, John F. Kennedy, General Lansdale (the C.I.A. man in Saigon), C.I.A. Director

Allen Dulles, General Donovan and other strong anti-communists. They were largely responsible for bringing about Diem's ascension to the Premiership of South Vietnam in July, 1954.

From his first day in office he set about crushing opposition and concentrating power in small nepotist groups. Diem's targets included the private armies of the religious sects and the anti-communist Vietnamese leaders, who were also anti-Diem. He wasn't looking for popularity. He knew his support was slim--that he would have trouble with the majority of the population who had been supporting the Viet Minh in the long war against the French; therefore, force was the only way he could effectively ready his people for the democratic alternative. Due to the paid propaganda of the U. S. Vietnam Lobby his dictatorial tactics were not widely reported in the American press until eight years later when he fell from power and he and his brother were assassinated by the military within his own government. Since that time South Vietnam has been unable to develop a stable or responsible government, as evidenced by the many changes in leadership.

The South Vietnamese Communists, with the help of the North Vietnamese, defeated the French. They are now fighting for the independence of their country against the non-communist South Vietnamese. In short, it is a civil war with the Viet Cong supported by North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese held together and supported by the United States. The South Vietnamese Catholics (about 10% of the population), property owners and business interests in the large cities are the strong anti-communist supporters of South Vietnam, and are the minority.

We have provided large amounts of military and economic aid and supplied them with military advisers, but until the present administration came into office we did not furnish American troops to help fight their war, until it was apparent they were being defeated. We have gradually taken over the direction of their government as

well as their war until now it has become an American war rather than a Vietnamese war. Why go to Vietnam to drive the communists out when we can't get them out of Cuba, 90 miles from our shore.

The North Vietnamese supplied troops to the Viet Cong only after American troops entered the war in large numbers and we commenced heavy bombing of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. It was then that China and Russia publicly announced they would give all the military and economic aid necessary to the North Vietnamese in order to defeat the U. S. aggressors. As a result, we now have aligned against us the powerful countries of China and Russia, including all the Communist World, with practically no support from the rest of the world in spite of Rusk's and McNamara's recent appeals to NATO. Under these conditions WE CANNOT WIN. You cannot defeat people in a jungle war where the majority is against you and it is impossible to tell your friends from your enemies.

We are rapidly destroying the very country we propose to save--South Vietnam--as well as killing hundreds of its men, women and children by our incessant and heavy bombing of the Viet Cong. We are adding to our burdens thousands of refugees that we must feed, clothe and house. What would the situation be if North Vietnam, with the help of China and Russia, should retaliate by bombing Saigon and the other principal cities in South Vietnam? Even if we won their freedom and turned the country over to them they have no capacity for democracy or self rule.

With a bigger war shaping up on the ground and fighting 9,000 miles away logistics are almost an insolvable problem. With troop strength only 158,000 in November our logistic needs shot up from 75,000 tons in February to 700,000 tons in November. The jet aircraft are burning more than a million gallons of fuel a month. Ports are clogged--ships wait 10 days to two months to unload cargoes. What will the situation be if we undertake to double or quadruple our fighting forces, planes, helicopters, etc.?

Our sense of negotiating a peace reveals our total insensibility to the other parties problem. Two antagonists cannot negotiate their own peace terms. The matter should be turned over to an impartial body, like the United Nations, each party agreeing to a cease fire and to accept any terms decided upon by the impartial body.

If the war is escalated, before many months the United States will probably be required to go on a war footing and our present domestic prosperity will be ended. Inflationary pressures will greatly increase and the position of the dollar in the world market will be further jeopardized unless we bring about a balanced budget through increasing taxes and cutting back domestic programs.

It may be the North Vietnamese do not control the course of the war--it is now in the hands of the Chinese and the Russians. As Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference the Russians have refused to take any part in bringing about a peaceful settlement. They may be glad to have us tied down in a most unpopular war in Asia, which greatly weakens our position in NATO as well as throughout the world. They must avoid giving support to Peking's charges that they are conniving with Mr. Johnson to end the war. To do otherwise would greatly weaken their own leadership in the Communist World. It would seem we have fallen into a trap that neither China nor Russia is willing to let us get out of with either face-saving or victory.

We could not have chosen anywhere in the world a more difficult place to challenge the communists and more to the liking of China--on her border. How could we have been so blind and misinformed. The decisions were made by the President and a handful of advisers in the White House, State and Defense Departments without debate or prior approval of the Congress. This is dictatorship that has no place in our democracy. The public has not been advised as to what was taking place. They have been misinformed and brainwashed to such an extent that opponents are accused of being disloyal and supporting the enemy and patriotism has come to mean unquestioning support of the administration. Blindly accepting the government's position in Vietnam

is more senseless than blindly accepting its domestic programs because mistakes in Vietnam can be far more disastrous. The real patriots today are the members of Congress and other public leaders who have the courage to oppose the administration and urge it not to escalate the war but to get out of Vietnam at the earliest possible date. This would be the least costly from every standpoint--even our world prestige would be enhanced.

If our leaders insist on escalating this war to a finish it is likely to be the most disastrous of the wars we have fought, measured by cost, loss of life and prestige throughout the world, and the most futile. It could lead to World War III--the United States alone fighting the Communist World. This could trigger an atomic war which all the world dreads.

The real tragedy is the useless suffering of the millions of our people whose sons, husbands and brothers are drawn into this conflict unwillingly and are killed or maimed for life, not in defense of their country but because of our incompetent leadership.

Peace in the world will never be brought about by aggression or by rash and inept remarks like McNamara made at the Paris Conference of NATO when he urged our European allies to plan now to meet a Chinese military threat to their own security within five years. We are justly accused of trying to utilize NATO as a tool for our anti-Chinese policy of aggression in Asia. Such remarks make it impossible for us to negotiate our way out of Vietnam.

The alternative is to recognize China and bring her into the United Nations before she becomes an atomic power in three to five years. Even her avowed enemies, India and Russia, have voted for her inclusion in the U.N.

With all our domestic problems--mass poverty, unemployment, riots in our cities and the highest rate of juvenile delinquency and crime throughout the world--who are we to be the world's policeman?

The billions being wasted on the war in Vietnam, if used to eliminate mass poverty and illiteracy in the undeveloped countries, would do far more than aggression to prevent the spread of communism.

We must recognize that it is just as important, if not more so, for the communists to save face in Asia as it is for the U. S. We should be less interested in saving face and more interested in saving lives. Great nations over the years have survived face-saving and withdrawing from an untenable position. It can be done with dignity. Certainly we are a sufficiently great nation to relieve the world of the fear of war that is so terrifying. Not only would we save face, but we would win approval of the world and gain in stature.