

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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STATEMENT BY THE
HONORABLE ADLAI E. STEVENSON,
UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
ON THE CAMBODIAN COMPLAINT
(Approximately as delivered)

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 1964, 11:00 a.m.

I.

Mr. President:

The facts about the incidents at issue are relatively simple and clear.

The government of the Republic of Viet-Nam already has confirmed that in the heat of battle, forces of the Republic of Viet-Nam did, in fact, mistakenly cross an ill-marked frontier between their country and Cambodia in pursuit of armed terrorists on May 7 and May 8, and on earlier occasions. That has been repeated and acknowledged here again today by the representative of Viet-Nam.

The government of Viet-Nam has expressed its regrets that these incidents occurred with some tragic consequences. It has endeavored to initiate bilateral discussions with the Cambodian Government to remove the causes of these incidents.

But these incidents can only be assessed intelligently in the light of the surrounding facts: namely, the armed conspiracy which seeks to destroy not only the Government of Viet-Nam but the very society of Viet-Nam itself.

Mr. President, it is the people of the Republic of Viet-Nam who are the major victims of armed aggression. It is they who are fighting for their independence against violence directed

from outside

from outside their borders. It is they who suffer day and night from the terror of the so-called Viet Cong. The prime targets of the Viet-Cong for kidnapping, for torture and for murder have been local officials, school teachers, medical workers, priests, agricultural specialists and any others whose position, profession, or other talents qualified them for service to the people of Viet-Nam -- plus, of course, the relatives and children of citizens loyal to their government.

The chosen military objectives of the Viet-Cong -- for gun-fire or arson or pillage -- have been hospitals, school houses, agricultural stations, and various improvement projects by which the Government of Viet-Nam for many years has been raising the living standards of the people. The government and people of Viet-Nam have been struggling for survival, struggling for years for survival in a war which has been as wicked, as wanton, and as dirty as any waged against an innocent and peaceful people in the whole cruel history of warfare. So there is something ironic in the fact that the victims of this incessant terror are the accused before this Council and are defending themselves in daylight while terrorists perform their dark and dirty work by night throughout their land.

II.

Mr. President, I cannot ignore the fact that at the meeting of this Council two days ago, Ambassador Federenko, the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union digressed at great length from the subject before the Council to accuse the United States Government of organizing direct military action against the people of the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

For years, too many years, we have heard these bold and unsupported accusations. I had hoped that these fairy tales would be heard no more. But since the subject has been broached in so fanciful a way, let me set him straight on my government's policy with respect to Southeast Asia.

First,

First, the United States has no, repeat no, national military objective anywhere in Southeast Asia. United States policy for Southeast Asia is very simple. It is the restoration of peace so that the peoples of that area can go about their own independent business in whatever associations they may freely choose for themselves without interference from the outside.

I trust my words have been clear enough on this point.

Second, the United States Government is currently involved in the affairs of the Republic of Viet-Nam for one reason and one reason only: because the Republic of Viet-Nam requested the help of the United States and of other governments to defend itself against armed attack fomented, equipped and directed from the outside.

This is not the first time that the United States Government has come to the aid of peoples prepared to fight for their freedom and independence against armed aggression sponsored from outside their borders. Nor will it be the last time unless the lesson is learned once and for all by all aggressors that armed aggression does not pay -- that it no longer works -- that it will not be tolerated.

The record of the past two decades makes it clear that a nation with the will for self-preservation can outlast and defeat overt or clandestine aggression -- even when that internal aggression is heavily supported from the outside, and even after significant early successes by the aggressors. I would remind the members that in 1947 after the aggressors had gained control of most of the country, many people felt that the cause of the government of Greece was hopelessly lost. But as long as the people of Greece were prepared to fight for the life of their own country, the United States was not prepared to stand by while Greece was over-run.

This principle does not change with the geographical setting. Aggression is aggression; organized violence is organized violence. Only the scale and the scenery change; the point is the same in Viet-Nam today as it was in Greece in 1947 and in Korea in 1950. The Indochinese Communist Party, the parent of the present Communist Party in North Viet-Nam, made it abundantly clear as early as 1951 that the aim of the Vietnamese Communist leadership is to take control of all of Indochina. This goal has not changed -- it is still clearly the objective of the Vietnamese Communist leadership in Hanoi.

Hanoi seeks to accomplish this purpose in South Viet-Nam through subversive guerrilla warfare directed, controlled and supplied by

North Viet-Nam

North Viet-Nam. The Communist leadership in Hanoi has sought to pretend that the insurgency in South Viet-Nam is a civil war, but Hanoi's hand shows very clearly. Public statements by the Communist Party in North Viet-Nam and its leaders have repeatedly demonstrated Hanoi's direction of the struggle in South Viet-Nam. For example, Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party, stated on September 5, 1960, "At present our Party is facing [a] momentous task:...to strive to complete ... revolution throughout the country ..." He also said this: "the North is the common revolutionary base of the whole country". Three months after the Communist Party Congress in Hanoi in September 1960, the so-called "National Front for the Liberation of South Viet-Nam" was set up pursuant to plans outlined publicly at that Congress.

The International Control Commission in Viet-Nam, established by the Geneva Accords of 1954, stated in a Special Report which it issued in June 1962, that there is sufficient evidence to show that North Viet-Nam has violated various Articles of the Geneva Accords by its introduction of armed personnel, arms, munitions and other supplies from North Viet-Nam into South Viet-Nam with the object of supporting, organizing, and carrying out hostile activities against the Government and Armed Forces of South Viet-Nam.

Infiltration of military personnel and supplies from North Viet-Nam to South Viet-Nam has been carried out steadily over the past several years. The total number of military cadres sent into South Viet-Nam via infiltration routes runs into the thousands. Such infiltration is well documented on the basis of numerous defectors and prisoners taken by the Armed Forces of South Viet-Nam.

Introduction of Communist weapons into South Viet-Nam has also grown steadily. An increasing amount of weapons and ammunition captured from the Viet-Cong has been proven to be of Chinese Communist manufacture or origin. For example, in December 1963, a large cache of Viet-Cong equipment captured in one of the Mekong Delta provinces in South Viet Nam included recoilless rifles, rocket launchers, carbines and ammunition of Chinese Communist manufacture.

The United States cannot stand by while Southeast Asia is overrun by armed aggressors. As long as the peoples of that area are determined to preserve their own independence and ask for our help in preserving it, we will extend it. This, of course, is the meaning of President Johnson's request a few days ago for additional funds for more economic as well as military assistance for Viet-Nam.

And if anyone has the illusion that my government will abandon the people of Viet-Nam -- or that we shall weary of the burden of support that we are rendering these people -- it can only be due to ignorance of the strength and the conviction of the American people.

III.

We all know that Southeast Asia has been the victim of almost incessant violence for more than a decade and a half. Yet despite this fact, it has been suggested that we should give up helping the people of Viet-Nam to defend themselves and seek only a political solution. But a political solution is just what we have already had and it is in defense, in support of that political solution that Viet-Nam is fighting today. The United States has never been against political solutions. Indeed, we have faithfully supported the political solutions that were agreed upon at Geneva in 1954 and again in 1962. The threat to peace in the area stems from the fact that others have not done likewise.

The Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962 were -- quite precisely -- political agreements to stop the fighting -- to restore the peace -- to secure the independence of Viet-Nam and Laos and Cambodia -- to guarantee the integrity of their frontiers -- and to permit these much-abused peoples to go about their own business in their own ways. The United States, though not a signatory to the 1954 Accords, has sought to honor these agreements in the hope that they would permit these people to live in peace and independence from outside interference from any quarter and for all time.

To this day there is only one major trouble with the political agreements reached at Geneva with respect to Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos in 1954 and again with respect to Laos in 1962. It is this: the ink was hardly dry on the Geneva Accords in 1954 before North Viet-Nam began to violate them systematically with comradely assistance from the regime in Peking. Nearly a million people living in North Viet-Nam in 1954 exercised the right given to them under the Geneva agreement to move south to the Republic of Viet-Nam. Even while this was going on, units of the Viet-Minh were hiding their arms and settling down within the frontiers of the Republic to form the nucleus of today's so-called Viet-Cong -- to await the signal from outside their borders to rise and strike. In the meantime, they have been trained and supplied in considerable measure from North Viet-Nam -- in violation of the Geneva agreement, the political settlement. They have been reinforced by guerrilla forces moved into the Republic of Viet-Nam through Laos -- in violation of the Geneva agreement, the political settlement.

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This is the reason -- and the only reason -- why there is fighting in Viet-Nam today. There is fighting in Viet-Nam today only because the political settlement for Viet-Nam reached at Geneva in 1954 has been deliberately and flagrantly and systematically violated.

As I say, Mr. President, this is the reason why my government -- and to a lesser extent other governments -- have come to the aid of the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam as it fights for its life against armed aggression directed from outside its frontiers in contemptuous violation of binding agreements. If the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam is fighting today it is fighting to defend the Geneva agreement which has proven undefendable by any other means. If arms are being used in Viet-Nam today it is only because a political solution has been violated cynically for years.

IV.

The same disregard for the political settlement reached at Geneva has been demonstrated -- by the same parties -- in Laos. Violation has been followed by a period of quiet -- and then another violation. Limited aggression has been followed by a period of calm -- and then another limited aggression. Throughout the period since July 1962, when the Laotian settlement was concluded, the Prime Minister of Laos, Prince Souvanna Phouma, has with great patience and fortitude sought to maintain the neutrality and independence of his country. He has made every effort to bring about Pathet Lao cooperation in the government of national union.

Now, in the past few days, we have seen a massive, deliberate, armed attack against the forces of the coalition government of Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma. The attack was mounted by a member of that coalition government, with the military assistance of one of the signatories of the Geneva Accords. These violations are obviously aimed at increasing the amount of Lao territory under Communist control.

The military offensive of recent days must be seen as an outright attempt to destroy by violence what the whole structure of the Geneva Accords was intended to preserve. Hanoi has persistently refused to withdraw the Vietnamese Communist forces from Laos despite repeated demands by the Lao Prime Minister.

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Hanoi has also consistently continued the use of Laos as a corridor for infiltration of men and supplies from North Viet-Nam into South Viet-Nam.

It is quite clear that the Communists regard the Geneva Accords of 1962 as an instrument which in no way restrains the Communists from pursuing their objective of taking over Laos as well as South Viet-Nam.

The recent attempt to overthrow the constitutional government headed by Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma was in large part attributable to the failure of the machinery set up with the Geneva Accords to function in response to urgent requests by the Government of Laos. This machinery has been persistently sabotaged by the Communist member of the International Control Commission, who has succeeded by misuse of the so-called veto power in paralyzing the machinery designed to protect the peace in that area and thereby undermining support of the Souvanna Government. Today, however, that government which was created under the Geneva Agreements remains in full exercise of its authority as the legitimate government of a neutral Laos.

The other Geneva signatories must live up to their solemn commitments and support Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma in his efforts to preserve the independence and neutrality which the world thought had been won at Geneva. These solemn obligations must not be betrayed.

V.

Mr. President, my government takes a very grave view of these events. Those who are responsible have set foot upon an exceedingly dangerous path.

As we look at world affairs in recent years, we have reason to hope that this lesson has at last been learned by all but those fanatics who cling to the doctrine that they can further their ambitions by armed force.

Chairman Khrushchev said it well and clearly in his New Year's Day message to other heads of government around the world. In that letter he asked for "recognition of the fact that territories of states must not, even temporarily, be the target of any kind of

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/attack, military occupation or other coercive measures, directly or indirectly undertaken by other states for any political, economic, strategic, boundary, or other considerations, whatsoever."

There is not a member of this Council or a member of this Organization which does not share a common interest in a final and total renunciation -- except in self-defense -- of the use of force as a means of pursuing national aims. The doctrine of militant violence has been rendered null and void by the technology of modern weapons and the vulnerability of a world in which the peace cannot be ruptured anywhere without endangering the peace everywhere.

Finally, Mr. President, with respect to Southeast Asia in general, let me say this. There is a very easy way to restore order in Southeast Asia. There is a very simple, safe way to bring about the end of United States military aid to the Republic of Viet-Nam.

Let all foreign troops withdraw from Laos. Let all states in that area make and abide by the simple decision to leave their neighbors alone. Stop the secret subversion of other people's independence. Stop the clandestine and illegal transit of national frontiers. Stop the export of revolution and the doctrine of violence. Stop the violations of the political agreements reached at Geneva for the future of Southeast Asia.

The people of Laos want to be left alone.

The people of Viet-Nam want to be left alone.

The people of Cambodia want to be left alone.

When their neighbors decide to leave them alone -- as they must -- there will be no fighting in Southeast Asia and no need for American advisers to leave their homes to help these people resist aggression. Any time that decision can be put in enforceable terms, my government will be only too happy to put down the burden that we have been sharing with those determined to preserve their independence. Until such assurances are forthcoming, we shall stand for the independence of free peoples in Southeast Asia as we have elsewhere.

VI.

Now, Mr. President, if we can return to the more limited issue before this Council today: the security of the frontier between Cambodia and the Republic of Viet-Nam. My government is in complete sympathy with the concern of the Government of Cambodia for the sanctity of its borders and the security of its people. Indeed, we have been guided for nearly a decade in this respect, by the words of the Final Declaration of the Geneva conference of July 21, 1954: "In their relations with Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam, each member of the Geneva conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity and the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned states, and to refrain from an interference in their internal affairs."

With respect to the allegations now made against my country, I shall do no more than reiterate what Ambassador Yost, the United States delegate, said to this Council on Tuesday morning: the United States has expressed regret officially for the tragic results of the border incidents in which an American adviser was present; our careful investigations so far have failed to produce evidence that any Americans were present in the inadvertent crossing of the Cambodian frontier on May 7 and May 8; and there is, of course, no question whatever of either aggression or aggressive intent against Cambodia on the part of my country.

Let me emphasize, Mr. President, that my government has the greatest regard for Cambodia and its people and its Chief of State, Prince Sihanouk, whom I have the privilege of knowing. We believe he has done a great deal for his people and for the independence of his country. We have demonstrated our regard for his effort on behalf of his people in very practical ways over the past decade. We have no doubt that he wants to assure conditions in which his people can live in peace and security. My government associates itself explicitly with this aim. If the people of Cambodia wish to live in peace and security and independence -- and free from external alignment if they so choose -- then we want for them precisely what they want for themselves. We have no quarrel whatsoever with the desire of Cambodia to go its own way.

The difficulty, Mr. President, has been that Cambodia has not been in a position to carry out, with its own unaided strength, its own desire to live in peace and tranquility. Others in the area have not been prepared to leave the people of Cambodia free to pursue their own ends independently and peacefully. The

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recent difficulties along the frontier which we have been discussing here in the Council are only superficially and accidentally related to the Republic of Viet-Nam. They are deeply and directly related to the fact that the leaders and armed forces of North Viet-Nam, supported by Communist China, have abused the right of Cambodia to live in peace by using Cambodian territory as a passage-way, a source of supply, and a sanctuary from counterattack by the forces of South Viet-Nam, which is trying to maintain its right to live in peace and go its own way, too. Obviously Cambodia cannot be secure -- her territorial integrity cannot be assured -- her independence cannot be certain -- as long as outsiders direct massive violence within the frontiers of her neighboring states. This is the real reason for troubles on the Cambodian border; this is the real reason we are here today.

Now it is suggested that the way to restore security on the Cambodian-Vietnamese border is to reconvene the Geneva Conference which ten years ago reached the solemn agreement which I just read to you.

Mr. President, we can surely do better than that. There is no need for another such conference. A Geneva Conference on Cambodia could not be expected to produce an agreement any more effective than the agreements we already have. This Council is seized with a specific issue. The Cambodians have brought a specific complaint to this table. Let us deal with it. There is no need to look elsewhere.

We can make -- here and now -- a constructive decision to help meet the problem that has been laid before us by the Government of Cambodia -- to help keep order on her frontier with Viet-Nam -- and thus to help eliminate at least one of the sources of tension and violence which afflict the area as a whole.

Let me say, Mr. President, that my government endorses the statement made by the distinguished representative of Cambodia to the Council on Tuesday when he pointed out that states which are not members of the United Nations are not thereby relieved of responsibility for conducting their affairs in line with the principles of the Charter of this Organization. We could not agree more fully. Yet the regimes of Peking and Hanoi which are not members of this Organization are employing or supporting the use of force against their neighbors. This is why the borders of Cambodia have seen violence. And this is why we are here today. And that is why the United Nations has a duty to do what it can do to maintain order along the frontier between Cambodia and Viet-Nam -- to help uphold the principles of the Charter in Southeast Asia.

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As for the exact action which this Council might take, Mr. President, my government is prepared to consider several possibilities. We are prepared to discuss any practical and constructive steps to meet the problem before us.

One cannot blame the Vietnamese for concluding that the International Control Commission cannot do an effective job of maintaining frontier security. The "troika" principle of the International Control Commission which is to say the requirement under Article 42 of the Geneva agreement on Viet-Nam that decisions dealing with questions concerning violations which might lead to resumption of hostilities can be taken only by unanimous agreement, has contributed to the frustration of the ICC.

The fact that the situation in South Viet-Nam has reached the crisis stage is itself dramatic testimony of the frustration to which the International Control Commission has been reduced. With the exception of the Special Report on June 2, 1962, to which I referred, condemning Communist violations of the Geneva Accords, the Commission has taken no action with respect to the Communist campaign of aggression and guerrilla warfare against South Viet-Nam.

The representative of Cambodia has suggested that a Commission of Inquiry investigate whether the Viet Cong has used Cambodian territory. We have no fundamental objection to a Committee of Inquiry. But we do not believe it addresses itself to the basic problem that exists along the Viet-Nam-Cambodian border. More is needed in order to assure that problems do not continue to arise.

Several practical steps for restoring stability to the frontier have been suggested and I shall make brief and preliminary general remarks about them. I should like to reiterate what Ambassador Yost said, that we have never rejected any proposal for inspection of Cambodian territory.

One suggestion is that the Council request the two parties directly concerned to establish a substantial military force on a bilateral basis to observe and patrol the frontier and to report to the Secretary General.

Another suggestion is that such a bilateral force be augmented by the addition of United Nations observers and possibly be placed under United Nations command to provide an impartial third-party element representing the world community. We also could see much merit in this idea.

A third suggestion is to make it an all-United Nations force. This might also be effective. It would involve somewhat larger UN expenditures than the other alternatives. But if this method should prove desirable to the members of the Council, the U.S. will be prepared to contribute.

We would suggest, Mr. President, that whether one of these or some other practical solution is agreed, it would be useful to ask the Secretary General of the United Nations to offer assistance to Cambodia and the Republic of Viet-Nam in clearly marking the frontiers between the two countries. One of the difficulties is that there are places where one does not know whether he stands on one side of the frontier or the other. Certainly it would help reduce the possibility of further incidents if this uncertainty were to be removed.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me repeat that I am prepared to discuss the policy and the performance of my government throughout Southeast Asia. But the issue before us is the security of the Cambodia-Viet-Nam border. I have expressed my government's views on that subject. I hope other members of the Council also will express their views on that subject and that the Council, which is the primary world agency for peace and security, can quickly take effective steps to remedy a situation which could threaten peace and security.

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