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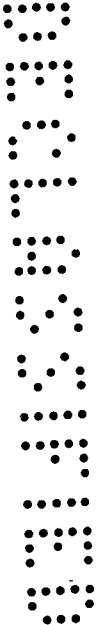
Foreign Policy Study

The American Role in Southeast Asia

by

M. Gordon Knox

June 25, 1962



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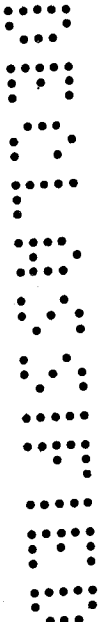
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INTRODUCTION

The current and chronic instability in Southeast Asia has commanded the attention of United States policy makers as well as broad areas of the American public. There is little to be gained from the addition of another voice in what to responsible officials must appear to be a cacaphony of unsolicited advice from the press and unofficial observers who are imperfectly or superficially informed regarding Southeast Asia. This paper, in fact, would have no justification for its existence were it not for two special factors, namely, the opportunities offered by the Senior Seminar for Foreign Policy to review at some length the nature of United States objectives overseas, to benefit from a first-hand glimpse of parts of Southeast Asia and, most important, to confer at first hand with experts in the area.

It is improbable that any of the professional students of the Southeast Asian scene whom I consulted would concur in all my conclusions though most of them would, I think, support some. These experts deserve at least a fair return for the expenditure of their time and for their courteous assistance in the education of this writer regarding their special area of the world. This then is their compensation, and though it must be considered an unsubstantial return for the effort they invested, at least they are free from any responsibility for the conclusions or for the tenor of the argumentation contained herein.

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The Current State of International Stability

Southeast Asia must be viewed within its world setting and particularly within the framework of current international tensions. The character of the Cold War is determined by the present state of mutual nuclear deterrence. Although it appears likely that the United States possesses a margin of nuclear superiority, its foreign policy is predicated on the requirement that there be no strategic nuclear war and that the damage the Soviet Union can wreak is essentially unacceptable; hence the policy selected by the United States is little different from one that recognizes nuclear parity between the two contenders. In any case, the capacity for mutual destruction is likely to be achieved in the comparatively near future, and this will confirm the United States in the military assessment on which it is already operating.

This is to say that both the United States and the Soviet Union assume that the other possesses (or in the case of the USSR within the measurable future will possess) a comparatively invulnerable strategic retaliatory force which could visit vast damage on the opponent. What the experts in nuclear strategic thinking like to call the "asymmetry" of the immediate situation, namely the current American superiority in magnitude of striking force and in its invulnerability based on dispersal (overseas bases, Polaris, 15-minute SAC alert) appears to be compensated for in the mind of the Kremlin by the differences in ideological fervor between the two

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camps. The leaders of the Soviet Bloc consider the Western Bloc to be composed essentially of satisfied nations concerned to preserve the status quo and little interested in accepting vast risks for the sake of spreading its ideological doctrine. Unless pressed to the wall by a series of diplomatic defeats, the United States in the military field might be expected to react rather than act and the initiative would remain in the Kremlin. It will be recalled that Premier Khrushchev in January, 1960, remarked that "a state subject to surprise attack, provided of course that it is a big state, will always be able to give the aggressor a worthy rebuff." It might be argued that this demonstration of missile rattling in reverse was intended merely as a form of psychological warfare and does not represent his true thinking; yet it appears to be reinforced by official Soviet comments on the nature of the future strategic war. For example, Major General Talensky stated in his article "On the Character of Modern Warfare," International Affairs, October, 1960, that "not a single country involved (in a strategic nuclear war) would escape the ensuing crushing devastating blows." He argued, of course, that such a war would destroy capitalism, but he publicly admitted at the same time that it would make the road to Communism "immensely longer."

In his speech of January 6, 1961, Khrushchev stated that

"We know that if the imperialist madmen were to begin a world war, the peoples would wipe out capitalism. But we are resolutely opposed to war We know that the first to suffer in the event of war would be the working people and their vanguard, the working class."

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Obviously national psychologies can change, and there comes a time when the national temperament, stung by a succession of defeats, will seek to recoup by methods more desperate than rational. This situation could render unstable the condition of mutual deterrence. Accordingly, it becomes part of the national interest of both contenders that the other side not be subjected to humiliating defeats or to frustrating situations from which there is no tolerable exit. This consideration alone - one which could upset the stability of the nuclear deterrent - is sufficient to strain the Sino-Soviet tie. It is a fair estimate that both Mainland China and Russia favor the eclipse of American influence and the American presence from the continent of Asia, but whereas Mao Tse Tung might wish to apply his formula:

"When the enemy advances, retreat,
when the enemy rests, attack,
when the enemy retreats, pursue,"

Khrushchev might prefer a more prolonged and correspondingly easier exit of American power from this area in order to allay the possibility of an American riposte in Europe or in some other sphere of primary Soviet interest.

This psychological limitation to the stability of nuclear deterrence is one which in certain cases of conflict would make it the national interest to seek stalemate rather than triumph and, to mis-quote a famous general, to defeat a substitute preferable to victory. In addition, there is also the instability inherent in the technological developments of deterrence. Obviously what goes on in the laboratories and on the proving grounds of nations with nuclear weapons and strategic

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delivery systems, and to a lesser extent in laboratories of states verging on nuclear-weapon capability, might tend to render instable the approaching nuclear parity of the two sides. There is further the alarming if somewhat unconvincing possibility of what may happen in the fairly distant future in the fields of biological, chemical and radiological warfare. Qualitative changes in armaments introduce unpredictable factors in the calculations. Any systematic or conspicuous effort, however, to capitalize on such a scientific or technical break-through would lead to greater risk of a pre-emptive strike by the forewarned potential victim of the new weapons; such an effort would represent a policy of backing a dangerous potential enemy into a corner, an effort likely to end disastrously for both contenders. Of course, attempts to develop new weapons cannot be neglected. More attention, however, should be paid to particular types of new weapons, those which tend to reinforce the national objective which is a stable nuclear deterrent. For example, if new techniques and new ideas could make the strategic nuclear counter-force more invulnerable to enemy action they would tend to increase the stability without precipitating hostilities. The development and production of Polaris-armed nuclear submarines is a fair illustration. The expenditure of large sums in order to hide these weapons under the oceans and the Arctic ice-cap is an indication that Polaris is a weapon for use as a counter-force. It does not, therefore, increase so much the first-strike threat to the potential enemy as it does significantly increase the pressure of restraint. Similarly, Minutemen in hardened bases are more effective

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than twice as many Minutemen on soft pads, since the former presumably are intended to be used second (else why spend the money hardening bases) whereas the latter are intended to be used first, prior to receiving a Soviet nuclear strike. A slow but steady build-up of fall-out shelters in the United States suggests that we are reducing the attractiveness to the Soviet Union of a first-strike; hence this form of national investment tends to increase the stability of the nuclear deterrent. Conversely, a shelter program on a crash basis gives a contradictory message; it could mean that the United States on the one hand fears a Soviet first-strike or alternatively is preparing to launch a first-strike and pari passu increasing its capacity to absorb a Soviet counter-blow. Correspondingly, a system of spy satellites, if sophisticated enough to estimate the size and magnitude of the Soviet nuclear force, might be considered an unstable factor, but if restricted to early warning to the American counter-force of the flight of Soviet missiles after their launching, then spy satellites would be useful only for counter-force purposes and hence would strengthen the deterrent.

In brief, an arms race should be pursued diligently in present circumstances though in such a manner that the nuclear deterrence is thereby rendered more rather than less stable.

Another development which might seem to affect the stability of the nuclear deterrent is the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the "Nth-power problem". The argument runs that with several, possibly many countries in possession of the nuclear bomb and, perhaps, a more or less rudimentary delivery system, the chances that nuclear weapons

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will be employed are increased and nuclear stability correspondingly decreased. It is true that a certain awesome mystique has surrounded the nuclear weapon, a weapon that has not been used against an enemy since Nagasaki. One reason is that the nuclear bomb is popularly considered to be indiscriminate in its mass destruction, for example, with widespread radioactive damage. Another is the belief that small tactical weapons will lead to strategic catastrophe by the process of escalation. It therefore seems a sound procedure to limit to as few hands as possible the capacity to destroy on so broad a basis.

On the other hand, is it really credible that a frenzied nationalist leader who has come into possession of a nuclear device and an elementary delivery method and who is insane enough to launch such a device against his nation's prime enemy is thereby likely to compel the onset of a massive nuclear exchange between the United States and the USSR? If, to use a purely hypothetical illustration, Nasser should choose to destroy Tel Aviv or Ben Gurion to obliterate Cairo by use of nuclear weapons, is it not a good deal likelier that the Soviet Union and the United States would join together to stop the fighting, as they did in the United Nations General Assembly in 1956 with regard to the Suez Affair, than that they would rain down nuclear weapons on each other for reasons that have little connection with the primary national interests of either great power? So great is the disparity in power between the nuclear giants, the USSR and the United States, on the one hand, and the rest of the world on the other, that a proliferation of unsophisticated nuclear weapons, themselves incapable of affecting the balance of power, appears unlikely to

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weaken the stability of the deterrent. On the contrary, if failure to assist certain allies in their efforts to obtain some nuclear capacity for reasons of national prestige and self-defense should mean that the United States were deprived of certain overseas bases during the present period of time prior to full conversion to long-range missile delivery systems this might tend to weaken our nuclear stance in relation to the USSR.

In fine, a glance around the world of today and a view into the murky future reveal on the political landscape one overwhelming political fact, which stands like a mountain above all other facts, namely, the existence of something approaching nuclear parity between the United States and the USSR and the likelihood that this approaching parity will make for and maintain a stability of deterrence which both sides will attempt to prolong because of the unacceptability to each of a show-down.

The Soviet leaders, having passed successfully through the period of nuclear inferiority, one which they must have considered to be intensely dangerous, may now be expected to adopt a freer expression of Soviet foreign policy objectives. The flamboyance of Khrushchev as contrasted with the cautious rigidities of Stalin probably are more than reflections of their individual personalities. They may also reveal a sense of exhilaration and of confidence on the part of the current Soviet leadership. Russia, probably for the first time since the establishment of the Duchy of Moscow in early mediaeval times, is now or soon will be almost invulnerable not to destruction but to foreign

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conquest and occupation. This is a change indeed from a scant twenty years ago when the enemy was able to surround Leningrad, threaten Stalingrad and approach to within barely thirty miles of the gates of Moscow. The sense of invulnerability which the two oceans and the British fleet provided the United States in the nineteenth century, nuclear weaponry has bestowed or will shortly bestow upon the Soviet Union. But this security exists only provided the strategic nuclear weapons are not used, that the deterrent remains stable. So although the Soviet authorities have used their power to probe American intentions and steadfastness, they have to date refrained from using Soviet forces aggressively outside the Communist Bloc, with the exception of attacks against isolated military aircraft over international waters. There is reason to anticipate this self-denying regulation will be continued in the future, since its abandonment would wake a firm response or lead to escalation. The Soviet authorities have thus sent military advisors to foreign lands and might use them in operations along lines similar to our employment of military advisers in South Vietnam. Soviet caution with regard to Berlin, where time limits have been extended or allowed quietly to lapse, Soviet self-restriction with regard to Iran where the effort is to arouse an internal revolt rather than to commit overt aggression, Soviet refusal in Korea, the Congo, Laos and South Vietnam to deploy its own forces irrevocably have delineated a sense of the limitations imposed by the nuclear deterrent and a willingness, perhaps desire, to live within them.

The first premise of this paper, then, is that a position of strategic stability has been reached with respect to nuclear weapons and

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that this stability is likely to be unaffected even though one side or the other either rises or sinks perceptibly in the balance of power. The stability will continue even if nuclear weapons of a non-strategic nature should be used, or even if nuclear weapons proliferate and are used, provided there is no real challenge to the nuclear power preeminence of the two major powers. The second assumption, one which must now be demonstrated, is that nuclear stability encourages conflict at a level below that of strategic nuclear war.

The Soviet Union is leader of an international bloc stimulated by a messianic ideology and the United States is part of a Western community stimulated inherently by a dynamic society. The nature of the Free World both with regard to its economy, philosophy and traditions is one of change, while for its part the Soviet Union is dedicated to changing the world through the imposition of its ideology. Change almost invariably leads to strain and friction and violence. American efforts rapidly to raise living standards in Africa and Latin America, to jump in a decade across economic cycles by encouraging drastic social reforms, are, themselves, open invitations to strife and hence to Communist intervention.

For its part, the Soviet policy has been clearly demarcated by Khrushchev in his speech of January, 1961.

"There have been local wars in the past and they may break out again. But the chances of starting wars even of this kind are dwindling. A small-scale imperialist war may develop into a world thermonuclear and missile war. We must, therefore, fight against local wars

"Now about national-liberation wars There will be liberation wars as long as imperialism exists, as long as colonialism exists Such wars are not only

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justified, they are inevitable Wars of this kind are popular uprisings What is the attitude of the Marxists to such uprisings? A most favorable attitude. These uprisings cannot be identified with wars between countries, with local wars The Communists support just wars of this kind wholeheartedly and without reservations and they march in the Van of the peoples fighting for liberation."

The dilemma of the Free World, particularly of the United States but to a degree of all other industrialized states and of former colonial powers, is clear: to avoid social change through the use of right-wing repression and thereby make inevitable a social upheaval, and, on the other hand, to encourage needful change at the risk of creating in a society social pressures which the Communists could exploit. The challenge to the Communists in this situation is equally clear: although an internationalist Party based on direction from Moscow, it must seize the nationalist issue in each emerging country and turn it against the former imperialist power or the so-called neo-imperialist, the United States.

Approaching nuclear stalemate has diverted the struggle for world mastery from the purely military sphere to the realms of the psychological, the economic, the political and the para-military, and specifically has moved from the European arena to that of the newly-emerging countries. Here defeats by one contender or the other have less significance in the scale of the balance of power and hence are more acceptable. For example, Russia could "lose" its position in Stanleyville and the Congo but could not afford, or so it seemed to have decided, to lose its position in Budapest. The United States can "lose" Cuba but not West Berlin. In the current

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world struggle the counters being used are largely money, influence, and only small increments of fighting men. In the Congo there are no combatants of either nuclear power; even in South Vietnam and Thailand the American troops present are a numerically insignificant fraction of the military forces of the two countries concerned.

The location of the post-nuclear conflict can be further defined. It is to be found not merely in those countries not considered strategically or psychologically vital to the two major nuclear powers but also will be focused upon essentially unstable areas of the world where conditions are ripe for a radical shift in political direction. An unstable state will fall more quietly; the aggressor can confront the world with a fait accompli. There will be little capacity for resistance, no time for appeals for help, no opportunity for other powers to intervene or for the sluggish conscience of mankind to be aroused.

The nature of the post-nuclear conflict can be further defined. It will tend to concentrate on internal strains within a country rather than reflect the application of external force across international boundaries. In the latter case there is a significant shock to the international status quo, since a single breach of the formal fabric of international conduct can lead rapidly to a degeneration of international behavior and a confrontation between nuclear powers. The cases of Korea in 1950 and of Hungary in 1956 proved exceptions, One can hardly pay serious attention to the Communist charges that South Korea attacked North Korea, and in any event, this was no ground for conquest nor even for reunification by force. Nor can one obtain

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much enlightenment from the Soviet tissue of lies regarding the establishment of the Kadar regime and its appeal to the Soviet Union for armed assistance. But Korea occurred under Stalin and there is serious reason to doubt that Stalin understood, at least in the direct way that Khrushchev understands, what the power of nuclear weapons can mean. Hungary as a part of the Soviet Bloc has not been recognized as such in any legal sense of the word; yet, the Kremlin would probably be as much surprised by American armed intervention to oppose the Soviet use of force in Hungary as it would be surprised if the United States did not intervene to oppose any direct Soviet use of force in Canada or Iceland.

These are exceptions, however, caused by special overriding conditions stimulating the plausible though specious implication that, in the case of Korea a struggle between two parts of a partitioned country was essentially intra-mural, and in the case of Hungary, a dispute between members of the Soviet Bloc was of the nature of an internal affair.

In general, an armed effort by one country to overthrow the government of another country will fail to attract support in the community of nations. Recognizing that international disapproval is far from being an insurmountable obstacle, being branded as an aggressor or probable aggressor nevertheless damages a country's reputation and weakens its influence. The United Nations General Assembly includes a large number of member states which fear their neighbors. To condone the use of force across an international boundary would instantly undermine the security of the many other weak

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states. Accordingly, this is not likely to occur. Exceptions spring immediately to mind, but the Indian breach of the Goa international boundary and the Indonesian dispatch of commando units to West New Guinea both represent unusual "special" cases. The concept of an international enclave between such disparate states as Portugal and India is peculiar in itself, and most ex-colonial powers find it implausible to regard West New Guinea as an intrinsic part of the sovereign domain of a small North Sea Kingdom.

Another impediment to inter-state warfare in the nuclear age is the obvious one of the possibility of escalation. Nuclear-possessing nations with a stake in the status quo, notably the United States, are likely to find their real interests affected by the implications of the conflict on the rule of law and hence are inclined to take action. Now, let it be supposed that the Korean conflict had arisen with a revolt in South Korea against the regime of Syngman Rhee and had developed into something approaching a civil war with the regime of North Korea sending in clandestine arms, supplies and possibly volunteers. Would it then have been easy for the United States to win majority support in the United Nations' Security Council and General Assembly for armed intervention? Would the United States have felt impelled to send seven divisions to Korea to maintain the regime of Syngman Rhee against what could be plausibly argued was a segment of his own people? In brief, was the United Nations intervention in Korea impelled by a desire to maintain in power the then government of the Republic of Korea? Was it, instead, based on the strategic need of the Western world to hold that portion of

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the Korean peninsula below the 38th parallel? Or was it not rather the need to maintain the integrity of the United Nations and the ancient rule of law which the new organization embodied?

There is a final and persuasive argument against the probability of formal conflict between two or more states. The lag of cultural development behind the rapid transformation of the world in the spheres of economics, politics, and social change has meant that just in the generation and period of history when society probably needs the emotional drive of nationalism least it has become most pronounced. Nations that have been granted their belated independence, partly as a result of the evident anachronism of excessive nationalism, are just the ones who feel required to indulge in fits of chauvinism. The actions of Indonesia regarding West New Guinea, the border raiding between Cambodia and South Vietnam, Ghana's attitude toward Togoland, Algeria's regarding the Sahara, all display it. An attack across a national boundary would arouse national fervor to resist the enemy, would tend to unite the population and hence protract the struggle which, if protracted, could lead to third-party intervention disadvantageous to the aggressor. In short, the direct way is no longer the easiest way to attain military objectives.

What the current mores of international conduct do permit is internal revolution or conflict as a means of applying force to the solution of political disputes. The Marxist doctrine of class struggle and its sequel the Leninist doctrine of international conflict between socialist and capitalist states have each had to be modulated in view of the events of economic and social history and of the

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development of nuclear weapons. There remains, however, the dogma of the desirability of the peasant and workers uniting in a victorious struggle against the landlords and the employers. To this stereotype is joined the much older liberal heritage from the French Revolution and earlier which sought liberty, equality and fraternity at the barricades against entrenched reactionary governments. This tradition is alive in Latin America and evokes sympathetic response in most countries with a revolutionary background, including the United States. This is the more true both in Moscow and in Western Europe where the existence of stable societies allows governments in that area to applaud revolutionary élan when displayed elsewhere with little apprehension of its occurring at home. There is also the anti-colonial tradition which in many parts of the world has called for internal rebellions against the alien government of the colonial overlord.

Not only is internal warfare socially permissible during the present-day period of history but also external aid to revolutionists is acceptable under international law and to a certain extent is even prescribed. The right of political asylum requires the Cambodian government to protect the young Vietnam aviator who took refuge there after bombing the Presidential Palace of President Diem. Presumably the government of North Vietnam is harboring the assassin of Colonel Lam, who had been a stalwart defender of the South Vietnamese Government among the peasantry. And from protecting the perpetrator, applauding the deed, to encouraging its repetition and providing ways

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and means and eventually direction and control are all short and easy though illegal steps. The very sanctity of international borders incites efforts to accomplish the same objectives by other means. At the same time it makes formal reprisal difficult for the embattled government struggling against a guerilla conflict supported and instigated from beyond the frontier.

There is a further advantage to the use of internal war and insurgency rather than formal conflict across international borders. In the latter case a victory requires either the defeat of the government under attack or at least a clear and demonstrable control over a significant portion of the embattled government's territory. To a certain extent the burden of proof is on the attacker. In the case of insurgency, however, the government attempting to put down the rising, must, if it is to be judged victorious in the eyes of the world opinion, do just that. The insurgency need not be successful and occupy the entire country; it need only maintain a condition of lack of law and order for a sufficiently long time for the world -- and particularly for interested foreign friends of the insurgents -- to begin to accord them the fruits of victory, namely public recognition. The duty of the government under attack is to restore order; the duty of the insurgency is much easier, namely, to prevent order from being restored. For the American revolutionists to gain their cause it was not necessary for them to occupy London; it was merely required that they prevent the British from maintaining their quiet occupation of substantial parts of the thirteen colonies. Batista of Cuba was never seriously challenged in his hold on Havana; he lost the island because he could not wrest from Castro parts of the Sierra Madre wilderness.

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Conclusions: Regarding International Security:

From this survey of the expected pattern of international conflict derived from the position of mutual nuclear deterrence, certain conclusions have now been drawn:

(a) International conflict is likely to remain at a level below that known as the strategic or the all-out nuclear exchange. Tactical nuclear weapons may well be used and, of course, escalation is always a danger, particularly because of the mystique which surrounds a weapon of such awfulness. But because escalation is a danger it is so recognized and hence the danger is the less.

(b) The possibility of conflict as qualified above indreases the period of nuclear stability. Because it is unlikely to rise above the sub-strategic level, conflict can the more unapprehensively be indulged in. Because there is little for small nations to fear from nuclear weapons, in view of the unlikelihood that such weapons would be used against peripheral targets, small nations and little cliques in unstable nations have the less need to worry that the conflicts they initiate will escalate and engulf them in nuclear catastrophe. Other causes contributing to conflict include the sudden wrenches and strains put on elements of international society as a sequel to the precipitate and practically complete obliteration of the colonial era, the population explosion resulting from modern medical and hygienic techniques, the revolution of rising expectations, the traumatic shock of two devastating world wars, the shift in world political domination from European to non-European powers with consequent uncertainties in political concepts and goals, and the spread of

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knowledge through new educational techniques and media of mass communication which evoke unfulfillable wants and unassuageable desires

(c) Such conflict is likely to concentrate upon areas of both unstable and uncommitted states. States that are allied to the United States or the Soviet Union are presumably protected by the nuclear weapon. States which are essentially stable are by definition comparatively immune to internal overthrow. Switzerland and Sweden form two examples. They would be likely to cause their external assailants so much trouble before they could be overwhelmed that it would doubtfully seem worth the effort and the risk of escalation. Unstable, uncommitted nations are most likely scenes of conflict. They presumably are not a significant addition to or diminution from the prestige and influence of the major nuclear powers, regardless of whether they should become committed to one or the other of these powers. Their alliance is not essential to the basic objectives of either side in the Cold War -- it being postulated that all uncommitted states do not go to one or the other of the two camps and thus make hostilities between the two camps virtually inevitable.

(d) The form of conflict ensuing in such circumstances is more likely to be internal rather than international warfare. By internal is meant struggle nominally within the borders of a country and engaged in, ostensibly, by nationals of the state against the established regime. This kind of conflict can include coup d'etat, assassination, insurgency, guerilla warfare, mass revolution. As they approach success, such movements would interdict an area of the country, generally remote and logistically difficult of access by the established governmental

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authorities, thus leading by degrees to proclamation of a rebel provisional government and a metamorphosis into civil war with consequent international developments. Obviously, the quicker the struggle, the more nearly it resembles a coup d'etat in the capital of the country, the less chance there would be for international friends of the regime in power to render assistance, the less chance there would be of international broadening of the conflict and of escalation. The obverse is equally true: the more protracted the war, the greater the chance of its spreading or of the direction of the outcome of the struggle becoming an object for consideration and perhaps negotiation by the major nuclear powers.

These appear to be the basic characteristics of present and future conflict under the umbrella of nuclear deterrence. Now I desire to superimpose this pattern on the current tensions in Southeast Asia and deduce from the overlay the appropriate role in this area to be played by the United States.

The Pattern of Conflict in Southeast Asia.

The struggle now being waged in South Vietnam by the Viet Cong and in Laos by the Pathet Lao, aided by elements of the Viet-Minh fit into the current pattern of sub-nuclear conflict. No country in Southeast Asia has the formal protection of a major nuclear power. It is worth noting that the salient passages of the South East Asia Collective Defence Treaty, 1955, read as follows:

Article IV: "Each party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the Treaty area against any of the Parties, or against any State ~~on territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may~~

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hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes ...

2. "If in the opinion of any of the Parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any Party in the Treaty area or of any other State or territory to which the provisions of Paragraph 1 of this article from time to time apply is threatened in any way other than by armed attack or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defense."

The Protocol to the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty reads in part:

"The Parties to the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty unanimously designate for the purposes of Article IV (see above) of the Treaty the States of Cambodia and Laos and the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam."

Clearly Article IV of the SEATO treaty requires "agreement" on the part of the members to meet any threat short of blatant "aggression by means of armed attack." East Asia since the disaster of Dien Bien Phu makes it apparent that French forces are most unlikely to be dragged again into that area so disastrous to French arms and military reputation. The policy of Britain appears to be essentially that of disengagement, both of itself and if possible of its allies, from this

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part of the world. Neither France nor Britain has in fact any significant armed forces to deploy in this part of the world. SEATO, therefore, was never likely to be a serious obstacle to Communist sub-nuclear conflict in Southeast Asia.

The tension in Southeast Asia has failed so far to bring about a direct confrontation between military units of nuclear powers. Conflict is more likely to occur under stable nuclear conditions when it is fought at several removes from the basic sources of power. In Southeast Asia there has been no direct Soviet participation aside from certain amounts of Soviet materiel (transport planes) and possibly Soviet transport pilots. Furthermore, even Chinese Communist activities have been restricted to supplies and general guidance and, perhaps, sparse appearances of Chinese military or technical experts in North Vietnam and in the northern provinces of Laos adjacent to the Chinese border. There is still another shield between the identification of the activities of the Viet Cong in South Vietnam and of the Pathet Lao in Laos and either Moscow or Peiping. Ho Chi Minh is the middle-man. The Viet-Minh forces have supplied the Pathet Lao with most of its equipment not taken from the Royal Laotian Army units and have sent the equivalent of approximately fourteen battalions into Laos. These amount to the cutting edge of the rebel forces. In South Vietnam the Viet Cong gets its orders and some supplies from North Vietnam, the equipment moving either over the border or by sea or southward down Laos along the so-called Ho Chi Minh trails. Even more important, perhaps, is the assistance offered by North Vietnam as a safe haven, convalescent center and training and indoctrination

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headquarters. Nevertheless, direct and conspicuous connection between the Viet Cong in South Vietnam and the Pathet Lao in Laos on the one hand and Ho Chi Minh and North Vietnam on the other hand have been avoided. The Viet Cong are largely peasantry living in South Vietnam; neither in their indoctrination nor their propaganda is there indication that they are consciously working and fighting for North Vietnam. Indeed it would be unpopular if it were known that the Viet Cong were struggling on behalf of the Communist Ho Chi Minh, though it is, of course, he who is bound to be the beneficiary of a Viet Cong victory.

The United States forces are in South Vietnam to train and assist the military units of South Vietnam but not, presumably, to participate directly. In Laos there is only a small number of military advisers. In Thailand American forces are not engaged in anti-guerilla activity against the nascent Communist bands on the Thai side of the Mekong River. Nor are they in that country on the same semi-permanent basis which marks the presence of American troops in, for example, Germany and at other NATO bases.

Not merely are the states of Southeast Asia uncommitted -- apart from the SEATO bond -- on behalf of Thailand and apart from the SEATO protocol connection -- on behalf of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, but they are all of them unstable. Even Thailand, perhaps the sturdiest of the group, contains large minorities of Chinese, Laotians and Malaysians who could easily become disaffected in their allegiance to Bangkok in the event of Communist successes in South Vietnam, Laos, and Malaya. The lack of transport and communications, the strong racial differences between the mountain tribes and the valley peasantry and the fairly

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archaic cultural level which makes village community life more important than national loyalty to them, all combine to militate against national cohesion, and this tendency can easily be exacerbated by external stimulation.

There is a further reason why Southeast Asia is a theater of conflict. It contains the emergent Communist state of North Vietnam which in turn borders the stable Communist state of Mainland China; so there is inherent in the situation a safe haven or sanctuary for the preparation and support of violence. Although conditions of instability encouraging the use of force at the sub-nuclear level do not require the use of sanctuary or safe haven -- the terrorist activity in the Malayan Straits being an example -- success in such activities is nonetheless often enough linked to the existence of a protected source of supplies and the presence of a psychological assurance that the rebels are not alone. Mao Tse Tung established a base in Northwest China before undertaking the struggle to overthrow the Chinese Nationalist regime. The Greek rebels heavily utilized the friendly border with Yugoslavia in their revolt, and their movement collapsed shortly after Tito broke with the Kremlin and closed his frontier to them. The overthrows of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala and of the Nagy regime in Hungary were facilitated by the absence, in each instance, of a continuous sanctuary to serve as a source for supplies and encouragement. The Huks in the Philippine Islands suffered from the absence of a protected base, and although Castro in Cuba succeeded with only the Sierra Madres at his back, the permanence of his victory is seriously jeopardised by the exposed position of his regime.

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In Laos there are the northern provinces of Nam Tha and Phong Saly bordering Communist China. There is also the long eastern border with North Vietnam. Facing South Vietnam is North Vietnam; there is the sea approach and the ill-defined and indefensible border with Laos and Cambodia.

In summary, it seems clear that Southeast Asia displays the model situation: an area not essential to the national security or international prestige of the United States (or so the Kremlin's analysis may run) and unprotected by formal commitments on the part of a nuclear power. Furthermore, Southeast Asia is constituted by intrinsically unstable states adjacent to a protected sanctuary in turn buttressed by the bordering territory of Mainland China.

The Prologue to Present Day Vietnam.

By analyzing the characteristics of sub-nuclear strife and examining the principal geographic and political features of the area, I have been trying thus far to determine the nature and probable future evolution of the struggle in this Asian peninsula. This alone, however, is not enough. A state does not develop its foreign policy through logically manipulating principles and concepts only but also through reacting to the foreign policy positions advanced by its adversaries, allies and implicated third-party neutrals. Communist moves in this area have been much affected by words and deeds of first the French authorities and then, as the latter faded out of the picture, by those of the American successors. In this connection, the United States and the Soviet Union may be compared to two wrestlers locked in each other's arms who are occasionally aided or impeded or merely distracted by a surrounding group of lookers-on. The

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action of either combatant is, of course, based on his concepts and analysis of the struggle, but it must also be immediately responsive to the actions of his opponent. Communist moves in the area of Southeast Asia have been much affected by deeds and words first of the French, and later on of their reluctant successors, the Americans.

The succession had begun sometime before Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Conference of 1954 which in effect eliminated French influence in North Vietnam (the area north of the 17th parallel). The United States had been giving substantial financial support to the French war effort, amounting by 1954 to approximately one-third of the cost of the French operations. American ground support, however, was not included nor envisaged in United States policy for French Indo-China. General Matthew Ridgway stated in his memoirs that he was alarmed by the then belief in Washington that with respect to Indo-China "we could do things the cheap and easy way, by going into Indo-China with air and naval forces alone." He reported to President Eisenhower that American infantry would be needed on a scale similar to the investment in Korea. General Ridgway writes in his book that "it is my belief that the analysis which the Army made and presented to higher authority played a considerable, perhaps a decisive, part in persuading our government not to embark on that tragic adventure."¹

The alternative policy voiced by Secretary John Foster Dulles as early as May, 1952, was "to convince them (potential aggressors) in advance that if they commit aggression they will be subjected to retaliatory blows so costly that their aggression will not be a profitable operation.

It is a fact the Communist Chinese troops did not intervene or "volunteer" in Indo-China as they had done in Korea; it is also the fact,

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however, that the Viet-Minh forces which won the overwhelming victory at Dien Bien Phu in May, 1954, had been trained in China, outfitted by the Chinese, armed and supplied and advised by the Chinese and provided with Chinese artillery pieces which brought them the victory that forced France to yield North Vietnam at the 1954 conference.

What happened at this time in Indo-China is that (a) the Communists were undeterred by threats of massive, presumably nuclear, retaliation and continued to assist the Viet-Minh; (b) non-nuclear naval and air intervention by the United States would not have been adequate, according to the judgment of professional experts and, inevitably, President Eisenhower; (c) for various reasons including domestic political considerations and also the simple unavailability of the requisite land forces, the United States was not prepared to introduce army units into the Indo-China theatre in sufficient numbers to accomplish the desired result. In substance, the United States government then decided that North Vietnam was not worth the cost required to defend it.

The Communist victory in Indo-China exploded Secretary Dulles' belief some way out could be found between retreat in the face of Communist military challenge and a confrontation on the field of battle and the notion it lay in retaliatory air and naval-air power with or without the use of nuclear weapons. This was the principle political and diplomatic casualty in Indo-China in 1954.

This concept, based in part on a desire to reduce governmental expenditures, in part on a partisan treatment of the Korean War policy which the Republican Administration had criticized and in part on a deficient under-

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standing of the nature and character of nuclear warfare had the effect of disarming the United States in Southeast Asia.

Subsequent development of Soviet nuclear power has served to render obsolete political and military concepts which lacked validity from their inception.

The second set-back suffered by the United States in this theatre, aside from the loss to American prestige incurred by our practice of combining tall talk with midget action, was the indication given to the Communist forces that Indo-China -- and by extension Southeast Asia -- was peripheral to our basic world objectives.

By 1954, therefore, the United States had provided positive inducements to Moscow, Peiping and Hanoi to pursue a policy of aggrandisement in Southeast Asia. Although not a party to the Geneva Agreements of 1954 the United States had accepted a moral commitment not to oppose them by force. They included a provision looking toward unification of the country by a plebiscite in South Vietnam by 1956, a vote which Ho Chi Minh, a national hero on both sides of the 17th parallel because of his victory over the French, had good reason to expect to win. This vote has not been held, and meanwhile, the Communist label attached to Ho Chi Minh's name has weakened his hold on his countrymen, as have also the dire economic straits prevailing in North Vietnam and the dependent connection between the government at Hanoi and China, the traditional enemy of all Vietnamese.

It would appear in Communist parlance and from the Communist point of view that it was time to give a "nudge to history" if the goal of a Communist Indo-China, presumably unified under Hanoi, were to be realized in the near future. Starting in 1957 the Viet Cong began a campaign for

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rural domination through a mixture of terror, promises and indoctrination. The Viet Cong recruits came from disaffected South Vietnamese, from North Vietnamese introduced into South Vietnam in 1954 at the time of the great exodus from Communist control, and in part reinforced and directed by North Vietnam agents sent into South Vietnam subsequent to the partition. This struggle is still going on.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRUGGLE IN VIETNAM.

South Vietnam is important to the United States and to the non-Communist world almost wholly for psychological reasons. It is true that South Vietnam is a net exporter of rice, but its importance in this is decreasing since as the standard of living in the country has been rising in recent years more of the surplus was being consumed domestically and less was being sold abroad. In any event, the difficulty encountered by the Department of Agriculture in disposing of the Louisiana rice crop would dampen enthusiasm for a still larger surplus. In general economic terms the country, with little industry, would require massive doses of economic aid for years to come.

Political reasons for maintaining support of South Vietnam and affording it protection from Communist threats are not immediately persuasive. The United States has entered the arena in South Vietnam very much on the defensive. It comes tarred to some extent by the defeat of the French by Ho Chi Minh aided by the Mainland Chinese. Though American troops had not been employed in the area at that time, any more than they were in Cuba in 1961, the stigma of defeat is nonetheless hard to evade. A sizeable amount of American money, amounting to more than a billion dollars, had gone to finance the war in its final months, a sum estimated to be about

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10 percent of the total French military expenditures in Indo-China after 1946. A more unfortunate heritage than loss of money is the acquisition of a reputation for instability of purpose in Southeast Asia. Finally there are the political disadvantages inherent in the fact that America is rich, white and remote. It might be contended that for political reasons this would be the wrong war at the wrong time in the wrong place, what General Ridgway might have called a "tragic adventure." A persuasive argument has been made, however, in favor of American intervention on behalf of South Vietnam: President Eisenhower put it as "the domino effect" of the loss of the area on our position elsewhere in the region. The reasoning is that Communist domination of all Vietnam would lead inevitably to the loss of all former French Indo-China and eventually Thailand and the rest of the peninsula, including Malaya and Indonesia. An unfriendly government in Djakarta would involve the possibility of serious consequences for the United States in that part of the world if such a regime should have the means to impede the access of the American navy from the Pacific into the Indian Ocean and so alter the power position in South Asia. The present Indonesian government, headed by the mercurial President Soekarno, is officially neutral in the struggle for South Vietnam and accepts Consular representatives from both Hanoi and Saigon. The Indonesian press is generally slanting its opinion in favor of Hanoi. Nevertheless, informed and influential officials of the Indonesian government have stated firmly, though of course privately, that Indonesia would be impelled to "go Communist five minutes after South Vietnam did." Quite clearly, neither Soekarno nor most of the opinion-makers in Indonesia want to come under Communist domination.

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It is not, however, entirely satisfying to be told that the United States must fight in South Vietnam in order to save Indonesia from internal Communism. For the instability of the regime in Indonesia, the equipoise of the political pressures there, the inadequacy of the economic sub-structure, the inherent opposition to Communist centralization and fear of China, all suggest that a Communist regime in Indonesia would be as unstable as the current regime. The need for free ocean communications would provide the incentive for an American "nudge to history" so as to encourage the installation of a neutrally inclined government; and the geographic fact that Indonesia is an island plus the complementary fact that the American Navy is supreme on the high seas indicate that the means for the "nudge" are also available.

On the contrary, our support for the government of South Vietnam essentially ministers to our own psychological need. A defeat there either through default of our efforts or by superior enemy force would introduce a note of emotional tension into the formulation of American foreign policy and would require a prompt counter-victory as compensation. For example, there would be strong pressure to launch an attack against mainland China which would force the Soviet Union either to honor its military agreement with Communist China or publicly to repudiate it. Such a counter-blow, perhaps in some theatre of the world struggle more sensitive than South Vietnam, would greatly increase international tensions and would bring much closer the possibility of a major conflict.

In the nuclear age it is important to maintain not merely one's own common sense and grasp on realism but also to encourage those of the nuclear-capable adversary because of the latter's unparalleled ability to

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inflict damage on others as well as himself when placed under intolerable psychological pressure. In the case of South Vietnam I think the Soviet government should discern its interests would not be well served by winning a diplomatic victory at so great a cost to more important objectives. The objectives of Peiping, indeed of Hanoi, may well be very different. Who calls the Communist tune in Southeast Asia? The answer to this question is particularly important. The Chinese provided most of the foreign training for the Viet-Minh, but in Laos the airlift is conducted with Soviet planes (although the pilots may be Chinese). The tactics used by the Viet Cong are reminiscent of those outlined in Mao Tse Tung's book concerning protracted conflict, but General Giap, generally credited with the military strategy of the war against the French, nowhere in his book gives credit to Mao. It is known that Ho Chi Minh was Moscow-trained, and it is clear that the Vietnamese regard the Mainland Chinese with dislike and fear for reasons that go back over 2,000 years. At the meeting of the Communist Parties in Moscow in November, 1961, the Communist Party of North Vietnam sided neither with the Soviets nor the Mainland Chinese in the dispute on the Albanian issue.

The Chinese give the impression of being in more of a hurry in Southeast Asia than the Russians; they seem more disposed to take risks for the attainment of their aims. The nuance of difference between their two methods of implementing their respective policies may hint at rather different objectives. The Chinese in all likelihood seek to oust the Americans from the Asian mainland; the Russians may prefer engineering a "slow-boil" embroilment of the Americans in Asia so as to distract our attention from Europe and strain our relations with our major European

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allies, thus hopefully the Russians may be scheming to put the Chinese into their debt for military supplies and diplomatic support. This would serve the Russia-profitting purpose of delaying Chinese industrial development, extending the period of Chinese dependence on the USSR and postponing the day when China could pursue an independent foreign policy with its gaze directed menacingly toward the north and the empty regions beyond the Sino-Soviet border.

The signal from Moscow to Peiping with regard to adventures in Southeast Asia can possibly be described as green, with flashing yellow: "proceed, but with caution".

The United States may be eased out of Southeast Asia in general and South Vietnam in particular, eased out slowly over a long period of time; it cannot be forced out quickly, dramatically. For whereas the United States government could tolerate, though with some pain, the humiliation of our French ally at Dien Bien Phu, it could not be equally patient under a defeat of its own forces in not dissimilar circumstances in the same part of the world.

The significance of the current struggle in South Vietnam, therefore, is that it will be slow, protracted, fought by military weapons to only a limited extent. Much more important will be the economic, political, social and psychological levers, for the essence of the conflict will be the struggle for men's minds. Above all the arbiter of the conflict will be the South Vietnam peasantry. The Communist forces cannot dislodge the American forces or cause us to abandon South Vietnam, but the South Vietnam peasant could accomplish that if he wishes, and without weapons.

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The Viet Cong could employ their old-model weapons and their paucity of numbers -- characteristics which are not necessarily desirable even in guerilla warfare -- to root out the American military advisers and destroy the Vietnamese soldiery, but such tactical victories would do the Viet Cong harm by causing the government of South Vietnam to redouble its efforts. Moreover, the Americans might react by increasing the dimensions of their contribution where the role of "adviser" already had been growing paper-thin. Instead, the objective of the Communists would logically be to disaffect the loyalty of the peasantry and suborn them to the Viet Cong cause. For this purpose propagandists would be needed more than guerillas and indoctrination would be more important than weapons. The strategic objective for the Communists was not to wrest day-time control of the rice fields and the hamlets from the South Vietnamese government but to make sure that night-time control was given voluntarily to the Viet Cong by the peasantry. Then, in time, the peasants would grow restive serving two masters, paying double taxes and rendering military corvées to two organizations, and would opt for the side not with the strongest battalions but with the greater likelihood of victory, the side with the best social program and the most convincing promises of reward. And the side with the greater patience.

This then is the strategy underlying the conflict in South Vietnam and dictating the tactics to be used. What these tactics are deserves further investigation.

SOUTH VIETNAM, MILITARY TACTICS

"When the enemy advances we retreat;
When he rests we harass him;
When he is weary we attack him;
When he retreats we pursue him."

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This passage from Volume IV of the Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung may be taken as one part of Viet Cong tactics. To it should be added the remark of General Giap: "A soldier's work as a political agent is at least as important as his work as a soldier."

There are approximately 26,000 Viet Cong guerillas, divided into part-time or night-time soldiers, supply units and the elite, fully-trained guerilla and fighting men. They are inflicting from 200 to 6,000 casualties a month. The number of guerillas is entirely elastic because more can be recruited in South Vietnam to replace those killed, captured, or occasionally, defecting. The leadership comes in part from North Vietnam and in part rises from the ranks of the Viet Cong. The guerillas are organized into small groups, originally numbering 10 to 20, now increased to from 200 to 400, somewhat depending on the food supplies available and degree of support from the local peasantry. The weapons are mainly home-made or armes captured from the sometime French adversaries or from the South Vietnamese. Some machine guns and heavier caliber weapons have been brought south from the Viet-Minh. The Viet Cong has two-way radios and some fairly elementary communications equipment. The clothing of the guerilla, like the lumps of rice carried in a bag around the neck, entail the simplest form of quartermaster support, comprising the black cotton blouse and short trousers of the peasants and rubber sneakers or sandals. Many go barefoot.

It must not be thought that the guerillas are satisfied with their role of jungle partisans; on the contrary, they seek to improve their weapons and combat efficiency and to operate in larger units as the

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struggle continues. At Dien Bien Phu in 1954 the Viet-Minh ended the war against the French by fighting in regular divisions under central leadership. The Viet Cong has the same ambition. But the Viet Cong does not wait until it is powerful before raising the defiant banner of insurgency; on the contrary, it raises the standard of rebellion in order to make itself powerful. Its first target is the isolated and small hamlets of the peasants. Small bands of Viet Cong appear in these villages and as they number a half-dozen or so they can hardly be resisted by the unarmed, unprepared heads of families of the hamlet. The newcomers immediately display the advantages of discipline, unity, singleness of purpose and political dedication. The group may "try" some peasant who is known to support the South Vietnam regime; the victim may be just warned or perhaps punished. The guerillas collect some food, arrange to have continuing supplies provided them in the future, organize an intelligence-collection apparatus, demonstrate the incapability of the government to protect the hamlet during night-time and, then, disappear. There may be periodic re-visits to this hamlet, either to mete out punishment to back-sliders, to indoctrinate and propagandize, to recruit guerillas and part-time helpers and to impose and collect taxes. In the words of Mao Tse Tung, the people (peasantry) are to the guerillas as the water is to the fish. Also according to Mao Tse-tung the conduct of the guerillas toward the peasantry is guided by these precepts:

- a) Talk to the people politely.
- b) Observe fair dealing in all business transactions.
- c) Return everything borrowed from the people.

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- d) Pay for anything damaged.
- e) Do not beat or scold the people.
- f) Do not damage crops.
- g) Do not molest the women.
- h) Do not ill-treat prisoners-of-war.

These rules were sometimes ignored; for example, hundreds of the 7,000 prisoners taken at Dien Bien Phu were killed during the 500 mile death-march to Vietnamese prison camps -- heavier losses than during any single battle of the whole Indo-China war. This seems to have been a policy decision, perhaps intended to influence French actions at the Geneva Conference, rather than wanton cruelty or normal practice. There are few cases of mass murder practised against the South Vietnamese peasantry by the Viet Cong, presumably for the simple reason that such actions are self-defeating, the object being to win over the peasantry from its allegiance to the government of Ngo Dienh Diem.

In brief, the tactics employed by the Viet Cong run as follows:

1. Operate at first at night only and against the small hamlets only.
2. At the beginning strike only at dispersed, isolated enemy troops, and only later at strong enemy concentrations.
3. The major objective is to get weapons and recruits, to annihilate the enemy's fighting strength, not to hold cities or territories.
4. In battle one is to concentrate absolutely superior forces. Fight no unprepared engagement; fight no engagement where there is no assurance of victory

In point of fact these precepts, though representative of the essential elements of the Viet Cong tactics, derive directly from the

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teaching of Mao Tse-tung. Other instructions for guerillas which might be considered accurate descriptions of the Viet Cong in action include the writings of Che Guevara of Cuba. They, too, show the Communist pattern and what has become standard guerilla practice in so-called wars of liberation fought in rural and emerging countries. Guevara in a condensed version of his La Guerra de Guerrillas published by the United States Army has recorded certain observations which are reflected faithfully in Viet Cong tactics.

1. Guerillas should be an elite, e.g., the rank should convey status and provide incentive. They are separated from part-time helpers and human beasts of burden. (In this connection G. K. Tanham in his Communist Revolutionary Warfare, 1961, has noted that among the Viet-Minh prisoners captured by the French 48 percent were "petty officials", e.g., frustrated, semi-educated, under-employed, racially conscious, anti-French clerks and bureaucrats, although these categories aggregated in all only a small percentage of the total Vietnam population, whereas only 46 percent of the captives came from the peasantry and from the laboring groups in Hanoi and other large cities, although this constituted the overwhelming majority of the adult male population.)

2. It is not necessary to wait until Marxist conditions are ripe; economic break-downs do not create guerillas, guerillas create economic break-downs. (Hence improvement in the economic conditions of life are of no permanent value in anti-guerilla operations unless they go hand-in-hand with improved security against guerillas.)

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3. There must never be a lost skirmish or a defeat because the "aura of victory" must be maintained; the guerilla must maintain the ability to engage and disengage at will. This provides the compensation for lack of planes, tanks and heavy guns which in any case are often immobile in adverse terrain. According to Guevara aerial high explosive and napalm are more a nuisance than a real impediment to guerillas, if they keep their operations in the forests and mountains instead of in the cities. In this respect guerilla warfare includes a powerful ingredient of psychological warfare; it must give the impression of constant attack, of surrounding the enemy, of dominating the environment and mastery of the terrain. Guevara states that "one must avoid loss of faith in the outcome of the struggle".

4. The guerilla should obtain his arms and supplies mostly from the enemy. This provides a powerful inducement for aggressiveness, one which the defender lacks.

5. The motivations of the guerillas are absolute necessities. There must be something to die for. Guevara says that for peasants it "would be the right to have a piece of land for himself". For the workers it would be "adequate wage and social justice." For the students and semi-intellectuals (the most important element of the Viet Cong) it should be abstract ideals like freedom, justice, opportunity. (Among the Viet Cong the additional motives of anti-imperialism and racial equality play an important role.)

6. Guevara emphasized that for guerillas sabotage is an invaluable weapon, creating the psychological illusion of surprise, ubiquity and invulnerability, quite aside from the material damage (which is

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of secondary importance). But, to quote Guevara: "Sabotage has nothing to do with terrorism We sincerely believe terrorism is a negative weapon which in no way produces the desired results. . . It can turn people against a revolutionary movement Assassination is permissible only in certain carefully chosen circumstances."

7. In conclusion Guevara emphasizes the same thought expressed independently by General Giap: guerilla activities and sabotage are not techniques possessing an intrinsic merit. They are means to progress towards conventional warfare. The first requirement for this progression is a secure base. If one is provided by a neighboring friendly power recognized as a safe haven, so much the better. Mao Tse-Tung was not so favored and he observed that "guerilla warfare could not be maintained for long without base areas which are indeed its rear." ¹.

Guevara writes about the need "to ensure indoctrination of the base areas." The Viet Cong seems to be seeking to establish a safe area in the Northwest corner of South Vietnam, one which cannot readily be attacked by the government's forces and also which can be made the seat of a provisional rebel government.

This in broad outlines is the shape of the Communist enemy and conveys the major tactics which it employs now in South Vietnam and which it is likely to use elsewhere in Southeast Asia and indeed elsewhere in the world as conditions permit.

In South Vietnam it is apparent the challenge must be met, and met on the battlefield of the Communists' choosing, regardless whether it may appear to be the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time.

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The battlefield chosen is, the mind of the South Vietnam peasant.

The tactics to be employed include,

(a) Protection for the peasantry by the use of the fortified hamlet;

(b) Hope and incentives supplied by economic reforms and improvements;

(c) The offensive to be wrested from the Viet Cong by the organization and deployment of Ranger units.

1. FORTIFIED HAMLET

Although considerably altered by experts from the Pentagon and the United States Army, the basic model of the fortified hamlet appears to have originated with the British anti-guerilla veteran, R. G. K. Thompson, who was associated with the Malayan government for many years during the struggle against Chinese terrorists in the Federated Malay States. A diagram can explain it best.

The principal defense features of the fortified hamlet are:

- (a) the protection of the peasants by the erection of the moat or wall,
- (b) the barbed wire barricades,
- (c) the clear surrounding fields for observation and fire,
- (d) the small weapons arsenal,
- (e) the radio communications to summon mobile cadres from nearby,
- (f) the stockade or fort with watch-tower and the helicopter landing pad.

The principal incentive features for the inhabitants are as follows:

- (a) peasants moving into these hamlets from isolated and vulnerable

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dwellings will have better living conditions than hitherto;

(b) There will be a school, a temple, a well, a food storage bin, a recreation and community center including, who knows, a USIS cinema projector;

(c) A truck or two will be provided to bring the peasants' rice to market where it will fetch a better price and be kept out of the hands of the Viet Cong and whence on the return trip some consumer goods can be delivered to the hamlet.

Active protection of the hamlets and villages consists of three elements: the self-defense corps made up of semi-trained peasants who stay in the hamlets; the mobile civil guards, also called the force de frappe from their French predecessors, who can be mustered to assist against a surprise guerilla attack and who, at least in theory, should be available within an hour or two wherever needed; and, in addition to the professional army, a series of Ranger units who go out into the jungles, hills, and swamplands to fight guerillas with their own weapons and techniques.

In order to clear the battlefield a strict curfew is established and people moving after dark beyond the village fences are considered guerillas and fair targets. Certain swamps and areas are identified as "out of bounds" where those detected are shot at sight. Identification cards are planned for hamlet personnel who otherwise are indistinguishable from guerillas. On a few occasions where hamlets are so isolated that they cannot be protected, arrangements are being or should be made to move the inhabitants physically to new and more

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defensible locations. This might be the case for 1,000 of the estimated 16,000 hamlets and villages in South Vietnam.

The theory behind these tactics is to sever the connection between the guerillas and the people. As Mao Tse Tung put it, "the guerillas are like fish and the people are the water in which the fish swim. If the temperature of the water is right the fish will thrive and multiply." If the guerillas can maintain only diminished access to the peasants they have diminished food, clothes, supplies, repose, assistance, recruits and intelligence. By losing contact they lose opportunities to propagandize and indoctrinate and display the "aura of approaching victory." They will be compelled to attack the villages rather than merely to exploit them. The attacks will come not as a result of careful planning leading to assured success but will be stimulated by desperation. The attacks themselves will breach the rapport between peasants and guerilla and when repulsed may serve as evidence to the peasant that the bird of success is not perching on the shoulder of the Viet Cong.

Meanwhile, it is essential that the application of force by the counter-insurgency units be discriminating so as to accomplish with precision the operation of separating guerillas from the people. Blind shooting-up of villages and arbitrary punishing of peasants on the assumption they are guerillas or guerilla-sympathisers would make the task more difficult. Captured guerillas should be confined, segregated, and removed from guerilla-infested areas to secure camps and villages but should not be punished. Instead they should be reformed, and this cannot be done by the applying whips and scorpions.

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Blind indiscriminate air attacks on random targets do more harm than good. If peasants are to be lumped with guerillas and treated as though they were criminals they will soon develop a sense of identification and a common loyalty with them. It was disturbing to read in the daily press on May 19, 1962 that South Vietnam government planes bombed "a secret Communist guerilla base near the Laotian border," dropping 100 tons of bombs and strafing the base headquarters of the Viet Cong. According to the Vietnam press agency 160 houses were destroyed, 30 were damaged and military and food depots were set ablaze. The probability is that the reports of damage were exaggerated, but even so to the inhabitants of this area the bombing attack can hardly appear to be firm and generous protection by their own government. Instead they may learn first from helter-skelter attacks that air raids are not very effective in the jungles and mountains and that with suitable precautions one need not fear them. Secondly, they may develop a feeling of disdain for and disaffection from a government that attempts to destroy its own citizens without making sure they in fact are guilty of treason or rebellion. Admittedly this northwest corner of South Vietnam is not very accessible, and the air attack is to that extent a confession of weakness suggesting that the Viet Cong have succeeded in establishing a protected base in South Vietnam which cannot be penetrated by Vietnamese infantry.

Vigilance is needed. It was observed in one village that a peasant who left the stockade each morning with a pair of rubber boots returned home in the evening bare-foot. A Ranger patrol followed him one day and ambushed the guerillas' trysting place, mowing down the guerillas and the rubber-booted peasant.

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Also the Department of Dirty Tricks. One peasant in a hamlet was suspected of giving information to the guerillas concerning whereabouts of Ranger units. Nothing could be proved for certain, but one day he was summoned to the local hut that passed as hamlet police headquarters and required to stay there several hours. There was a routine interrogation; nothing was learned. On departure the local police chief went with him to the door of the hut, thanked him warmly and ostentatiously gave him a sizeable sum of money. Two days later the peasant was found with his throat cut by guerillas who believed their informant had accepted a police bribe.

One of the more successful modern techniques is the use of the helicopter to provide mobility. The helicopter is a powerful psychological weapon, a visible symbol to the peasant that he is not alone and that powerful friends are on his side. One such friend is the peasants' own government, because although the helicopter may be flown and controlled by Americans it is a Vietnamese military unit that boils out of the whirligig when it settles on the rice paddy. Nevertheless, the helicopter is a wasting psychological weapon, even though it remains a highly successful means of military transport. It does not, cannot, mean that the peasants' security problems are resolved, nor does it continue to strike terror in the heart of the guerilla and it is an omnipresent symbol of a foreign culture.

A constant requirement for successful tactics in counter-insurgency has been the simultaneous establishment of economic and social progress for the peasant along with an improvement in his

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physical security. The peasant's head must be kept on his shoulders, but he must also have something positive to think about. The curtailments in comfort required for physical security, namely, curfews, identification tags, night service with the para-military, the real dangers of attack and assassination, on occasion the bodily moving of huts and houses from an isolated village to a fortified hamlet entailing the abandonment of the family tombs and household gods, these deprivations must be balanced by positive advantages.

Civil action groups are expected to provide the means to make hamlets more prosperous economically and more progressive socially. Improvements, frequently costing very little, have great psychological value if they are punctually provided. If efforts at self-help are assisted by the central authorities they will be re-doubled. Many hamlets and villages need new or deeper wells; fish ponds should be built to enrich and vary the diet; electricity is generally lacking; so is adequate schooling on even the most rudimentary standard; there is a shortage of infirmaries and local hospitals; almost everywhere adequate fertilizer and farm implements are lacking; canals and irrigation schemes need to be built or repaired; trucks for transport are in demand; radios, reading materials, films are required. The prompt appearance of such items as these is no less important than helicopters and weapons. Equally important is the need to organize social incentives for self-help at the village level.

The successful policy of former President Magsaysay of the Philippine Islands against the Huks was epitomized by the clenched fist of force and simultaneously the open hand of help and reform.

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There may be some confusion about an order of priorities in the distribution of economic aid in South Vietnam. At present it would appear that only about 10 percent goes directly to the villages as a counter-subversion and counter-insurgency weapon. The rest is spent centrally on larger projects such as roads, schools in urban areas, hospitals, communications centers and power projects. Obviously some of this filters down to help the peasantry indirectly, but there seems to be lacking that one-two punch of inter-relationship between the military and civilian efforts on the front, which is the key to success in this conflict.

A major reason for the long-deferred economic hope for the rural population may be found in the structure of the government of South Vietnam and particularly in the personality of its president, Ngo Dinh Diem, and his immediate entourage.

SOUTH VIETNAM INTERNAL POLITICS.

A Catholic in a country largely non-Christian, an austere oligarch in a nation of small farmers and rice peasants, a mandarin thoroughly at home in the French language and culture who made his national reputation by being anti-French, President Diem is to all intents and purposes the government of South Vietnam. He is neither corrupt, stupid, dissolute, lazy, unpatriotic, nor cowardly. What he lacks is "charisma", that undefinable spark of popular magnetism so evident in such disparate leaders as Soekarno, Nehru, Franklin D. Roosevelt, men who can inspire enthusiastic mass loyalty and get men to marching in almost any direction. Diem is respected by many, particularly the non-urban and the non-intellectual; he



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attracts, however, few followers. He treats his countrymen rather like unruly schoolchildren and trusts them with very little responsibility. This is galling to the Vietnam bourgeoisie, particularly since such cafe-intellectuals are excluded from the perquisites of public office which in venal Saigon is a shattering blow in itself. Diem prefers to lecture his countrymen on their duties and on their sacrifices. There are not many rosy hues in the pictures he paints. Ho Chi Minh, though tarnished now by his Communist label, is more of a national hero because he led the fight against the French, whereas Diem opposed the French but did not take up arms. The faults he finds in his countrymen which render them, he thinks, incapable of self-rule are minor compared to the weaknesses he detects in the American character. He suspects our motives concerning Vietnam and himself; he has misgivings regarding our constancy of purpose; and he distrusts our political judgment. In the latter instance he has some justification. After being instrumental in placing him in power in South Vietnam in 1954, American advisers told Diem to go slow in offending the Nationalist Chinese government by requiring Chinese in South Vietnam to take out Vietnamese citizenship. He was also told to beware of a showdown with the powerful Vietnamese sects and their private armies, and he was encouraged to come to friendly arrangements with the French government, a prime source of economic assistance. Diem paid scant

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attention. Today the sects are stripped of power and Diem and his government are supreme, a great asset in the current struggle with the Viet Cong. He maintained a stern anti-French attitude. This gave him the respect of his country-men which he greatly needed. And today Chiang Kai-Shek, whose country-men were required to take out Vietnamese citizenship, is on good terms with Diem and relations between their two countries are close and friendly.

Diem has other reasons to regard the United States somewhat askance. During the November, 1960 army rebellion against him, Diem did not receive prompt and firm assurance of American assistance. Our expressions of support came after he had quelled the uprising.

Diem can be accused of nepotism on a truly formidable scale. The Nepotism, not Diem, is guilty of corruption; worse, it is inefficient. Diem refuses to follow chains of command and to delegate responsibility. On the other hand it was because he knew the colonels of regiments and was accustomed to giving them orders personally that he succeeded in circumventing the rebellious generals in 1960 who had surrounded his palace with their troops in an attempted coup d'état.

Diem insists on channeling aid through the central government with the result that its effect on the hamlets and villages is delayed and diluted. Efforts should be made to have the military units responsible for military cleansing of guerilla-infected areas deliver, simultaneously with their military equipment, the civil aid which needs to be as timely as weapons. Whether Diem would permit such simple and efficient procedures is doubtful. In truth such a

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policy would spread political power from the central government to subordinate units, which in time might make the authority of the central government, Diem himself, more vulnerable.

The opposition to Diem, much of it self-interested and partisan for selfish reasons, is prevalent in Saigon and the few urban centers. During the 1961 elections (which were partially rigged), whereas 75 percent of the entire electorate went to the polls of which 88 percent supported Diem, in Saigon itself only some 65 percent went to the polls of which only 75 percent voted for Diem. It is spear-headed by over-educated and under-employed clerks and thinkers whose expectations have been thwarted by the failure of the economy to leap ahead following the independence from the French in 1954. These people feel left out, as indeed they are. They speak a brand of liberal politics which they probably would not practise if they were part of the government apparatus. Most of them would probably abandon their professed loathing of what they call Diem's tyrannical rule if he offered them jobs. They appear to have little influence in the rural areas of the country, but they have considerable effect in damaging the reputation of Diem abroad, notably in the United Nations. This damaging effect will increase the longer the struggle with the Viet Cong remains unresolved, and the struggle will remain protracted and largely unsuccessful so long as Diem and his central government remain a bottle-neck between the application of power and persuasion on the one hand and the target on the other hand, which is the mind of the Vietnamese peasant.

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Two careful and precise political problems need to be weighted exactly, one by Diem and one by the American government. Diem should calculate to what extent he can broaden and moderate his regime by admitting a limited number of political dissenters without losing control of the administration. For example, one of his brothers is Ambassador to Great Britain and at the same time to four other countries and the father of his sister-in-law is accredited to the United States and several other governments. Some of these empty slots might be parcelled out to the milder of his critics; this might affect very favorably their attitude toward his administration. Admittedly, it would probably add to the expense. There are openings available for several dozen lectureships, professional chairs, travelling cultural projects which dissident intellectuals could fill with advantage to the public image of the Diem regime. Diem might also consider whether the Parliament has to be kept by the executive branch on such a tight leash, one which makes a mockery of the institution. At present anti-Communist political opponents of Diem have rebellion their only recourse, whereas by a judicious use of flexibility Parliament could become a means of letting off steam with discretion, to the ultimate benefit of the stability of the regime.

For its part the United States government must realize that in the long run Diem cannot be allowed to interfere with the successful outcome of the military and economic operations. At present, however, he is very probably indispensable, if only because he has been identified in the eyes of his countrymen and in the propaganda of Hanoi as the major enemy to Communism in South Vietnam. Furthermore, there is no nationally

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acceptable successor. A successor lacking national stature who was supported by the United States might well find himself severely handicapped by the stigma of being an American puppet. This would lower morale and sap the national spirit of sacrifice. Leaders rise, however, as well as fall. South Vietnamese army commanders are likely to win some battles and to become conspicuous on the national horizon in the stress of the conflict. Suitable ones can be helped into prominence by discreet American effort. With the passage of time, the indispensability of Diem may wane. All of which is well realized by the President, presumably, and provide additional reasons for him to insist on the centralization under his personal authority of the sinews of power and to view with some canny speculation the American training and assistance program provided elements of the South Vietnamese army.

The political problem posed by the intransigence and nepotism of President Diem and his unfortunate international reputation is more difficult to solve than the military problem. The United States has technical know-how of value in the latter case and some approach to a doctrine for counter-insurgency operations. But we have been less successful in our political judgments. A stable government in Saigon is a pre-requisite for successful anti-guerilla campaigns. According to those who know him, Diem believes that to route the flow of political decisions and powers so as to short-circuit his office is to render the regime unstable. He states further that to operate the military machine along a standard chain of command is to put power into the hands of generals of doubtful loyalty. How certain are the Americans that they understand the internal political developments in South

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Vietnam better than Diem? Even if he exaggerates his personal importance, if such a bigger-than-life self-portrait is found to be credible by the South Vietnamese it becomes for that reason alone a basic political factor. Washington may properly think it can win in South Vietnam without Diem, but suppose that belief is not shared by the rank-and-file in South Vietnam who refuse to support an American-imposed successor? Washington can certainly not win in South Vietnam without the Vietnam peasantry.

If it is prudent to let bad enough alone for the time being, to use persuasion and exhortation, Diem's critics can bear in mind that opportunities for improvement may present themselves in the future.

Even if the regime were efficient and dynamic, it is not likely that the conflict could be decided in Saigon or in South Vietnam alone because of the existence of a safe haven (North Vietnam) and South Vietnam's indefensible frontiers (Laotian and Cambodian). It is necessary, therefore, to look at South Vietnam as part of a region.

SOUTH VIETNAM, PART OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.

The insurgency of the Viet Cong, unlike that of the Huks in the Philippines but like that of General Markos of Northern Greece, is supported by a safe haven and by reasonably secure lines of communication. Access to North Vietnam by sea can be challenged successfully through naval power. Seepage of men and materials directly south across the border cannot be effectively stopped because of the terrain, though it can be held to minor dimensions by stationing conventional military divisions and alert, energetic patrol. Entry into South Vietnam from

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the west, from North Vietnam along the so-called Ho Chi Minh trails via Laos or via Laos and the northeast corner of Cambodia cannot be effectively halted in present circumstances. It is doubtful that significant numbers of men and materials have been sent to the Viet Cong so far, but the possibility exists and has been improved by Soviet airdrops at Tchepone and by Pathet Lao concentrations along the Eastern border of Southern Laos. Convalescent camps, re-supply areas and communication net-works have been spotted in this part of Laos and, to a lesser extent, in Cambodia -- in both places in defiance of the respective governments, of course.

United States policy seeking a neutral, unified Laos, headed by a coalition government probably renders more rather than less difficult the prospects for success of our policy in South Vietnam. It can hardly be expected that a neutral Laotian coalition government, when established, would be better able to resist Viet-Minh use of its territory for assisting the Viet Cong than either the anti-Communist Laotian regime of Prince Boun Oum or the popular, neutral and homogeneous Cambodian Government headed by Prince Sihanouk who strongly opposes Communist influence for his country. Of course, no government in Laos or Cambodia has effectively halted Communist forays none has had the means to control thousands of square miles of jungle-swamp bordering South Vietnam.

To the extent that counter-insurgency operations in South Vietnam do pose a barrier between the Viet Cong and the peasantry and hence weaken the former's influence and attack its morale, the umbilical cord that passes to the Viet Cong through Laos from the parent Viet-Minh will increase in importance and use.

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To the extent that the United States allows its efforts in South Vietnam to be frustrated by incursions from Laos it will delay the successful termination of the anti-Viet Cong campaign. To the extent that this delay is protracted and accepted it will call into question the firmness of the United States resolution to resist a Communist take-over in South Vietnam. Equally important, the longer it takes to end the Viet Cong menace the more weary grows the South Vietnam peasantry and the more apathetic their will to oppose the new order from the North. The peasantry wants peace and order above all and an opportunity to grow rice and to profit therefrom. Protracted disorder is chargeable as a fault of the legitimate government. Protracted disorder, save in areas fully under Viet Cong control, would become a major psychological weapon in the hands of the Communists.

In short, time in is not on the side of the South Vietnamese government, and the ability to prolong the duration of the insurgency remains in the hands of the Viet Cong so long as it is refreshed through access to the Ho Chi Minh trails across the border in the safe havens of Laos and of North Vietnam. The latter refuge may, indeed, become less important as a source of materiel if the Russians provide a satisfactory build-up by air supply to Tchepone, their chief Laotian base.

For reasons of psychology and of Communist logistics the linkage of the political destinies of Laos and South Vietnam becomes imperative. A look at Laos, therefore, is essential if one is to see South Vietnam in perspective.

It appears highly unlikely that the present uneasy political situation in Laos can long continue. Either the three princes will

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agree to a neutral coalition government, nudged in that direction by successive captures of towns and territories by the Pathet Lao and by American-induced national bankruptcy, or the country will decompose into various parts. Probably Laos should never have been established in the first place; certainly experience has shown that it is hardly a viable state. A really neutral coalition government may be theoretically desirable, but if achieved is it likely to be of long duration? Laos is not a buffer but a vacuum; from the Communist point of view it is not a state but a corridor into Southeast Asia; that may be their real goal, not the real estate comprising the corridor. One must assume, therefore, that the neutral Laotian government when formed will be forced to tolerate violations of its neutrality by infringements of the South Vietnam border. The concept of the safe haven will come sharply into question, not merely with regard to South Vietnam but also Cambodia and Thailand.

THE PROBLEM OF SAFE HAVEN

Post-war history has shown that insurgency as instigated by Communism or exploited by Communists as an alleged war of national liberation can be coped with only with difficulty where the area of conflict borders a Communist country. Means must be found to limit the usefulness of the safe haven.

Raids into North Vietnam to destroy installations of economic usefulness, but not cause wanton loss of life, would strike at sensitive Communist nerves, viz., the reduction of the already marginal standard of living of the Communist stronghold. It would not take the destruction of many bridges, canals, coal mines, power plants and

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BIOGRAPHY

M. Gordon Knox was born in Baltimore, Maryland, June 28, 1913, educated at Yale University, A. B. 1934, and Oxford University, B. Litt. 1938. At both universities he concentrated largely on history, economics and English literature.

His first jobs were in the field of journalism. They included summer work on the Cumberland (Maryland) Daily News. After graduation from Yale, he worked for News-Week in New York, doing foreign news reporting. After leaving Oxford, he worked in Paris and Warsaw for the London News-Chronicle and later in Baltimore and Washington for the Baltimore Sun.

In 1939, he took the examinations for the Foreign Service and was accepted as a Foreign Service Officer in May, 1940. He served first in Berlin until Pear Harbor and the German declaration of war against the United States. After being interned five months in Germany he, with other members of the United States Embassy, Berlin, was released at Lisbon in exchange for the release at the same time of the personnel of the German Embassy in Washington. He subsequently served at United States Missions in Stockholm, Moscow, Vienna and London.

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installations should be sabotaged and Pathet Lao military trucks blown up. (At present in Laos they are merely photographed by the anti-Communists.) The degree of damage done should correspond in magnitude to that caused by the Communists.

The stage would thus be set for what is likely to be the next act in what has become the Laotian-South Vietnam drama. An uneasy stalemate of mutual violence and reprisal would have been set up and the ball would be in the Communist court. The Communists might elect to up the stakes and to use elements of the well-trained Viet-Minh army to increase pressure on South Vietnam and possibly Cambodia from Laotian territory. They might also step up their infiltration and subversion across the Mekong River in Thailand. Such action would destroy even the appearance of neutrality by the Laotian regime and would invite the partition of Laos. Along the Thai-Laotian border Thai forces should move forward and occupy the province of Sayaboury and part of the province of Luang Prabang, making their frontier coterminous with the Mekong River. The Laotian population of these provinces might welcome a formal connection with the Laotian minority in Thailand and with the Thais themselves, whose language and culture touch the Laotian at many points. The competent jungle fighters, the Meo tribesmen, should be moved to these provinces. It might also be desirable to take and hold the cities of Luang Prabang and Vientiane since they command long reaches of the river, and beachheads east of the Mekong would be advantageous for counter-insurgency. They would also be useful as bargaining counters. Neither cities nor

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"Internationalization" should consist of

- (a) apprising the United Nations of the current situation;
- (b) establishing a series of regional pacts to cover military, psychological and economic programs for the area;
- (c) the creation of a regional, professional, counter-insurgency force supported and trained by the United States, to which American units would also be attached.

The essence of the problem in Southeast Asia is time for self-development and economic growth free from undue external interference from the Communists. The area is a vacuum, not a buffer counter-force, therefore, must be created by the United States since there is no one else to do it. Loss of this area to the Communist Bloc would be a psychological blow weakening the credibility of our world defence posture and making more likely the prospect that we would be required to use our military strength at a higher order of magnitude than counter-insurgency. The time allowed us to establish this counter-insurgency force and doctrine is comparatively short, because in the long run there is no place on the Asian mainland for the American soldier, or for any white man in a position of authority. In the short run the Southeast Asian eschews the forced labor camps and depressed living standards of Asian Communism, together with its monolithic social discipline, imposed austerity and aggressive foreign policy. His attraction to Soviet industrialization is no greater than to American, provided he believes he can learn to industrialize from us as quickly as from the Russians. Industrialization to the

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"Cambodia's refusal to commit itself to either side is in the interests of our friends in both blocs, who can only put an end to their disputes by accepting with a good grace not to meet in face-to-face conflict but to be separated by buffer states friendly to both."

Cambodian-South Vietnam relations are too strained to support any closer contact between the two countries. Furthermore, true neutrality and independence are advantages for American foreign policy which, perhaps too hopefully, looks forward to a world of nations with these propensities, whereas Marxism or international Communism cannot really tolerate over the long course, truly neutral and independent nations.

It may be objected that so vigorous a response to challenge might incite Communist China to intervene in the conflict even more than it does now. So it may, but Communist China will intervene in any situation it chooses, American action must not be paralyzed by that prospect if a resolution is to be found for the problem of Southeast Asia. Nor is it a solution of any of the analogous problems elsewhere in the world but would lead, instead, to a series of retreats until a world-wide war in the worst possible circumstances for the United States would become inevitable. As to the situations in Laos and South Vietnam, it will be observed that Northern Laos has already gone effectively in to the Communist camp and that the extreme northern tip bordering Mainland China has not been responsive for several years to directions emanating from Vientiane. The partition policy proposed as a fall-back position in Laos in fact merely recognizes what would be a fait accompli and attempts to salvage a small remnant of strategic value for defensive not offensive purposes.

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insurgency. The nations of the area are unstable. They are remote from the industrial power area of the Western world. They may be thought to be peripheral to the security requirements of the United States.

3. The inhabitants of Southeast Asia, on the whole have an anti-colonial tradition. From the Soviet point of view, Communist Chinese expansion in this area may be

- (a) less dangerous than in the direction of Siberia,
- (b) less likely to escalate than across the Taiwan Straits,
- (c) less politically objectionable than into Northern India;

and Russia may not be able or willing to expend the political influence to prevent Chinese expansion in all directions.

4. Facing the prospect of increased guerilla insurgency activity in Southeast Asia, the United States should adopt a policy of counter-insurgency involving paramilitary, economic and social, political and diplomatic measures. It should establish and train a multi-national anti-guerilla force composed of American units and elements of nations of the region. This force would operate under a single command along the model of the United Nations command in Korea.

5. If, having been achieved, the neutrality of a coalition-governed Laos is breached by the Communists, Laos should be partitioned, with Laotian forces supported by Thailand holding the province of Sayaboury west of the Mekong River, and with Laotian forces aided by Vietnam holding Southern Laos approximately along the 17th parallel. The Meo and Kha tribesmen

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national government, energetic and well-intentioned to the peasantry. Such an image is indispensable if there is to be maintained a proper flow of intelligence on which to plan counter-insurgency operations. These deficiencies, it must however be repeated, are only partial explanations of the break-down in public order, because any organized guerilla force protected by a neighboring safe haven can create insurgency conditions by applying energy with persistence. Nonetheless, the presence of American troops in Southeast Asia has its drawbacks and may make it desirable to "internationalize" the struggle in this area for independence and against Communism. In the short run the peasants of Southeast Asia who on the whole do not want to live under Communism will be concerned lest the United States lose interest in a peripheral area, and, therefore, will hedge their bets and submit to Communist rule in the night time. In the long run our military presence and the inevitably disturbing effect we have on national regimes and policies will create the psychologic danger that the United States may be succeeding to the French position in South Vietnam. This of course, lies at the heart of the Ho Chi Minh propaganda which refers to the government of Saigon as the "United States-Diem regime." For contradictory reasons, therefore, the United States' position in Southeast Asia is untenable for the future. It is untenable because the intellectuals and small elite group which run things in Southeast Asian countries do not believe that the United States will maintain an exposed position there indefinitely. Important elements in the government of Thailand feel this way; so do some of the dissident elements in Saigon who are confirmed in their opposition to Diem for

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play an important role, reflecting the opinion of the world community and of important nations in the world. Such sub-wars are generally peripheral to basic national interests of great powers and hence can be affected, perhaps deflected. For this reason there will be real advantage to a formal and continuing expression of psychological and moral support for the small nations of Southeast Asia. Such a pact unlike SEATO will not breed disillusion and bitterness, because it will have no pretensions to being more than what it is, a group of states interested in cultural and economic ties with nations of Southeast Asia and desirous that such states, in their effort to maintain their national identity, their welfare and political stability realize that they are not being ignored or forgotten.

Finally, a third grouping of States might form a joint assistance group for Southeast Asia. Such states would include the usual industrial Northern powers in contradistinction to the agrarian Southern powers among which Southeast Asia is so conspicuous a part. In addition to the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, there might also be included India and Japan. Unfortunately, neither Japan nor India seem ready to play role in Southeast Asia which would provide moral and psychological support for the embattled nations there. India, so far as this observer can judge from the vantage point of Southeast Asia rather than from Delhi itself, does not really see a permanent role for the United States in Asia. Japan seems determined to not take a position that can be construed as conspicuously anti-Chinese. With a sharply divided electorate at

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echo these sentiments. If later on, events were to require us to adopt a partition policy for Laos, our public record would show that this was not our preferred position. The governments of Thailand and South Vietnam should also independently of each other inform the United Nations that the economic welfare and political stability of their countries were being threatened by subversion and insurgency directed from abroad.

There may come a time in Southeast Asia when the United States would welcome some form of United Nations frontier patrol either on the order of the United Nations Emergency Force at the Gaza Strip or a more politically oriented body such as UNSCOB (United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans). Preliminary gestures to help to orient public opinion and to pave the way for future action without committing us at present are in order. In any event, it is better to go into a court, even a somewhat prejudiced and ineffective court, as a complainant than to be haled there as a defendant.

Of more practical value in implementation of the policy of broadening the consideration of the Southeast Asian problem is regionalization. This could be effective militarily, psychologically and economically, involving different groupings of countries. In the military sphere there is a great and urgent need in this region for intense and deep experience in the techniques and related skills that make up counter-insurgency. Every country on the peninsula is unstable and so are Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea and Nationalist China. The two so-called anchors of Free Asia, Japan and India, are not likely to hold firm if the wind should rise much beyond a summer

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patriotism. Instead there would be professional pride and regional identification. Communist leaders have no difficulty persuading the Viet-Minh to fight in Laos or South Vietnam, and shortly, presumably, in Thailand. There should be fewer national inhibitions on the part of the anti-Communists, for such inhibitions are anachronistic in the age of insurgency and sub-wars.

The advantages of this arrangement seem pertinent and striking.

(1) The presence of the United States in Southeast Asia would be partially masked by "internationalization" and "regionalization".

(2) Some of the inhibiting characteristics of national frontiers which deprive counter-insurgency forces of fluidity and scope and give advantages to the enemy, could be reduced.

(3) Technical skills required in counter-insurgency might be taught with consistency and depth according to a single (American) doctrine at a single training school, instead of being duplicated with inadequate facilities in several different countries.

(4) The essential thrust of the effort would hopefully knit together a peninsula where most of the problems are in fact regional.

The second form of regional internationalization, like a larger concentric circle around a single center, could include nations which feel a tie with Southeast Asia but have no direct interests there. This form would be essentially psychological. It would consist in part of the same states of Southeast Asia that form a para-military pact: South Vietnam, Thailand, South Laos (if a neutral unified Laos has broken down after its formation and if the country has been partitioned), the Philippine Islands, Korea, Malaya, and the United

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patriotism. Instead there would be professional pride and regional identification. Communist leaders have no difficulty persuading the Viet-Minh to fight in Laos or South Vietnam, and shortly, presumably, in Thailand. There should be fewer national inhibitions on the part of the anti-Communists, for such inhibitions are anachronistic in the age of insurgency and sub-wars.

The advantages of this arrangement seem pertinent and striking.

(1) The presence of the United States in Southeast Asia would be partially masked by "internationalization" and "regionalization".

(2) Some of the inhibiting characteristics of national frontiers which deprive counter-insurgency forces of fluidity and scope and give advantages to the enemy, could be reduced.

(3) Technical skills required in counter-insurgency might be taught with consistency and depth according to a single (American) doctrine at a single training school, instead of being duplicated with inadequate facilities in several different countries.

(4) The essential thrust of the effort would hopefully knit together a peninsula where most of the problems are in fact regional.

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echo these sentiments. If later on, events were to require us to adopt a partition policy for Laos, our public record would show that this was not our preferred position. The governments of Thailand and South Vietnam should also independently of each other inform the United Nations that the economic welfare and political stability of their countries were being threatened by subversion and insurgency directed from abroad.

There may come a time in Southeast Asia when the United States would welcome some form of United Nations frontier patrol either on the order of the United Nations Emergency Force at the Ghaza Strip or a more politically oriented body such as UNSCOB (United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans). Preliminary gestures to help to orient public opinion and to pave the way for future action without committing us at present are in order. In any event, it is better to go into a court, even a somewhat prejudiced and ineffective court, as a complainant than to be haled there as a defendant.

Of more practical value in implementation of the policy of broadening the consideration of the Southeast Asian problem is regionalization. This could be effective militarily, psychologically and economically, involving different groupings of countries. In the military sphere there is a great and urgent need in this region for intense and deep experience in the techniques and related skills that make up counter-insurgency. Every country on the peninsula is unstable and so are Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea and Nationalist China. The two so-called anchors of Free Asia, Japan and India, are not likely to hold firm if the wind should rise much beyond a summer

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play an important role, reflecting the opinion of the world community and of important nations in the world. Such sub-wars are generally peripheral to basic national interests of great powers and hence can be affected, perhaps deflected. For this reason there will be real advantage to a formal and continuing expression of psychological and moral support for the small nations of Southeast Asia. Such a pact unlike SEATO will not breed disillusion and bitterness, because it will have no pretensions to being more than what it is, a group of states interested in cultural and economic ties with nations of Southeast Asia and desirous that such states, in their effort to maintain their national identity, their welfare and political stability realize that they are not being ignored or forgotten.

Finally, a third grouping of States might form a joint assistance group for Southeast Asia. Such states would include the usual industrial Northern powers in contradistinction to the agrarian Southern powers among which Southeast Asia is so conspicuous a part. In addition to the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, there might also be included India and Japan. Unfortunately, neither Japan nor India seem ready to play role in Southeast Asia which would provide moral and psychological support for the embattled nations there. India, so far as this observer can judge from the vantage point of Southeast Asia rather than from Delhi itself, does not really see a permanent role for the United States in Asia. Japan seems determined to not take a position that can be construed as conspicuously anti-Chinese. With a sharply divided electorate at

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national government, energetic and well-intentioned to the peasantry. Such an image is indispensable if there is to be maintained a proper flow of intelligence on which to plan counter-insurgency operations. These deficiencies, it must however be repeated, are only partial explanations of the break-down in public order, because any organized guerilla force protected by a neighboring safe haven can create insurgency conditions by applying energy with persistence. Nonetheless, the presence of American troops in Southeast Asia has its drawbacks and may make it desirable to "internationalize" the struggle in this area for independence and against Communism. In the short run the peasants of Southeast Asia who on the whole do not want to live under Communism will be concerned lest the United States lose interest in a peripheral area, and, therefore, will hedge their bets and submit to Communist rule in the night time. In the long run our military presence and the inevitably disturbing effect we have on national regimes and policies will create the psychologic danger that the United States may be succeeding to the French position in South Vietnam. This, of course, lies at the heart of the Ho Chi Minh propaganda which refers to the government of Saigon as the "United States-Diem regime." For contradictory reasons, therefore, the United States' position in Southeast Asia is untenable for the future. It is untenable because the intellectuals and small elite group which run things in Southeast Asian countries do not believe that the United States will maintain an exposed position there indefinitely. Important elements in the government of Thailand feel this way; so do some of the dissident elements in Saigon who are confirmed in their opposition to Diem for

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insurgency. The nations of the area are unstable. They are remote from the industrial power area of the Western world. They may be thought to be peripheral to the security requirements of the United States.

3. The inhabitants of Southeast Asia, on the whole have an anti-colonial tradition. From the Soviet point of view, Communist Chinese expansion in this area may be

- (a) less dangerous than in the direction of Siberia,
- (b) less likely to escalate than across the Taiwan Straits,
- (c) less politically objectionable than into Northern India;

and Russia may not be able or willing to expend the political influence to prevent Chinese expansion in all directions.

4. Facing the prospect of increased guerilla insurgency activity in Southeast Asia, the United States should adopt a policy of counter-insurgency involving paramilitary, economic and social, political and diplomatic measures. It should establish and train a multi-national anti-guerilla force composed of American units and elements of nations of the region. This force would operate under a single command along the model of the United Nations command in Korea.

5. If, having been achieved, the neutrality of a coalition-governed Laos is breached by the Communists, Laos should be partitioned, with Laotian forces supported by Thailand holding the province of Sayaboury west of the Mekong River, and with Laotian forces aided by Vietnam holding Southern Laos approximately along the 17th parallel. The Meo and Kha tribesmen

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"Cambodia's refusal to commit itself to either side is in the interests of our friends in both blocs, who can only put an end to their disputes by accepting with a good grace not to meet in face-to-face conflict but to be separated by buffer states friendly to both."

Cambodian-South Vietnam relations are too strained to support any closer contact between the two countries. Furthermore, true neutrality and independence are advantages for American foreign policy which, perhaps too hopefully, looks forward to a world of nations with these propensities, whereas Marxism or international Communism cannot really tolerate over the long course, truly neutral and independent nations.

It may be objected that so vigorous a response to challenge might incite Communist China to intervene in the conflict even more than it does now. So it may, but Communist China will intervene in any situation it chooses, American action must not be paralyzed by that prospect if a resolution is to be found for the problem of Southeast Asia. Nor is it a solution of any of the analogous problems elsewhere in the world but would lead, instead, to a series of retreats until a world-wide war in the worst possible circumstances for the United States would become inevitable. As to the situations in Laos and South Vietnam, it will be observed that Northern Laos has already gone effectively in to the Communist camp and that the extreme northern tip bordering Mainland China has not been responsive for several years to directions emanating from Vientiane. The partition policy proposed as a fall-back position in Laos in fact merely recognizes what would be a fait accompli and attempts to salvage a small remnant of strategic value for defensive not offensive purposes.

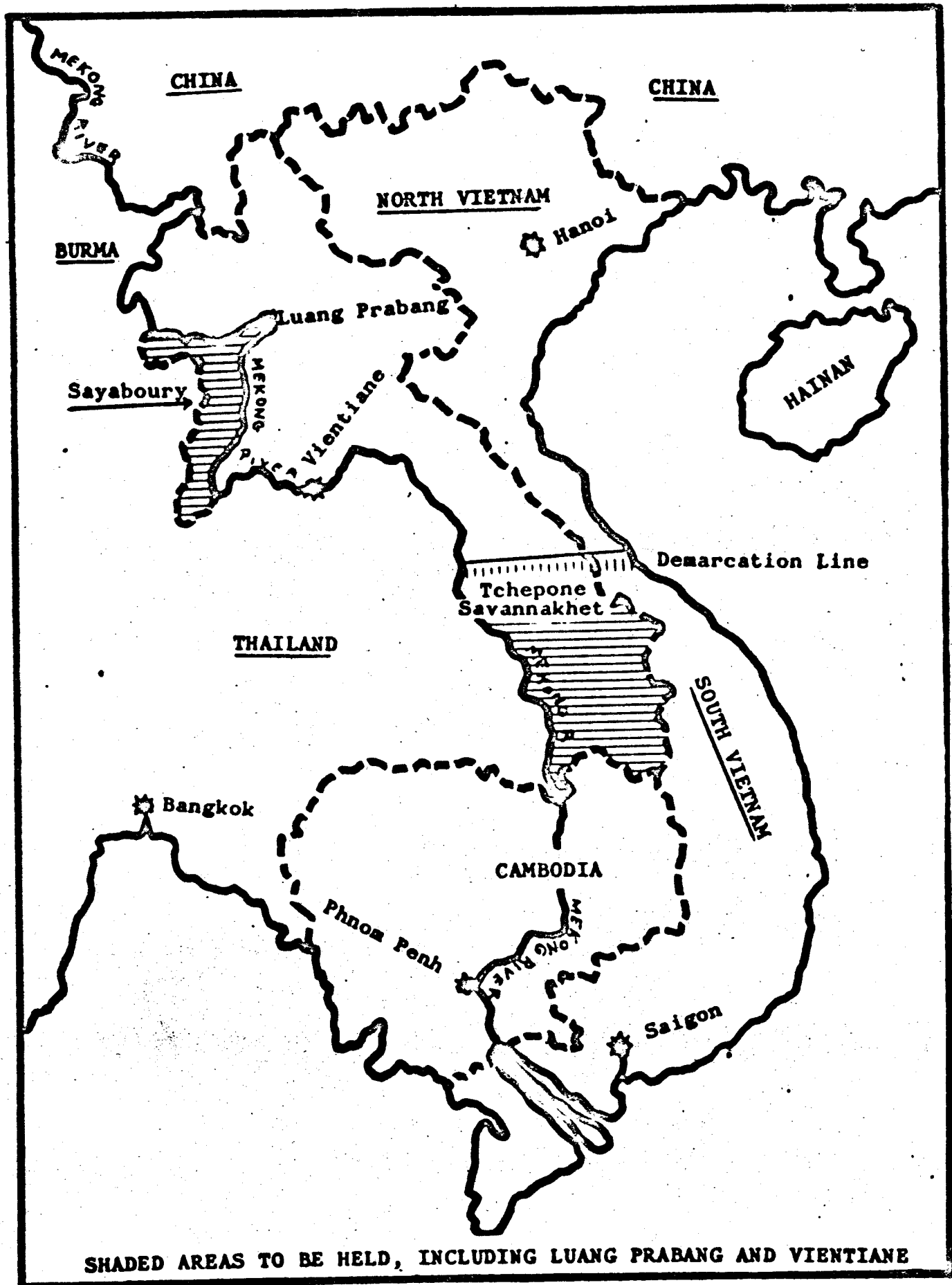
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"Internationalization" should consist of

- (a) apprising the United Nations of the current situation;
- (b) establishing a series of regional pacts to cover military, psychological and economic programs for the area;
- (c) the creation of a regional, professional, counter-insurgency force supported and trained by the United States, to which American units would also be attached.

The essence of the problem in Southeast Asia is time for self-development and economic growth free from undue external interference from the Communists. The area is a vacuum, not a buffer counter-force, therefore, must be created by the United States since there is no one else to do it. Loss of this area to the Communist Bloc would be a psychological blow weakening the credibility of our world defence posture and making more likely the prospect that we would be required to use our military strength at a higher order of magnitude than counter-insurgency. The time allowed us to establish this counter-insurgency force and doctrine is comparatively short, because in the long run there is no place on the Asian mainland for the American soldier, or for any white man in a position of authority. In the short run the Southeast Asian eschews the forced labor camps and depressed living standards of Asian Communism, together with its monolithic social discipline, imposed austerity and aggressive foreign policy. His attraction to Soviet industrialization is no greater than to American, provided he believes he can learn to industrialize from us as quickly as from the Russians. Industrialization to the



SHADED AREAS TO BE HELD, INCLUDING LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE

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influenced by Mainland China they will not be overwhelmed. We should have as our goal the development of a group of interlocking Finlands and Yugoslavias whom China would not need to crush because they are not obstacles to Chinese foreign policy objectives, and would not wish to crush because being impervious to infiltration and insurrection they cannot be crushed easily, whereas direct assault might lead to escalation and unacceptable risks.

This then is or should be the role of the United States in Southeast Asia. These are our limited objectives, and the employment of counter-insurgency techniques is the means to accomplish them.

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installations should be sabotaged and Pathet Lao military trucks blown up. (At present in Laos they are merely photographed by the anti-Communists.) The degree of damage done should correspond in magnitude to that caused by the Communists.

The stage would thus be set for what is likely to be the next act in what has become the Laotian-South Vietnam drama. An uneasy stalemate of mutual violence and reprisal would have been set up and the ball would be in the Communist court. The Communists might elect to up the stakes and to use elements of the well-trained Viet-Minh army to increase pressure on South Vietnam and possibly Cambodia from Laotian territory. They might also step up their infiltration and subversion across the Mekong River in Thailand. Such action would destroy even the appearance of neutrality by the Laotian regime and would invite the partition of Laos. Along the Thai-Laotian border Thai forces should move forward and occupy the province of Sayaboury and part of the province of Luang Prabang, making their frontier conterminous with the Mekong River. The Laotian population of these provinces might welcome a formal connection with the Laotian minority in Thailand and with the Thais themselves, whose language and culture touch the Laotian at many points. The competent jungle fighters, the Meo tribesmen, should be moved to these provinces. It might also be desirable to take and hold the cities of Luang Prabang and Vientiane since they command long reaches of the river, and beachheads east of the Mekong would be advantageous for counter-insurgency. They would also be useful as bargaining counters. Neither cities nor

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provocative but unsupported statements, such as that "Khrushchev reportedly was more interested in Cuba than in Laos because Cuba was more advanced economically and ready to move into a 'Socialist' phase "

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The manual teaches how conventional forces should defend against guerilla units, giving the enemy the advantages of the offensive and the new techniques. A faulty solution to a problem of growing importance.

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Joseph Buttinger, The Smaller Dragon, 1958.

A good one volume history of Indo-China but largely ignores events in the twentieth century. A good historical bibliography, particularly emphasizing French sources.

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Ellen J. Hammer, The Struggle for Indo-China Continues, 1955.

A cursory treatment in pamphlet form, bringing the story forward another year.

G. M. Kahin and others, Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia, 1959.

A useful text-book, now somewhat dated.

George K. Tanham, Communist Revolutionary Warfare, 1961.

An excellent study by a member of RAND Corporation, its material drawn almost entirely from the Viet-Minh

Bernard B. Fall, Street Without Joy, 1961.

Brilliant description of Indo-China at war, 1946-1954, with some penetrating remarks on psychological and guerilla aspects of warfare.

A. Vandenbosch and R. A. Butwell, Southeast Asia Among the World Powers, 1957.

The authors attempt a methodical treatment of the subject, but their discussion is necessarily cursory in view of the size of the subject and the slimness (329 pages) of the book.

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agree to a neutral coalition government, nudged in that direction by successive captures of towns and territories by the Pathet Lao and by American-induced national bankruptcy, or the country will decompose into various parts. Probably Laos should never have been established in the first place; certainly experience has shown that it is hardly a viable state. A really neutral coalition government may be theoretically desirable, but if achieved is it likely to be of long duration? Laos is not a buffer but a vacuum; from the Communist point of view it is not a state but a corridor into Southeast Asia; that may be their real goal, not the real estate comprising the corridor. One must assume, therefore, that the neutral Laotian government when formed will be forced to tolerate violations of its neutrality by infringements of the South Vietnam border. The concept of the safe haven will come sharply into question, not merely with regard to South Vietnam but also Cambodia and Thailand.

THE PROBLEM OF SAFE HAVEN

Post-war history has shown that insurgency as instigated by Communism or exploited by Communists as an alleged war of national liberation can be coped with only with difficulty where the area of conflict borders a Communist country. Means must be found to limit the usefulness of the safe haven.

Raids into North Vietnam to destroy installations of economic usefulness, but not cause wanton loss of life, would strike at sensitive Communist nerves, viz., the reduction of the already marginal standard of living of the Communist stronghold. It would not take the destruction of many bridges, canals, coal mines, power plants and

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BIOGRAPHY

M. Gordon Knox was born in Baltimore, Maryland, June 28, 1913, educated at Yale University, A. B. 1934, and Oxford University, B. Litt. 1938. At both universities he concentrated largely on history, economics and English literature.

His first jobs were in the field of journalism. They included summer work on the Cumberland (Maryland) Daily News. After graduation from Yale, he worked for News-Week in New York, doing foreign news reporting. After leaving Oxford, he worked in Paris and Warsaw for the London News-Chronicle and later in Baltimore and Washington for the Baltimore Sun.

In 1939, he took the examinations for the Foreign Service and was accepted as a Foreign Service Officer in May, 1940. He served first in Berlin until Pear Harbor and the German declaration of war against the United States. After being interned five months in Germany he, with other members of the United States Embassy, Berlin, was released at Lisbon in exchange for the release at the same time of the personnel of the German Embassy in Washington. He subsequently served at United States Missions in Stockholm, Moscow, Vienna and London.

Mr. Knox is currently Deputy Director of the Office of British and Northern European Affairs, Department of State, Washington.

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