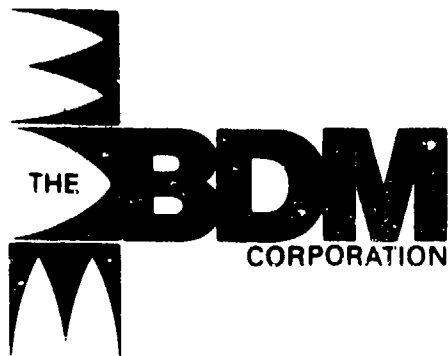


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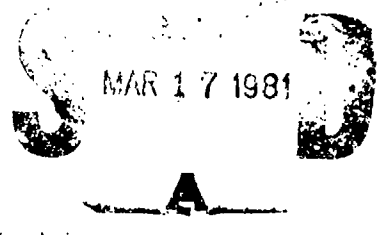
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*A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned
in Vietnam*

VOLUME III U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND VIETNAM, 1945-1975

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AWCI


9 March 1981

SUBJECT: Declassification of the BDM Study, "The Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam"

Defense Technical Information Center
ATTN: Ms. Betty Weatherholtz
Cameron Station
Alexandria, VA 22314

1. Your organization was on the distribution list for the BDM study, "The Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam." The study was assigned AD numbers B048632L through 641L.
2. In December 1980, the Army War College Security Office notified all recipients of the study by telephone that it contained classified information and should be secured.
3. BDM now has revised the appropriate pages of the study to delete all classified information and has conformed to all other requirements required by the clearance review.
4. A revised copy of the study which is unclassified and approved for public release is inclosed. DTIC Form 50's are inclosed for assignment of new AD numbers.

Incls
as


ANDREW C. REMSON, JR.
Colonel, CE
Director, Strategic Studies Institute



7915 Jones Branch Drive
McLean, Virginia 22102
Phone (703) 821-5000

February 15, 1980

⑭ BDM/W-78-128-TR-Vol-3

⑪ 15 Feb 80

⑫ 340

⑨ Final kept.

⑮ DARG 39-78-C-0120

⑥
A STUDY OF STRATEGIC LESSONS
LEARNED IN VIETNAM.
VOLUME III
US FOREIGN POLICY AND VIETNAM 1945-1975.

This draft report is submitted to DAMO-SSP.

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PREFACE

A. PRESPECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This volume, "US Foreign Policy and Vietnam, 1945-1975," is the third of an eight-volume study entitled A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam undertaken by the BDM Corporation under contract to the US Army. This comprehensive research effort is aimed at identifying lessons which US military leaders and US civilian policy makers should have learned or should now be learning from the US experience in Vietnam.

Volume I of this study, an examination of the enemy, includes discussions of the DRV leadership and party organization, Communist Vietnamese goals and strategies, and internal and external channels of support established to aid the North's war effort. Volume II focuses on the Republic of Vietnam, the country's societal characteristics and problems, its government, and its armed forces. Volume IV explores the US domestic scene, including its political and economic components, the role of the media during the Vietnam conflict, and the extent of domestic support for the war. Volume V concentrates on the actual planning of the US war effort, examining various aspects of this effort, including contingency planning, the Pacification and Vietnamization programs, and the negotiation process. Volume VI, "Fighting the War," includes discussions of US intelligence, logistics, and advisory efforts; US counterinsurgency programs; and ground, air, naval, and unconventional operations. Volume VII examines the US soldier, including the war's psychological effects on the soldier; alcohol, drug abuse, and race relations in the US military; and leadership and personnel relations in the US armed forces. Finally, Volume VIII discusses, in broad terms, the results of the war for the United States in terms of domestic, foreign, and military policies.

This eight-volume study effort is analytical, not historical in nature. Its focus is primarily military in orientation. The purpose of the entire eight volumes is not a retelling of the Vietnam conflict, but a

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drawing of lessons and insights of value to present and future US policy makers, both civilian and military.

B. METHODOLOGY AND PURPOSE OF VOLUME III, "FOREIGN POLICY AND VIETNAM, 1945-1975"

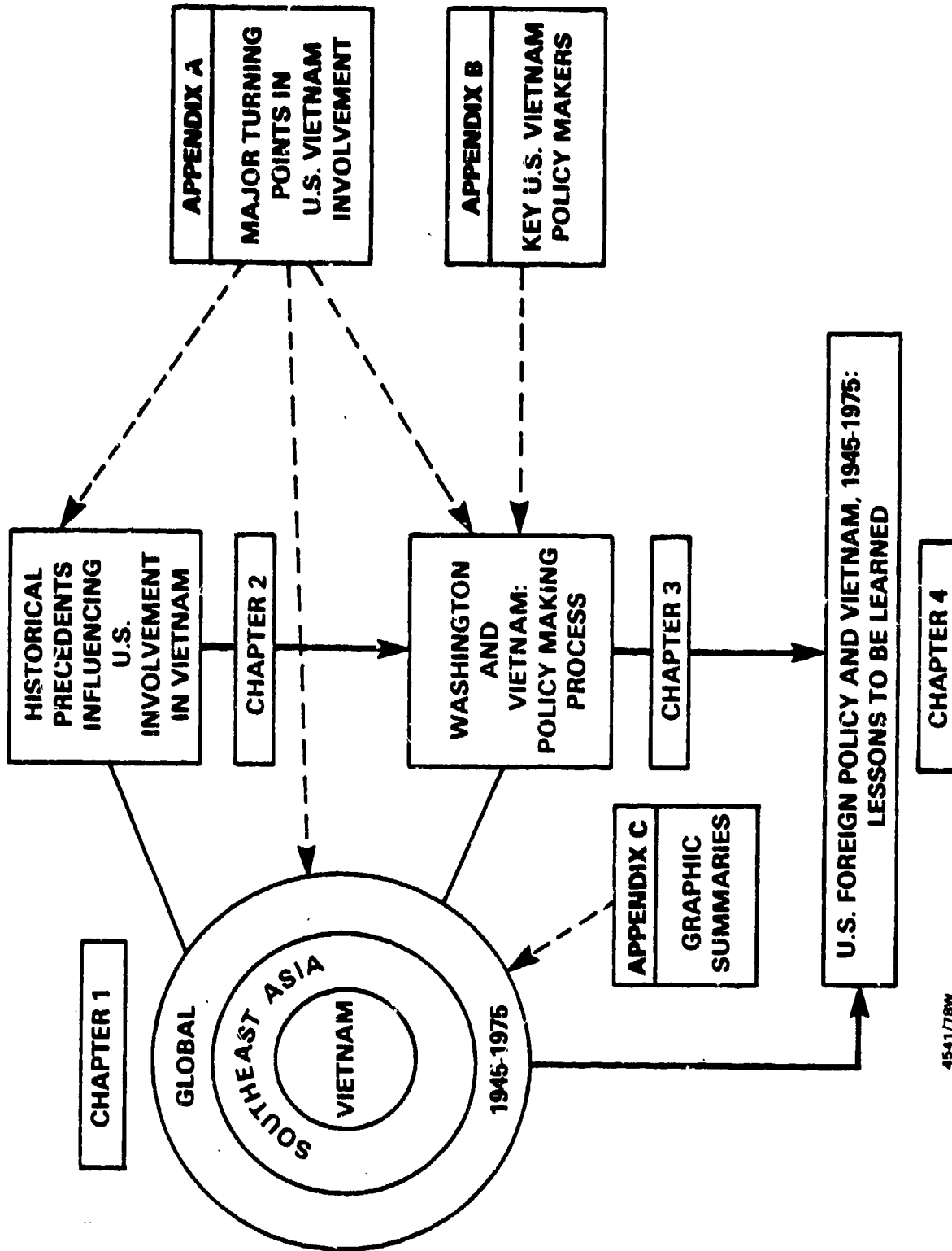
1. Methodology

This volume, entitled "US Foreign Policy and Vietnam, 1945-1975," assesses the United States' involvement in Vietnam by examining the global context in which this involvement occurred, the major historical precedents influencing US involvement, and the US national-level policy process which shaped this involvement. This volume and Volume IV, "US Domestic Factors Influencing Vietnam War Policy Making," serve together as a joint research effort; both US domestic and foreign policies influenced the nature and scope of US military involvement in Vietnam and it would be detrimental to segregate these concerns into mutually exclusive efforts. The information in these volumes should, therefore, be considered together in order to gain an appreciation of the full constraints and concerns which influenced US policy makers determining US policy for Vietnam.

Volume III is divided into four chapters. Figure III-1 provides an overview summarizing the interrelationship of the four chapters and volume appendices and the methodology employed to derive lessons and insights regarding US foreign policy for Vietnam. The four chapters and the volume appendices serve together as an integrated and unified study effort. Each chapter, in succession, provides background information for the next, culminating in the final chapter, "US Foreign Policy and Vietnam, 1945-1975: Lessons to Be Learned." The appendices serve as supplementary support data for the reader. (See Figure III-1 for the relationship of the appendices to the rest of Volume III.)

2. Purpose

Chapter 1 illustrates US global policy during the 1945-1975 period and relates this policy to US policies for Southeast Asia in general, and for Vietnam specifically. Chapter 2 discusses a number of



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Figure III-1. Summary of Volume III Methodology: Interrelationship of Chapters and Related Appendices

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historical precedents and perceptions expressed as catchwords such as the "loss of China" or "appeasement at Munich," which served to justify or constrain US policy making for Vietnam. Chapter 3 assesses the US Vietnam policy-making process, providing an overview of the six post-WW II administrations, their respective policy-making styles, and the relative level of influence enjoyed by the major US policy-making bodies in the Vietnam policy-making process. Chapter 3 also provides case studies for each of the six administrations examined; these case studies provide detailed descriptions of the policy-making process employed by each particular administration in making key Vietnam policy decisions.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 all conclude with a section entitled "Analytic Summary and Insights," serving both as a conclusion and as a basis for deriving lessons on US foreign policy and Vietnam for the period 1945-1975. Chapter 4 is based on the data and analyses appearing in Chapters 1, 2, and 3, integrating this information in a brief concluding chapter devoted to lessons.

C. THEMES THAT EMERGE FROM VOLUME III: "US FOREIGN POLICY AND VIETNAM, 1945-1975"

Chapter 1, entitled "US Global Policy and Its Relationship to US Policy for Southeast Asia, 1945-1975," demonstrates that US interests in Southeast Asia were almost entirely dictated by US perceptions of global threats outside of the region, particularly the threat of Soviet and Chinese Communist expansionism. The major themes (and their relationship to US involvement in Vietnam) assessed in this chapter include:

- the conflict of colonialist concerns with post-war economic reconstruction and the creation of security alliances;
- the conflict between anticolonialist and anticommunist concerns;
- the US understanding of monolithic communism and the Sino-Soviet rift;
- the US investment with its allies, particularly with South Vietnam, (in men, materiel, money, and prestige) and its effect on US foreign policy formation; and

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- the United States' eventual exploitation of hostilities between the Soviet Union and Communist China as a politico-diplomatic tool.

Chapter 2, entitled "Historical Precedents Which Influenced US Involvement in Vietnam," identifies those historical experiences most influential in shaping US policy for Vietnam. The major themes emerging from this chapter include:

- the fear of appeasement, such as occurred at Munich in 1938, served to justify the US policy of containment in Southeast Asia;
- the "loss of China" prompted successive US administrations to fear a "loss" in Southeast Asia, and to commit US resources in order to prevent such a "loss";
- the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion served to strengthen the Kennedy administration's resolve in proving US capabilities (especially counterinsurgency) elsewhere, particularly in Vietnam;
- the fear of Chinese Communist intervention, such as experienced during the Korean War, limited the level of the US military response to North Vietnam; and
- the adage "never again," referring to US involvement in another Asian land war, served to constrain two post-WW II administrations in policy making for Vietnam.

Chapter 3, entitled "Washington and Vietnam: US National-Level Policy Makers and the Policy-Making Process," explains the pervasiveness of the containment doctrine and domino theory in US policy toward Vietnam by showing that the key decision makers shared a belief in their validity in Indochina. Chapter 3 also shows that the decision-making processes, while enabling some dissent on this view to emerge, tended to minimize dissent by stressing presidential decisionmaking with a narrow band of loyal appointed advisers who shared the basic beliefs of the president. Chapter 3 also explores the themes of centralization and decentralization in the decision making process.

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Chapter 4, entitled "US Foreign Policy and Vietnam, 1945-1975: Lessons to Be Learned," examines a number of general lessons to be learned from the preceding discussion of US foreign policy and Vietnam. The lessons and insights are summarized in the "Executive Summary" following this preface.

D. HISTORICAL-CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF VOLUME III

Figure III-2 provides an encapsulation of the data and analyses appearing in Volume III. The figure offers a time-sensitive depiction of major US global objectives and interests, perceived threats, and strategies for the thirty-year period, 1945-1975. The figure also summarizes the impact of certain historical precedents which served to justify or constrain US policy making for Vietnam during this time period. In addition, the graphic highlights general characteristics of the policy-making styles and processes for each of the six post-WW II administrations. The final section of Figure III-2 plots seventeen major turning points during US military involvement in Vietnam, allowing the reader to gauge their development with other data appearing in this framework of US foreign policy, 1945-1975.

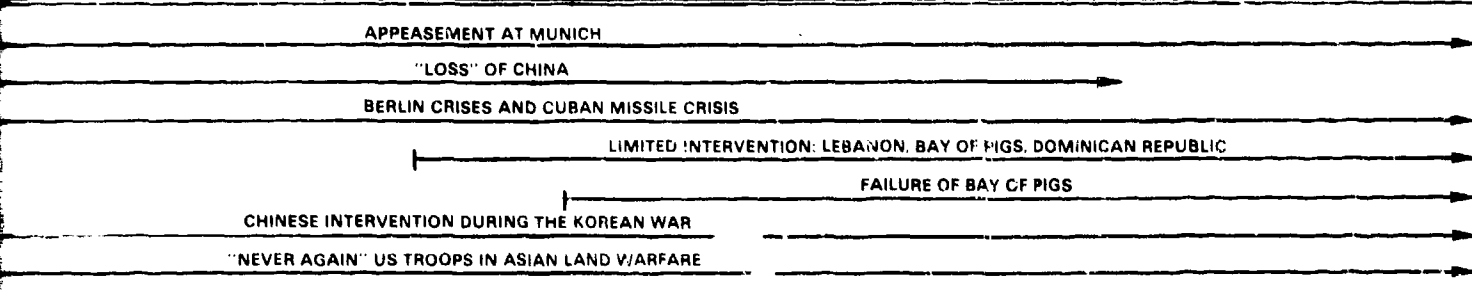
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YEAR		1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	
CHAPTER 1 US GLOBAL POLICY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO US POLICY FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA	INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REBUILD EUROPE ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION BUILD A STRONG INTERNATIONAL ORDER CONTAIN COMMUNISM PROMOTE SELF DETERMINATION INDEPENDENCE OF WORLD'S COLONIES 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PREVENT THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN THE WORLD CONTAIN COMMUNISM TO PROTECT US AND ALLIES ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS PREVENT WORLD WAR II PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE OF THE WORLD'S COLONIES 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HALT THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY DEWATERIALIZATION PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNISM DETER TOTAL WAR SHORE UP US CREDIBILITY PRESERVE THE SECURITY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND IDEALS 				
	PERCEIVED THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOVIET IMPERIALISM AND EXPANSIONIST DRIVE POST WAR OBJECTIVES OF US ALLIES ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM COLONIALISM US LACK OF WELL DEFINED POLICY REGARDING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN EUROPE AND IN ASIA SUBVERSION AND GUERRILLA WARFARE WEAKNESS OF WESTERN EUROPE IN GENERAL AND IN PARTICULAR REGARDING SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM WORLD WIDE BASIS USSR NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES SUBVERSION AND PROTRACTED WARFARE 				
	STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND COOPERATION ECONOMIC TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHEN FEASIBLE 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS UNITED ACTION MASSIVE RETALIATION LIBERATION DOCTRINE AND PREPARATION FOR COUNTERING GUERRILLA WARFARE PROMOTE SELF DETERMINATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD'S DEVELOPING NATIONS 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASSIVE (SELECTIVE) RETALIATION SAFEGUARDED DISARMAMENT PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PROVIDE ECONOMIC TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE FACE OF COMMUNIST SUBVERSION EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WEAKNESSES AND VULNERABILITIES OF BLOC COUNTRIES 				
CHAPTER 2 IMPACT OF HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS OVER TIME	JUSTIFICATIONS															
	CONSTRAINTS	<p style="text-align: right;">CHINESE INTERESTS "NEVER AGAIN"</p>														
CHAPTER 3 WASHINGTON AND VIETNAM: US POLICY MAKERS AND POLICY MAKING PROCESS	VIETNAM DECISION-MAKING: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DECISION-MAKING STYLE AND PROCESS	TRUMAN							EISENHOWER							
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GENERALLY CONSISTENT RELIANCE ON FORMAL DECISION MAKING ORGANIZATIONS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS RELATIVELY FORMAL AND STRUCTURED APPROACH TO DECISION MAKING 							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EXTREMELY FORMAL CAREFULLY CONTROLLED DECISION MAKING PROCESS PROPER CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION UTILIZED REGULARLY AND FORMAL DECISION MAKING ORGANIZATIONS CONVENED FREQUENTLY AND WITH REGULARITY 							
APPENDIX A SIGNIFICANT US NATIONAL POLICY DECISIONS WHICH INFLUENCED US MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM	MAJOR TURNING POINTS	<p style="text-align: center;">US ACQUIESCENCE TO RE-ENTRY OF FRENCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RECOGNITION OF ASSOCIATED STATES AND PROVISION OF MILITARY AID AND MAAG</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SUPPORT OF DIEM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIEN BIEN PHU</p>														
YEAR		1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	

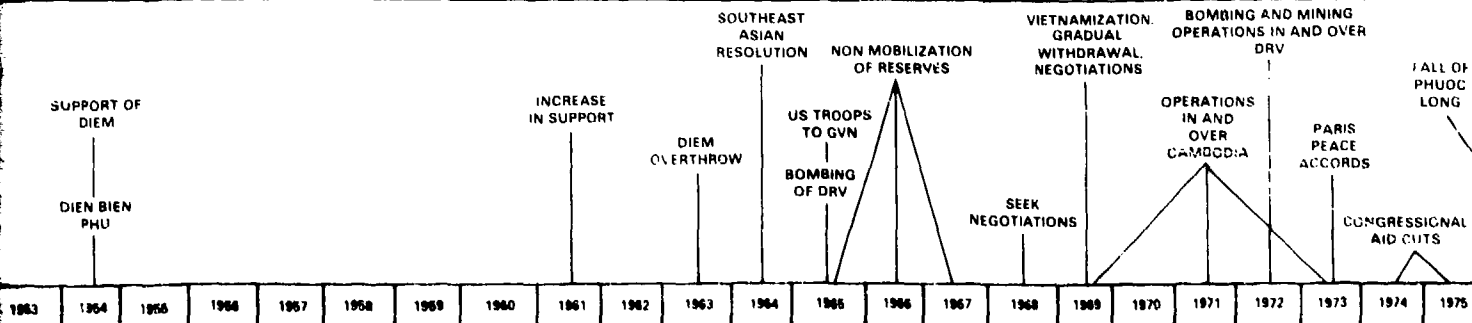
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Figure III-2. Historical-Chronology

1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
<p>COMMUNISM IN THE WORLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HALT THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY DESTRUCTION OR NEUTRALIZATION ● PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNISM ● DETER TOTAL WAR ● SHORE UP US CREDIBILITY ● PRESERVE THE SECURITY OF THE US AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS 												
<p>COMMUNISM IN EUROPE AND ASIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM ON A WORLD WIDE BASIS ● USSR NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES ● SUBVERSION AND PROTRACTED GUERRILLA WARFARE 												
<p>COLLECTIVE SECURITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MASSIVE (SELECTIVE) RETALIATION; DETERRENCE ● SAFEGUARDED DISARMAMENT ● PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ● PROVIDE ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING NATIONS IN THE FACE OF COMMUNIST SUBVERSION ● EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AND VULNERABILITIES OF BLOC COUNTRIES 												



EISENHOWER	KENNEDY	JOHNSON	NIXON	FORD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EXTREMELY FORMAL, CAREFULLY CONTROLLED DECISION MAKING PROCESS ● PROPER CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION UTILIZED REGULARLY AND FORMAL DECISION MAKING ORGANIZATIONS CONVENED FREQUENTLY AND WITH REGULARITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PREDOMINATELY INFORMAL PERSONAL APPROACH TO DECISION MAKING MARKED BY FLUIDITY, FLEXIBILITY AND Q. IN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION ● FORMAL DECISION MAKING BODIES INFREQUENTLY CONVENED IN FAVOR OF AN AD HOC TASK FORCE SEMINAR APPROACH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GENERALLY INFORMAL BUT CENTRALIZED PROCESS CHARACTERIZED BY A "CONSENSUS BUILDING" APPROACH TO DECISION MAKING ● FORMAL DECISION MAKING ORGANIZATIONS CONVENED INFREQUENTLY; DECISIONS MADE PREDOMINATELY BY A SMALL GROUP OF TRUSTED ADVISORS "TUESDAY CABINET" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● INITIALLY FORMAL, OPEN CHANNELLED DECISION MAKING PROCESS WHICH SHORTLY GAVE WAY TO A CLOSED, RELATIVELY SECRETIVE APPROACH ● VERY CENTRALIZED APPROACH TO DECISION MAKING; DECISION MAKING PROCESS JETTISONED BY WATERGATE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RELATIVELY INFORMAL APPROACH ● FORMAL DECISION MAKING ORGANIZATIONS CONVENED WITH REGULARITY ● CONGRESS ESTABLISHED IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

→ The chapters of Volume III develop a number of key insights and lessons relating to the formulation of US policy toward Vietnam during the years 1945-1975. These insights underscore both the general context and the specific nature of US policy making--the global environment in which Vietnam policy was formulated, the historical precedents which influenced subsequent US foreign policy and particularly Southeast Asian policies, and the US policy-making process. The insights are specific, focusing on such issues as US perceptions of its global role, US perceptions of external powers, both friendly and unfriendly, consistencies and contradictions in US foreign policies, the influence of historical precedents on US policy makers, and the advantages and liabilities inherent in specific approaches to policy making. In contrast, the lessons derived in this volume are general, concentrating on the broader issues and themes discussed in the volume which are relevant to a discussion of US foreign policy during the 1945-1975 period and to present day policy considerations. ↗

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INSIGHTS

US Foreign Policy
and Vietnam,
1945-1975

- The early years of US involvement in Southeast Asia witnessed an attempt by national policy makers to reconcile US anticolonialist and anticommunist policies, generally at the expense of the former.
- During the time period under consideration, the US found itself constrained by perceptions of its own leadership role in the world and by its perceptions of threats to US objectives.
- The United States' post-WW II assumption of the role of "global policeman," aimed at combatting international communism in the post-World War II era, limited its appreciation of other forces at work in the global environment, particularly that of nationalism.
- Inconsistencies or abrupt changes in US policies undermined the effectiveness and credibility of the United States. In addition, the United States' long-held Eurocentric policy perspective diminished overall US effectiveness in fashioning viable policies outside of Europe.
- The broad US objective of containing communism globally conflicted with the US objective to promote self-determination for and civil liberties in the world's former colonies in general and in South Vietnam in particular. Perceptions of the monolithic communist threat frequently clouded the differences between civil wars, colonial wars, and what the communists termed as "wars of national liberation."
- Foreign policy terms such as "vital interest," "objective," and "threat" were often applied without careful discrimination by US national policy makers, thus leading to oversimplification, contradictions, and confusion in US foreign policy.

LESSON

The importance of particular US interests may undergo significant changes, depending upon a broad array of international and national considerations, often beyond the control of the United States Government. To minimize confusion at subordinate levels of leadership, US national leaders must be as clear, precise, and discriminating as possible in determining "vital" interests, especially prior to making a long-term commitment to another nation or government.

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Historical Precedents Which Influenced US Involvement In Vietnam

INSIGHTS

- The Chinese threat perceived by the US was more assumed than real. For example, throughout the period of US involvement in the Vietnam conflict the significance of the political rift between the USSR and the PRC and the cultural enmity between the Vietnamese and Chinese was consistently understated.
- The admonition that the US must not "lose" South Vietnam (like it "lost" China) was often used by US policy makers to justify the US commitment to Southeast Asia. The fact that the term "loss" implied previous control or hegemony by the US over China reinforced the United States' perception of its post-World War II role as the free world's global policeman, and of the nature of global politics as "bipolar," where a "loss" by the US was considered a gain for world communism.
- Tendencies toward moderation and compromise in Vietnam policy making were sometimes discredited by being compared with "appeasement" of Hitler at Munich in 1938.
- Policies and strategies proven effective in super-power confrontations may be wholly inapplicable to problems in the Third World.
- Several important lessons provided by the Bay of Pigs experience were neglected: first, prior to committing military and/or political resources to a given country, a thorough assessment of political and social realities in that country should be undertaken. Second, there are significant risks inherent in restricting the scope and employment of military resources in a given operation. US lack of knowledge about Asia and Asians helped lead to faulty perceptions, as did a lack of understanding about the goals, etc. of Cuba and Cubans.

LESSON

It is essential to know precisely the nature of relationships between Third World countries and external communist powers - a corollary to the "Know Your Enemy" and "Know Your Ally" lessons underscored in Volumes I and II. US policy makers must carefully examine the premises upon which they formulate any US policies.

INSIGHTS

US National-level
Policy Makers and
the Policy Making
Process

- Pressures to arrive at timely decisions militate against the possibility of obtaining expert advice on all sides of every issue. However, when expert advice is available but is continually ignored because of an assertion that timeliness is crucial, then the validity and implications of this assertion deserve careful scrutiny.
- The US Congress indicated its dissatisfaction with the executive branch's performance in foreign policy, especially with regard to Southeast Asia, by reducing aid to South Vietnam and Cambodia, thereby using its "power of the purse" to shape future US commitments to the region.
- Presidents, like other leaders, sometimes confused dissent over Vietnam policy with personal disloyalty or lack of patriotism.
- General beliefs about the dangers of "appeasement" and of global communist unity and expansionism, conditioned by experiences such as Munich, Yalta, Korea, and the McCarthy era, frequently served as the basis for US Southeast Asian policy formulation, often regardless of the political, cultural, traditional, or ideological realities in the region.
- All decision makers are human and fallible and adopt a decision-making process with which they feel comfortable. While good organizations and procedures cannot ensure sound decisions, weak ones are more likely to produce bad policies and decisions.

LESSON

The American experience in Vietnam points to the danger of elevating one fundamental principle -- anticommunism -- to the status of doctrine and of applying it to all regions of the globe. This reduces the possibility of meaningful debate and limits the airing of legitimate dissenting viewpoints. Careful and continual reexamination of US foreign policy premises may forestall this potentially dangerous development from occurring in future policy deliberations.

OVERALL LESSON

US national leaders, both civilian and military, must continually assess the validity and importance of the policies they are pursuing. In particular, they must assess the changing implications of these policies for particular foreign countries and regions and determine the political, military, and economic prices that they are likely and willing to pay for successful policy implementation. Assessments of this nature will foster the creation and/or revitalization of strong, mutually beneficial alliances, thereby providing an element of continuity and constancy to US foreign policy. Moreover, the national leadership should continually assess its willingness to accept the responsibility for policy failures, especially if it is unwilling to pay the price called for by a given policy. US national leadership must, therefore, conduct continual and honest reassessments of the premises of its national policy in light of changing circumstances in both bipolar and multipolar relationships.

CHAPTER 1
US GLOBAL POLICY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO
US POLICY FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, 1945-1975

A. INTRODUCTION

The nature and extent of US involvement in Vietnam was shaped by the post-WW II global environment and the tensions inherent in that environment. This chapter provides a discussion of US global interests and objectives, the tensions and problems which threatened these goals, and major US strategies to achieve these goals. This chapter also assesses US interests and objectives in Southeast Asia and strategies for achieving them which usually flowed directly from US global interests and objectives.

Use of terms "national interest," "national objective," "national strategy," "national threat," and "national policy" is common in any discussion of US foreign policy; yet they have been frequently overused, misapplied or misunderstood. US policy makers, both civilian and military, have often been obscure rather than clear and precise in their use of these terms. For the purposes of this discussion, the above terms are defined as follows: 1/

- National Interest: A fundamental goal or purpose of a nation (e.g., peace, freedom, security, prosperity) which a nation is prepared to defend.
- National Objective: A tangible, material object (as distinguished from a theoretical, abstract concept or idea) which a nation desires in pursuit of its interests (e.g., use of resources, use of sea, air and land for security reasons - bases, etc.).
- National Threat: Anything which appears to jeopardize or obstruct the attainment of a national interest or objective (e.g., aggression, non-cooperation).
- National Strategy: A plan for developing and applying a nation's political, economic, psychological, and military capabilities and

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resources to provide maximum support to policies, thereby securing national objectives and interests, (e.g., provision of economic, military, technical aid; promote the establishment of defense organizations.)

- National Policy: A broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of its national objectives and interests, including strategies for their attainment and for dealing with national threats (e.g., statements of definition or clarification of US interests, objectives, and strategies).

From the above, then, US national policy is seen as the government's articulation of national interests, objectives, and threats in the form of a stated course of action.

The thirty years covered in this chapter are divided into six five-year time periods, an approach which lends itself to a neutral, perhaps clinical, overview of the era to be discussed. This analytical tool of five-year "slices" - to use Paul Kattenburg's terminology - allows for the inclusion of a broad array of diverse themes within the discussion.^{2/} There are other possible time-sensitive breakdowns open to the analyst assessing US foreign policy. The following list, by no means exhaustive, illustrates a number of these breakdowns; the era could be delineated and discussed according to:

- US administrations;
- Periods of the Cold War;
- Changes in the global strategic balance;
- Changes in the global economic balance;
- Emergence of the Third World and its impact on the global environment;
- Changes in the European balance of power;
- Changes in the Asian balance of power;
- Key events on a global basis shaping US foreign policy;
- Key events during the years of US involvement in Vietnam;

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- o Changes in a bipolar world;
- o Changes in a tripolar world; and
- o Changes in a multipolar world.

Most of the above devices, however, are geared primarily to one particular theme, thus limiting the inclusion of other relevant yet dissimilar themes manifested in a given time period. The five-year "slice" approach, on the other hand, allows for an interweaving of themes without necessarily limiting the discussion to any one particular focus. The approach chosen, therefore, is a superior analytical tool for developing a neutral, objective discussion of US global interests and objectives, perceived threats, and strategies for the period 1945-1975. Figure 1-1 provides an overview of the themes addressed in the chapter and is divided according to the five-year breakdown. Appendix C of this volume provides additional graphic depictions of these themes, relating their global applicability to US interests and objectives, perceived threats, and strategies for Southeast Asia, 1945-1975.

B. 1945-1950 (PRE-KOREA)

Emerging as the world's major power at the close of the second World War, the United States hoped to create a strong and stable international order and in pursuit of this goal strove for two major objectives: the reconstruction and stabilization of the European continent and the evolution of the world's colonies towards self-government. Yet, in the immediate post-war environment, obstacles to the attainment of these objectives arose: the incompatibility of these two major objectives was, in itself, a sizable obstacle to overcome.

To attain the first objective, the US committed itself to programs for European economic recovery, centered on the Marshall Plan, and security assistance, centered on NATO. To attain the second objective, the US encouraged the colonial powers to prepare their Asian colonies for self-government. France and Britain, whose participation in European security

STRATEGIC MILIEU	PRES.	TIME PERIOD	INTEREST/OBJECTIVES	PERCEIVED THREATS	STRATEGIES
POST-WAR INTERLUDE	T R U M A N	1945-1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REBUILD EUROPE; ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION BUILD A STRONG INTERNATIONAL ORDER CONTAIN COMMUNISM PROMOTE SELF-DETERMINATION, INDEPENDENCE OF WORLD'S COLONIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOVIET IMPERIALISM AND EXPANSIONIST DRIVE POST-WAR OBJECTIVES OF US ALLIES ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM COLONIALISM ENMITY OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND COOPERATION ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHEN FEASIBLE TRUMAN DOCTRINE
		1950-1955	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PREVENT THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN THE WORLD CONTAIN COMMUNISM TO PROTECT US AND ALLIES' ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS PREVENT WORLD WAR III PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE OF THE WORLD'S COLONIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN EUROPE AND IN ASIA SUBVERSION AND GUERRILLA WARFARE WEAKNESS OF WESTERN EUROPE, PARTICULARLY IN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS; UNITED ACTION MASSIVE RETALIATION, LIBERATION DOCTRINE, AND PREPARATION FOR COUNTERING GUERRILLA WARFARE PROMOTE SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD'S DEVELOPING NATIONS
C O L D W A R	E I S E N H O W E R	1955-1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HALT THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNISM DETER TOTAL WAR SHORE UP US CREDIBILITY PRESERVE THE SECURITY OF THE US AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM ON A WORLDWIDE BASIS USSR NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROMESS SUBVERSION AND PROTRACTED GUERRILLA WARFARE CHINESE CHALLENGE TO BIPOLARITY UNCERTAINTY OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASSIVE (SELECTIVE) RETALIATION; DETERRENCE SAFEGUARDED DISARMAMENT PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PROVIDE ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING NATIONS IN THE FACE OF COMMUNIST SUBVERSION EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AND VULNERABILITIES OF BLOC COUNTRIES EISENHOWER DOCTRINE
		1960-1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PREVENT COMMUNISM'S DRIVE TO DOMINATE THE WORLD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMMUNIST AGGRESSION, IMPERIALISM, AND SUBVERSION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATION-BUILDING; PROVISION OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE

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Figure 1-1. A Summary of US Interests, Objectives on a Global Basis, 1945-1975

<p>1960</p> <p>HOWE R</p>	<p>THROUGHOUT THE WORLD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNISM • DETER TOTAL WAR • SHORE UP US CREDIBILITY • PRESERVE THE SECURITY OF THE US AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS 	<p>WORLDWIDE BASIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USSR NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS • SUBVERSION AND PROTRACTED GUERRILLA WARFARE • CHINESE CHALLENGE TO BIPOLARITY • UNCERTAINTY OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS 	<p>DETERRENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAFEGUARDED DISARMAMENT • PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS • PROVIDE ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING NATIONS IN THE FACE OF COMMUNIST SUBVERSION • EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AND VULNERABILITIES OF BLOC COUNTRIES • EISENHOWER DOCTRINE
<p>1960-1965</p> <p>KENNEDY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREVENT COMMUNISM'S DRIVE TO DOMINATE THE WORLD • MAINTAIN AND PROTECT US SECURITY BY PRESERVING A FREE ASIA AND FREE WORLD • PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN US PLEDGES OF ASSISTANCE AND CREDIBILITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMMUNIST AGGRESSION, IMPERIALISM, AND SUBVERSION • WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND BRUSH-FIRE AGGRESSION • LOSS OF US PRESTIGE AND CREDIBILITY WITH ALLIES AND US PUBLIC • US LOSS OF NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATION-BUILDING: PROVISION OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO DEVELOPING NATIONS • FLEXIBLE RESPONSE: ABILITY TO WAGE LIMITED WARS, GRADUATED ESCALATION, AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY WARFARE
<p>1965-1970</p> <p>JOHNSON</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREVENT COMMUNISM'S DRIVE TO DOMINATE THE WORLD • STRENGTHEN US - ALLIED RELATIONS • PREVENT WORLD WAR III • CALM TENSIONS WITH USSR AND PRC • PREVENT LOSS OF US CREDIBILITY AND INVESTMENTS • SECURE AN HONORABLE AND DURABLE PEACE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POSSIBLE PRC INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM • US CREDIBILITY LOSS AND POSSIBLE FAILURE OF COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY • WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION, SUBVERSION AND GUERRILLA WARFARE • GLOBAL TURBULENCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE THIRD WORLD • DEVELOPING NATIONS 'OVER-DEPENDENCE' ON THE US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROVISION OF ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE DEVELOPING NATIONS • FLEXIBLE RESPONSE • INITIATE DIALOGUE WITH PRC AND USSR • NIXON DOCTRINE • PERSONAL (AND OFTEN SECRET) DIPLOMACY
<p>1970-1975</p> <p>NIXON</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUILD A STABLE WORLD ORDER BASED ON MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESTRAINT • PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF DEVELOPING NATIONS • DETER AGGRESSION AND MAINTAIN A STRONG DEFENSE • DECREASE TENSIONS WITH USSR AND PRC • PRESERVE US CREDIBILITY • SECURE AN HONORABLE AND DURABLE PEACE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POSSIBILITY OF LOCAL CONFLICTS ERUPTING INTO MAJOR CONFLAGRATION • COMMUNIST AGGRESSION • OVER-RELIANCE ON OR FALSE SECURITY OF DETENTE • US UNPREPAREDNESS TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM • ISOLATIONISM • THE 'THIRD WORLD'S AND OTHER REGIONAL BLOCS' IMPACT ON THE STATUS QUO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIXON DOCTRINE • PROVISION OF ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING NATIONS • PERSONAL (AND OFTEN SECRET) DIPLOMACY • ASSIST SELECTED COUNTRIES IN DEVELOPING THEIR OWN INDIGENOUS DEFENSE CAPABILITIES • ARMS LIMITATIONS: US MAINTENANCE OF BALANCE IN NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES
<p>DETENTE</p>	<p>DETTENTE</p>	<p>DETENTE</p>	<p>DETENTE</p>

2

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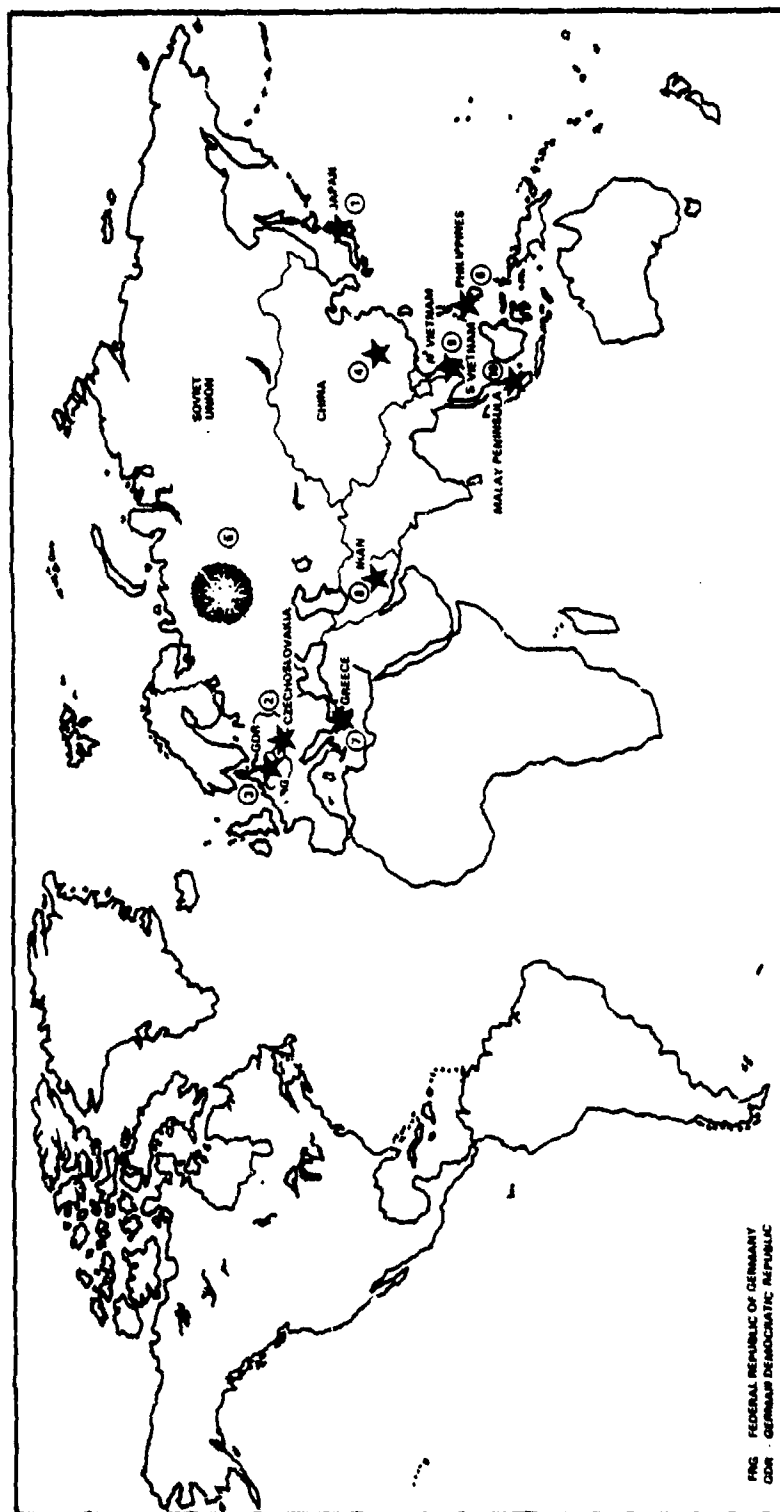
arrangements was believed essential by the United States, were unwilling to move as fast as the US had hoped toward preparing their Asian colonies for self-government. In addition, tension with the Soviet Union resulted from disagreements with the West over the nature and scope of European reconstruction and defense requirements, culminating in Soviet refusal to participate in the US-sponsored European recovery and security programs. US perceptions of Soviet post-war objectives in Europe clashed with US objectives, as did British and French objectives regarding the fate of their colonial territories. On this overarching global framework depended US interests and objectives for the Asian continent and, in particular, for Southeast Asia.

Map i-1 pinpoints major crises and events in the period 1945 - 1950 which had a significant impact on the development of US objectives, interests, and strategies. This graphic representation serves as a conceptual backdrop for the following analysis of US global and Southeast-Asian policy.

1. Interests and Objectives

Desiring a strong international system composed of several viable powers with which to trade, and based on a rational balance of power in both Europe and Asia, the US committed its economic, political, and military resources to the European Recovery Program, the United Nations, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. From 1945 to 1950, the US maintained its traditional European focus. Concerning Asia, US attention was concentrated on the reconstruction of Japan and on the promotion of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist China as a viable, independent, "replacement" power for debilitated Japan.

US interests and objectives for Japan and China underwent radical redefinition during the 1945-1950 period, having a very real influence on overall US relations with the Asian countries and the power balance in Asia. At the beginning of the Truman administration, the primary US objective in the Pacific remained the defeat of the Japanese; as one means to secure this objective, US OSS personnel cultivated relations with



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Map 1-1. Major Crises and Significant Events Affecting US Policy for the Period 1945-1950 (Pre-Korea)

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Vietnamese nationalists, including Ho Chi Minh, as an important and dynamic anti-Japanese force.^{4/} With Japan's defeat, US objectives and interests in the Pacific came to center on revitalizing Asia, which included the creation of peace-time markets and the establishment of strategic bases. US relationships with the Southeast Asian nationalists, previously based on the objective of defeating the Japanese, dimmed considerably in the absence of their common enemy. European reconstruction and the need to ensure French and British participation won out over earlier ties established with nationalist forces in Indochina.

With the defeat of the Japanese, China became of vital interest to US policy makers, both as a "replacement" power in the Pacific and as a potential investment site for US entrepreneurs. The success of Mao Tse-tung's forces in 1949 abruptly altered US interests in Asia. The attention of the US came to rest on containing the communist advance, and, as NSC 48/2 of December 1949, stated, on the:

prevention of power relationships in Asia which would enable any other nation or alliance to threaten the security of the United States from that area, or the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations."^{5/}

2. Threats

In the immediate post-war years, the US found itself in a vitally different global environment: the effects of the war and the ramifications of the post-war settlements had shaped a new and unfamiliar world, marked by different boundaries, a weakened Europe, and a single world power possessing a nuclear capability. The post-war expectations of US policy makers assumed that a certain compatibility of interests existed; yet US war-time allies - the Soviet Union, Britain, and France - expressed objectives which did not coincide neatly with those of the US. Soviet expansionism, based on a professed need to secure its fronts against encroachments such as those witnessed during the war, and the British and French desire to preserve intact their empires for both economic and prestige-related reasons, threatened US post-war objectives.

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A series of events led gradually to a redefinition of US policy in the immediate post-war period: first, French and British requests for a clear statement of US intentions regarding their colonial possessions, and an increased concern, especially on the part of Churchill, regarding Soviet intentions, set the heretofore ambiguous US policy on a course strongly predicated upon anticommunist principles.^{6/} Hence, while the US stood firmly against colonialism when dealing with the Dutch, a less important ally, when pressed for a clear statement of policy by the French and British regarding the US position on colonial issues, the US chose to pursue objectives which would serve to rally Western Europe and the US against the Soviet-inspired advance of communism.^{7/} The series of crises pinpointed in Map 1, in particular the events in Eastern Europe and the USSR's successful detonation of its first atomic device, lent credence to the belief that communism was the major threat to US-allied interests and objectives. The "loss" of China to the communist orbit did more to enhance the "validity" of this threat than perhaps any other crisis or event during the 1945-1950 period. Yugoslavia's breakaway from the Kremlin's orbit was overshadowed by the China "loss" and did little to shake the US perception of the monolithic character of communism.

The US, therefore, found itself on a policy course directed towards the containment of communism. The United States' ambiguous policy regarding colonialism gave way to strategies focused on controlling the communist advance, often to the detriment of ties earlier forged with nationalist forces in the Asian Third World.

3. Strategies

The most significant and far-reaching strategy devised by the national policy makers during this period, a broad program for dealing with communism and, to a lesser degree, with the developing nations, was stated in the Truman Doctrine and NSC 68. The Truman Doctrine was a response to the British inability to deliver aid to Greece and Turkey beyond March 1947

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and set out the following policy which would serve as a basis for US relations with the world's developing nations, including Vietnam:

It must be the policy of the US to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures...we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way... 8/

Herein lay the foundation for assistance programs designed to inculcate democratic principles, inspire democratic development, and serve as an attractive alternative to communism.

NSC 68 set forth a broad range of objectives and strategies for a US victory in the Cold War 9/ and identified the Soviet Union as the major threat to the free world. It set forth a highly ambitious, all-encompassing program for containment of the Soviet Union. Briefly, the document recommended:

- Against negotiations with the Soviet Union since conditions were not yet sufficient to force the Kremlin to "change its policies drastically;"
- Development of hydrogen bombs to offset possible Soviet possession of an effective atomic arsenal by 1954;
- Rapid building of conventional military forces to preserve American interests without having to wage atomic war;
- A large increase in taxes to pay for this new, highly expensive military establishment;
- A strong alliance system directed by the US;
- Undermining of the "Soviet totalitariat" from within by making "the Russian people our allies in this enterprise."10/

By June 1950, then, US national policy makers had decided on a strategy to counter communist-inspired aggression. As will be seen in the following discussion of the 1950-1955 period beginning with the Korean War, NSC 68 and the Truman Doctrine served as the basis for US assistance to South Korea and to the French in the latter's conflict in Indochina with the Viet-Minh.

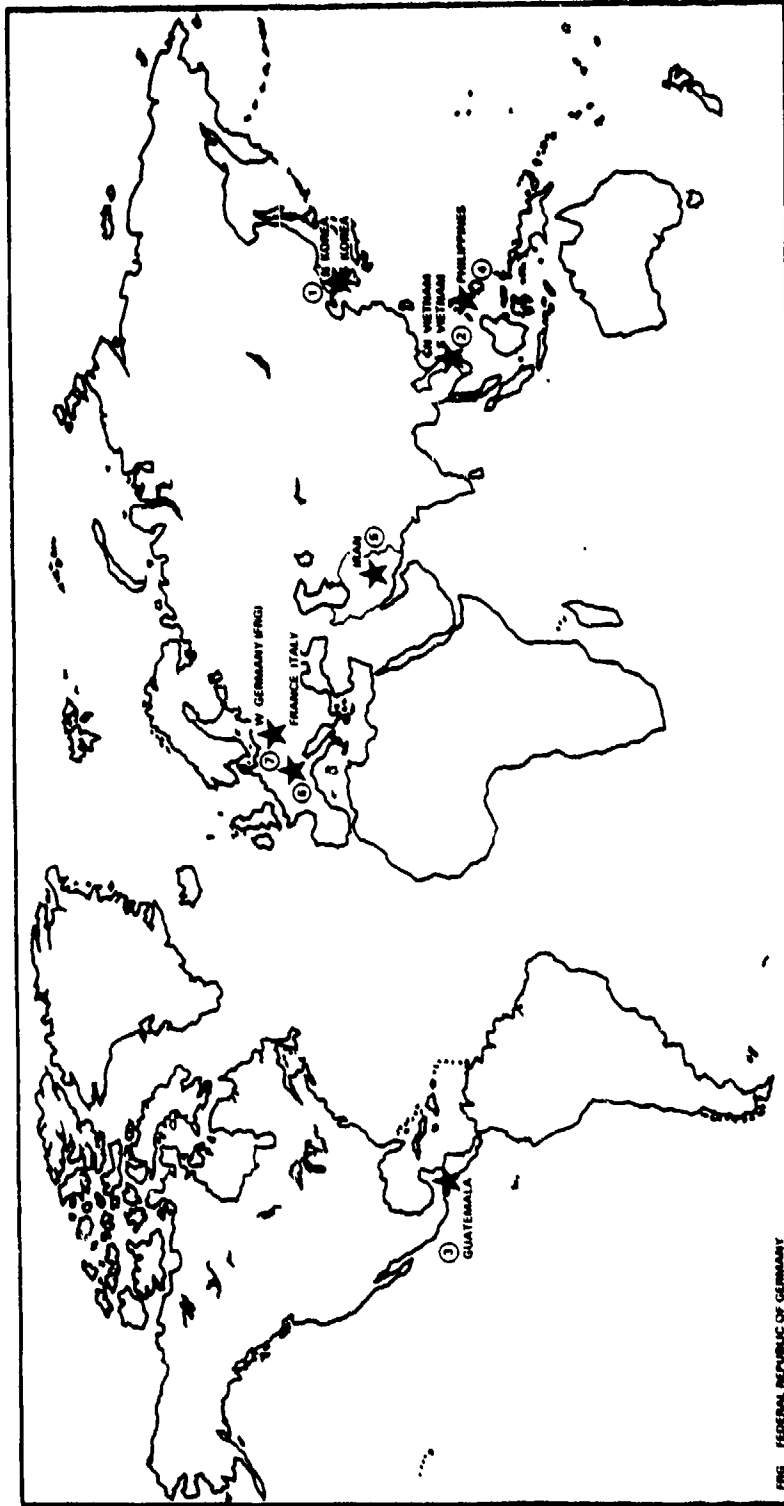
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C. 1950-1955

With the outbreak of the Korean War, the US undertook a mission aimed at curbing the advance of presumably monolithic communism and at vindicating the administration for "allowing" the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek's forces by those of Mao Tse-tung in China. The Korean conflict, following so closely after the victory of the Chinese Communists and the recognition of Ho Chi Minh's government by both the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China, appeared to be a threat of substantial proportion. One important result of the Korean conflict was that it concentrated the attentions of high-ranking US national advisers on the Asian arena, perhaps serving to balance the heretofore disproportionate attention concentrated on European concerns.

As in the 1945-1950 period, the US continued to seek French cooperation in granting a modicum of independence to Indochina; yet, in retrospect, the US desire for establishing a strong European defense community and for defeating the advance of monolithic communism took precedence over anticolonialist concerns.

This period also witnessed a restatement of US interests and objectives, particularly with regard to the preservation of Southeast Asia as a region of economic and strategic significance, the stability of which was perceived as paramount to the security of the US, Japan, and the rest of the non-communist world. Perceptions of the communist threat during this period took on a new dimension: the threat of subversion and guerrilla warfare were considered offshoots of the broader threat of monolithic communism. And new strategies to counter these threats evolved: "massive retaliation" and initial preparations for what was later termed counter-insurgency had their inception during this period of US policy formulation. Map 1-2 depicts the significant events which had a bearing on US policy during the years 1950-1955.



Map 1-2. Major Crises and Significant Events Affecting US Policy for the Period 1950-1955

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1. Interests and Objectives

The Korean conflict served as a catalyst for increased US involvement in Southeast Asia. North Korea's invasion not only precipitated US involvement on the Korean peninsula, but also provided the rationale for the immediate provision of military assistance to the Associated States of Indochina and, in particular, to the French and Vietnamese forces battling the Viet-Minh.^{11/} The prevention of a communist takeover in Southeast Asia was seen to be of importance, for both economic and strategic interests were open to partial compromise or total jeopardy if communism gained a foothold in the region: numerous national policy statements stressed the importance of Southeast Asia as the "Asian rice bowl", providing Japan with essential resources for its industrialization.^{12/} The preservation of a Southeast Asia sympathetic to Western defense needs explained the strategic-military interest in the region: bases, air and sea routes, and an Asian "perimeter of defense" were cited as the major strategic interests meriting US protection.^{13/}

As before, the US continued to call for the establishment of a viable, non-communist, yet independent Indochina. The French, however, regardless of US beliefs to the contrary, were involved in a battle to preserve the French Indochinese empire.^{14/} Yet, the US, committed to its policy of "containment," tended to gloss over the colonial realities operating in Indochina. As the US saw it, France was to serve as the Western force dedicated to defeating communism in Southeast Asia; upon winning, the French would bow out of the region, allowing for the Associated States' independence and self-government.^{15/} The US government did not overly stress such expectations, for it was also extremely conscious of French hesitancy over joining the US-sponsored European Defense Community. US interests in Europe coupled with the realities of a growing communist movement in Indochina, therefore, worked against a firm US anticolonialist posture vis-a-vis the French in Indochina.

The Dien Bien Phu crisis in 1954 found the US encumbered as it sought to balance its European and Asian objectives. Committed to containment, yet fearful of initiating unilateral action, especially in an

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Asian land war, the US developed its strategy for collective, "united action."16/

2. Threats

While Kremlin-inspired aggression in Europe continued to be seen as a dangerous threat to US global objectives and interests, the threat of Chinese Communist aggression was perceived as equalling, if not surpassing, the Soviet threat in Asia. Mindful of falling dominos and of the Chinese Communist support to North Korea, the US sought to deter future PRC intervention, especially in Indochina. In fact, the 1950-1955 period found the US national-level security advisers preoccupied with the possibility of Chinese Communist intervention in the Indochinese-French conflict.17/

Several other threats were identified during this period, presenting serious problems for the US: the increase in communist guerrilla warfare in the Philippines and Indochina was seen as potentially detrimental to the preservation of the status quo. Problems in Europe also troubled the US. Still weakened from the second World War, US allies were incapable of committing economic and military resources comparable to those provided by the US for the establishment of a strong, European defense community. In particular, the large commitment of French troops to Indochina was incompatible with European defense requirements, imposing severe constraints on French participation in NATO. Moreover, a divided Germany did little to foster either a strong Europe or an economically viable German nation.

3. Strategies

One of the most significant strategies developed by the US as a means to curb the communist advance both in Europe and in Asia was to establish regional defense organizations, including collective and bilateral security arrangements. During this period, numerous US-Asian security treaties were negotiated, including: 18/

- ANZUS: September 1, 1951 - US, Australia, New Zealand
- US - Republic of the Philippines: August 30, 1951
- US - Republic of Korea: October 1, 1953

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- SEATO: September 8, 1954 - US, UK, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Republic of the Philippines, Thailand
- US - Republic of China: December 2, 1954

Strategies set out in the Truman Doctrine and in NSC 68 also obtained for this period: military and economic assistance provided to the French and Vietnamese by the Truman administration increased steadily under Eisenhower. Yet, mindful of the Korean experience, President Eisenhower required an allied commitment to united action in Indochina as a prerequisite to US military intervention during the Dien Bien Phu crisis.^{19/}

Perhaps the most well-known strategy developed during this period was Secretary Dulles' deterrence strategy of "massive retaliation." Frequently misunderstood, this strategy was designed to alleviate the sizeable economic burden of security expenditures which were weighing heavily on the US and its allies during this period.^{20/} In short, this strategy called for:

...a maximum deterrent at a bearable cost. Local defense will always be important. But there is no local defense which alone will contain the mighty land power of the Communist world. Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power...The way to deter aggression is for the free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing.^{21/}

Contrary to some interpretations of Dulles' speech, the strategy allowed for a degree of flexibility by providing for a conscious and selective approach to retaliation. Coupled with the Dulles-inspired "roll-back" and "liberation" slogans, however, massive retaliation carried with it an undertone indicative of this period's staunch anticommunist posture. While the following period of 1955-1960 saw a continuation of the declared strategy of massive retaliation, its credibility as a deterrent threat was diluted by President Eisenhower's desire to reduce the superpower tensions which prevailed during the 1950-1955 period.

In Indochina, the US continued to support the development of a non-communist, nationalist government. By 1955, US concerns over Vietnam

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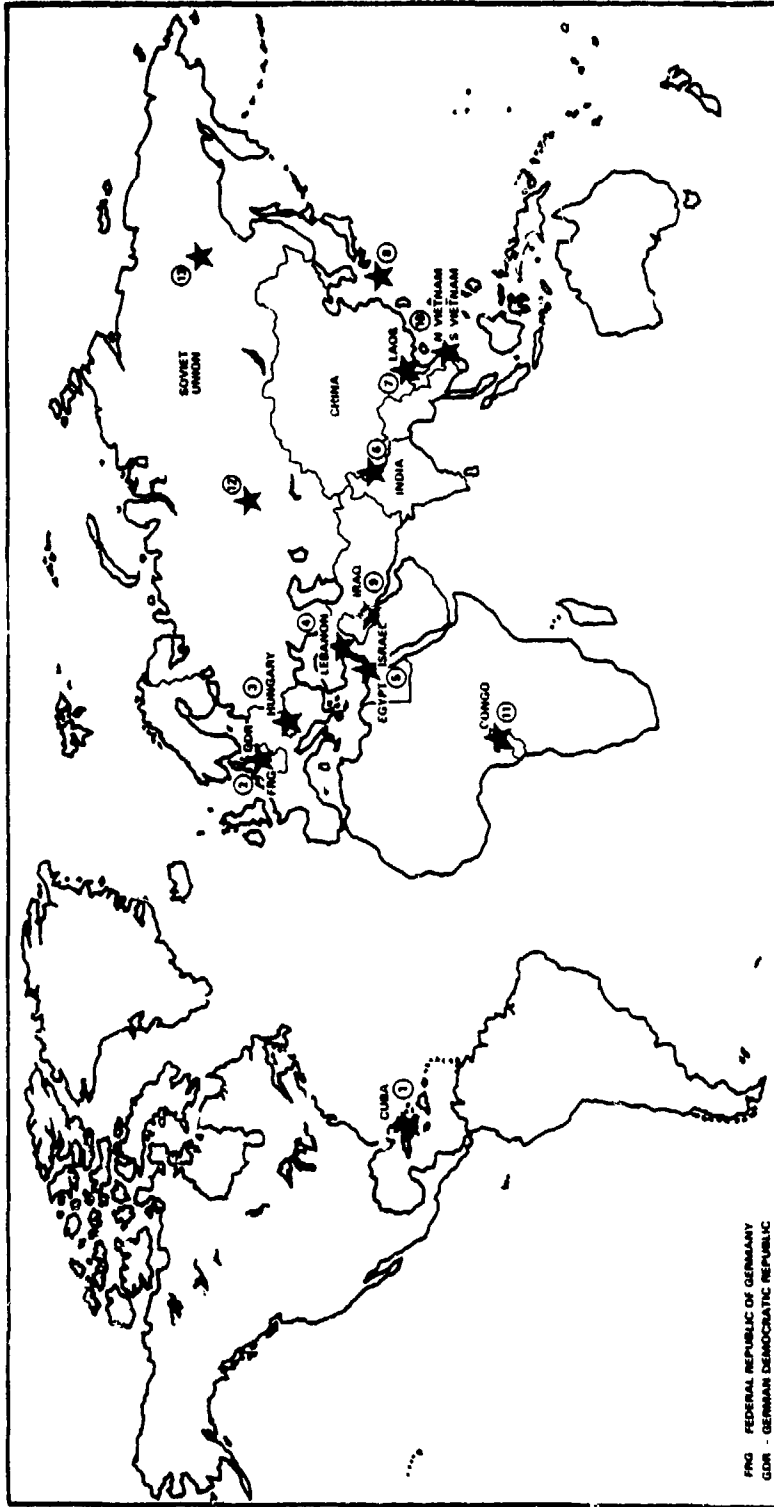
had subsided; the US continued to provide assistance to Vietnam and cultivated ties with its non-communist leader, Diem, while the activities of Ho's forces appeared minimal after their defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu and Ho's setback at the conference table in Geneva.

D. 1955-1960

US interests and objectives during this time period were markedly similar to those discussed for the preceding period. However, US perceptions of the communist threat and strategies to deal with it underwent a subtle reinterpretation. While the threat of monolithic communism continued to weigh heavily on US national security advisers, the nature and scope of communist aggression now appeared capable of manifesting itself in forms other than overt activity. Cloaked in the guise of indigenous rebellion, the communist advance was now seen as a major cause of global unrest, subversive activities, and guerrilla warfare. Moreover, the Kremlin's call for "peaceful coexistence" did not preclude communist-inspired exploitation of political and economic vulnerabilities in the Third World.

US strategies devised during the 1955-1960 period for dealing with this "multi-front" threat were also carried over from the preceding period, although subtly modified. While Dulles' deterrent strategy of "massive retaliation" remained a basic element of US Cold War policy, it was combined with Eisenhower's cautious desire for relaxation of tensions between the two superpowers. Hence, while containment remained a primary national objective, increased emphasis came to rest on deterring total war through the control of arms and the maintenance of a low threshold of global conflict.^{22/} Thus, while Cold War attitudes persisted, the US began to focus on "learning to live with the Communists."^{23/}

As Map 1-3 indicates, the period 1955-1960 witnessed a broad array of crises, any one of which could have developed into a major superpower confrontation. The developing nations of Asia, Latin America, and Africa all posed unique problems for the US and the Soviet Union. South Vietnam was



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viewed as an example of the US success in engendering a "model" democracy in a developing nation. Concerns in Southeast Asia, especially during the last several years of this period, centered primarily on Laos and the activities there of communist insurgents.

1. Interests and Objectives

Consistent with the objectives and interests set forth during the years 1950-1955, the US continued to view Southeast Asia as vitally important, owing to the region's wealth of natural resources. President Eisenhower, in a 1959 speech, noted:

...by strengthening Viet-Nam and helping insure the safety of the South Pacific and Southeast Asia, we gradually develop the great trade potential between this region, rich in natural resources, and highly industrialized Japan to the benefit of both. In this way freedom in the Western Pacific will be greatly strengthened and the interests of the free world advanced.24/

After the resolution of the first Indochinese war which left a divided Vietnam, the importance of South Vietnam as an economic trade link to Japan appeared paramount. The strategic significance of Southeast Asia to the US and its allies was also a persistent theme throughout this period; the possibility of losing another Asian state to the communist orbit would run counter to the primary US objective of this period: the global containment of communist expansion. It was felt that the "loss" of Southeast Asia would:

- Indicate US inability to act resolutely in the face of communist aggression and to maintain a strong, credible, leadership position in the free world;
- Illustrate the weakness of capitalism and democracy;
- Encourage other non-communist Asian states, including Japan and India, to seek accommodation with the Communists.25/

Therefore, while Southeast Asia and, in particular, Vietnam did not consume the attentions of US policy makers during this period, its potential loss would have a major impact on both US Asian and global policy.

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2. Threats

US perceptions of a monolithic communist threat continued throughout this period, regardless of the growing antagonism between the Soviet Union and the PRC. Soviet technological advances, in particular the launching of Sputnik I, greatly alarmed Washington. It was perceived as an ominous indication of overall Soviet military strength - greatly overestimated by the US at this time - and created suspicions in the US as to the Soviet Union's sincerity in calling for "peaceful coexistence" between capitalism and communism.

In Asia, the communist strategy seemed oriented towards non-military forms of aggression; while communist overt military aggression was not ruled out by the US, "subversive activities ranging up to armed insurrection" and "an intensified campaign of communist political, economic and cultural penetration" appeared the more prominent and less easily controlled threat to US interests in the region.^{26/}

Local conflicts - involving low-level subversion, armed insurrection, and protracted guerrilla warfare - concerned US policy makers; they would debilitate weaker states, thereby making them more susceptible to communist penetration. Nationalist uprisings threatening the status quo were frequently considered as communist-inspired. US global objectives were also seen as threatened by the preference for "non-alignment" or neutrality, professed by a number of Third World nations, particularly as regards economic and strategic arrangements.

In Europe, the 1956 invasion of Hungary indicated the limits on the Kremlin's willingness to liberalize, or "de-Stalinize," its policies. The invasion also dealt a decisive blow to Dulles' "liberation" doctrine, for Hungary now appeared even more entwined within the communist bloc. Tensions regarding the status of Berlin, as well as antagonisms between the US French and British over the handling of the Suez crisis threatened both the spirit of this period's mini-detente and the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance.

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3. Strategies

While the US continued to rely on the strategy of "massive retaliation" to deter aggression, other strategies were also developed during the period 1955-1960. The most notable of these was the strategy of "flexible response" articulated by General Maxwell Taylor and the strategy of negotiating with the Soviet Union in the fields of arms control and disarmament.

President Eisenhower did draw somewhat on the principles underlying these strategies, for he gradually came to stress the need for flexibility in dealing with conflicts and for controlling the arms race with the Soviet Union. His growing advocacy of conventional forces backed by comparatively low-yield tactical nuclear weapons was (as the European allies of the US sometimes feared) indicative of this readjustment away from the deterrent strategy of massive retaliation towards more flexibility in dealing with aggression in Europe. Eisenhower's interest in arms control led to the Open Skies Agreement of 1955, the Geneva conference on nuclear test bans, and the 1958 Surprise Attack Conference. The US continued to promote regional collective security arrangements to deter Soviet aggression and to justify the use of US force to meet communist aggression if deterrence failed. An excerpt from President Eisenhower's 1957 message to Congress regarding mutual security programs illustrates this:

We in our own interest, and other free nations in their own interest, have therefore joined in the building and maintenance of a system of collective security in which the effort of each nation strengthens all. Today that system has become the keystone of our own and their security in a tense and uncertain world.27/

To preserve both our economic and strategic interests in Southeast Asia, then, the US drew up detailed strategies for meeting the often subtle threat of communism in the region. The basic national policy statement outlining many of these strategies was NSC 5809. (See Appendix C.) Several of these strategies - for example, those relating to the training of indigenous police forces and the implementation of covert operations - were, in retrospect, the building blocks for future US strategies in

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Southeast Asia, thus paving the way for future US military involvement in the region. Yet, even though national policy makers of this period fashioned strategies for dealing with communist aggression in Indochina, it was not until the following period, beginning with the Kennedy presidency, that attention focused on this particular region.

E. 1960-1965

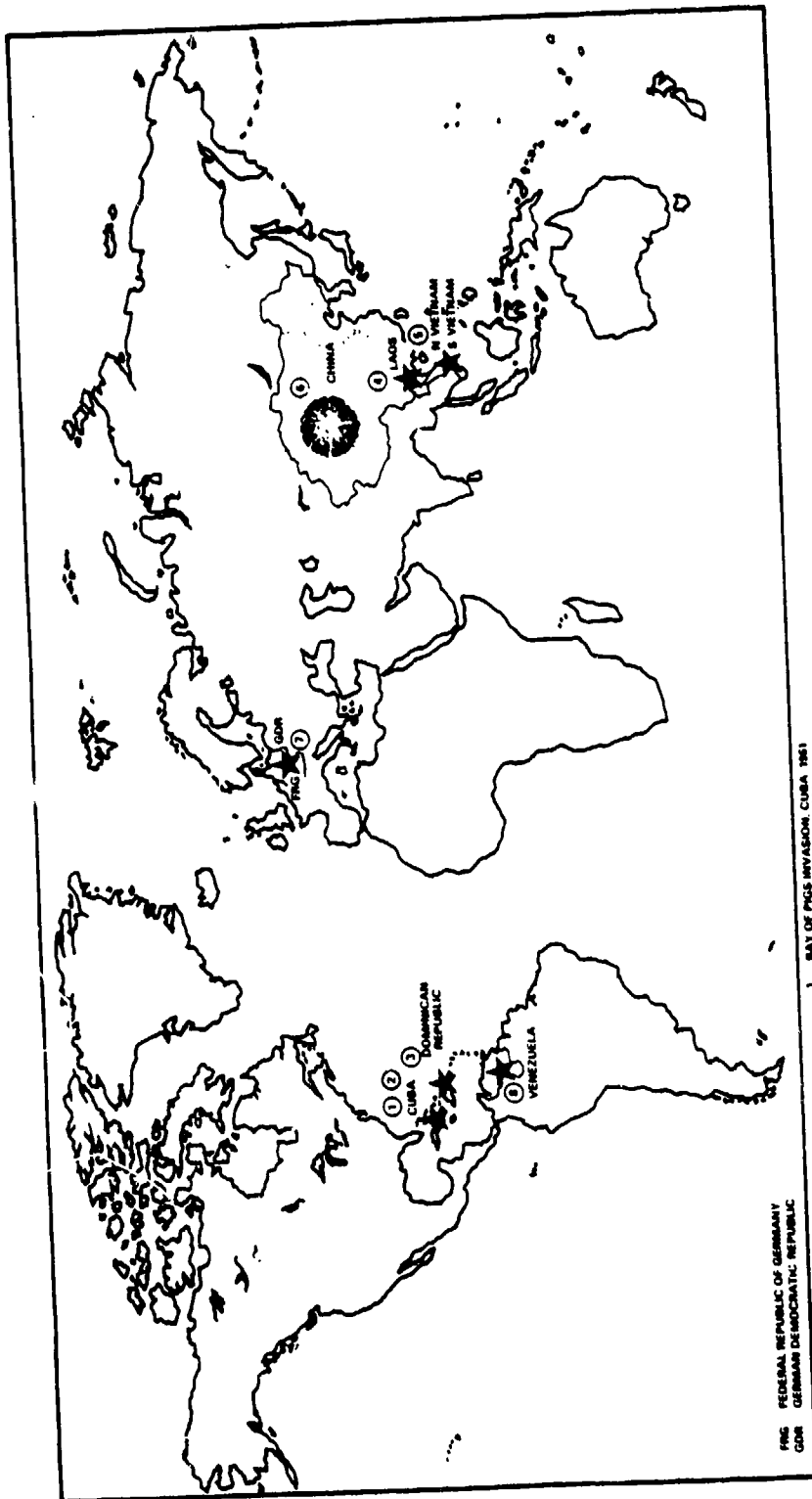
This time period, beginning with the inauguration of President Kennedy in 1960 and ending just prior to the 1965 arrival of US troops at Danang, can be characterized as an era in which new strategies were used for the attainment of old interests and objectives. The Kennedy administration began to stress the necessity of "nation-building" in Vietnam, concentrating on the region as a "test-case" for halting "wars of national liberation." In fact, while policy makers in the preceding time frame viewed subversion and guerrilla warfare as threats to US national objectives, it was not until the Kennedy presidency that a strategy was developed specifically for dealing with these threats.

A rejection of the "massive retaliation" strategy resulted; while the US would maintain an adequate defense in the event of total war, which implied the use of nuclear weapons, US strategists focused intently on developing responses for fighting limited wars, particularly those of an insurgent, subversive nature.^{28/}

Indeed, the majority of conflicts in the world during this period were primarily of a limited, subversive nature (see Map 1-4). Except for the 1962 Cuban missile crisis and continuing tensions over Berlin, both of which involved direct superpower confrontations, this era's focus on flexible response appeared to meet the requirements of the time.

1. Interests and Objectives

Similar to the interests and objectives outlined for the preceding periods, the US continued to stress the need to maintain a free, non-Communist Southeast Asia. In particular, the preservation of Vietnam



FRG FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
GDR GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

1 BAY OF PIGS INVASION, CUBA, 1961
2 CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, 1962
3 CONFLICT IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 1965
4 CONFLICT IN LAOS CONTINUES, EVENTUAL NEUTRALIZATION OF COUNTRY 1962
5 VIETNAM CONFLICT INTENSIFIES, AMERICAN CASUALTIES INCREASE, CHINA TESTS FIRST ATOM BOMB, 1964
6 CHINA TESTS FIRST NUCLEAR DEVICE 1964
7 INSURRECTION IN VENEZUELA, 1962-1963

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MAP 1-4. MAJOR CRISES AND SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AFFECTING U.S. POLICY FOR THE PERIOD 1960-1965

Map 1-4. Major Crises and Significant Events Affecting US Policy for the Period 1960-1965

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from the aggressive machinations of communist China was emphasized.^{29/} Moreover, the emphasis on the region's economic importance to the US was reduced during this period; statements regarding US interests in Southeast Asia focused more on its strategic relevance and on the importance of fulfilling prior US commitments based on obligations set forth by SEATO.^{30/}

The promotion and development of a viable, democratic South Vietnamese government was frequently cited as a major US objective in Southeast Asia. However, US visions of a "model" democracy in Vietnam were shattered by the corrupt and uncompromising Diem regime.

Globally, the US focused on two objectives: deterring total war and countering guerrilla insurgency. After the first tension-filled years of this period, characterized by saber-rattling on the part of both the US and the USSR, emphasis came to rest on reducing the frequency and intensity of superpower brinkmanship. The objective of deterring a nuclear holocaust came to be regarded as a vital interest of both powers.^{31/}

The second objective, aimed directly at the Third World and indirectly at the world's two leading communist nations, entailed proving that the US was capable of dealing effectively with insurgency and guerrilla warfare. So vital was this objective considered that President Kennedy officially endorsed the US Army Special Forces, christening them the "Green Berets." Their responsibilities were greatly expanded in line with the administration's focus on counterinsurgency and covert operations. While the Bay of Pigs episode failed to prove US capabilities in this type of warfare, Vietnam seemed an excellent testing ground for countering "protracted guerrilla warfare" and "wars of national liberation."^{32/}

2. Threats

The threat of communist aggression and imperialism assumed substantial proportions during this time period; in particular, the US perceived Peking as the primary instigator of subversion in Asia, Africa, and even in Latin America. Rhetoric emanating from the Soviet Union, stressing

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Soviet support for "wars of national liberation," and from the PRC, praising the virtues of "protracted guerrilla warfare," reinforced perceptions of a monolithic communist threat. A 1962 JCS assessment stated:

It is recognized that the military and political effort of Communist China...and the political and psychological threat by the USSR...is part of a major campaign to extend communist control beyond the periphery of the Sino-Soviet Bloc...It is, in fact, a planned phase in the communist timetable of world domination.33/

Hence, while President Kennedy indicated an appreciation for the "profound divisions" which, by 1962, had beset would-be communist unity, it was apparent that this appreciation was not shared by all other national policy advisers.34/ Even when the tensions between the USSR and PRC could no longer escape US notice, the dynamics of the rift and its overall effect on the Vietnam conflict were not seriously considered.35/

But, regardless of their external or internal direction, the US considered "wars of national liberation" - entailing cross-border insurgency, brush-fire aggression, and "spread and conquer" tactics - a major threat to its interests in Southeast Asia and, indeed, throughout the Third World. According to President Kennedy,

This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin -- war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, wars by ambush instead of by combat, by infiltration, instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him. It is a form of warfare uniquely adapted to what has been strangely called "wars of liberation," to undermine the efforts of new and poor countries to maintain the freedom that they have finally achieved.36/

Globally, US tensions with European countries, particularly with France, threatened the fragile harmony of the Atlantic Alliance. Disgruntled by the US approach to a multi-lateral force (MLF) concept, France indicated intense displeasure with the US, initiating a reassessment of its

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own commitment to NATO and, in general, causing considerable anxiety within the US government.^{37/} The sincerity of the US commitment to its treaty obligations had, thus, come under question. Although this was not the first time that US allies questioned the sincerity of US intentions, the French reassessment did mark the beginning of a decade in which US credibility became an issue domestically and internationally. The frequency with which national level policy makers stressed our SEATO obligations suggests that the possibility of losing credibility was a major national-level concern. This theme gains increasing relevance in the remaining two time-frames.

3. Strategies

Pursuing its objectives of an independent government and strong economy in South Vietnam, the US increased its political, economic and technical assistance to the country as part of its "nation building" program.

The most important national strategy developed during the 1960-1965 period, influencing not only US involvement in Vietnam but the entire US military posture, was the strategy of "flexible response." The importance of developing a method for dealing with subversion, especially of a limited nature, was a major reason for its evolution - thus, the development of the Counterinsurgency Plan (CIP) and other programs designed to meet the threat of insurgency. In 1961, President Kennedy noted,

We need a greater ability to deal with guerrilla forces, insurrections, and subversion. Much of our effort to create guerrilla and anti-guerrilla capabilities has in the past been aimed at general war. We must be ready now to deal with any use of force, including small externally supported bands of men; and we must help train local forces to be equally effective.^{38/}

The strategy of "flexible response," by which the US was "to respond anywhere, at anytime, with weapons and forces appropriate to the situation," ^{39/} also left open the option of US troop commitment as a means

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by which to realize US national objectives, both global and in Southeast Asia. The Kennedy administration's build-up of US conventional forces was in keeping with this strategy of US flexible response. Citing its SEATO commitments and the Southeast Asian Resolution, the US committed troops to South Vietnam in 1965 and initiated its first bombing campaign against North Vietnamese targets as part of its strategy of flexible response in the Southeast Asian theater.

F. 1965-1970

The 1965-1970 time period can be divided into two sub-periods: the first, 1965-1968, saw a high degree of thematic continuity from the preceding time period; the second, 1969-1970, marked the United States' entry into a fundamentally different era of foreign policy making. While characterized by many of the same objectives and interests which obtained for the four periods discussed above, this period saw the development of new strategies for their realization.

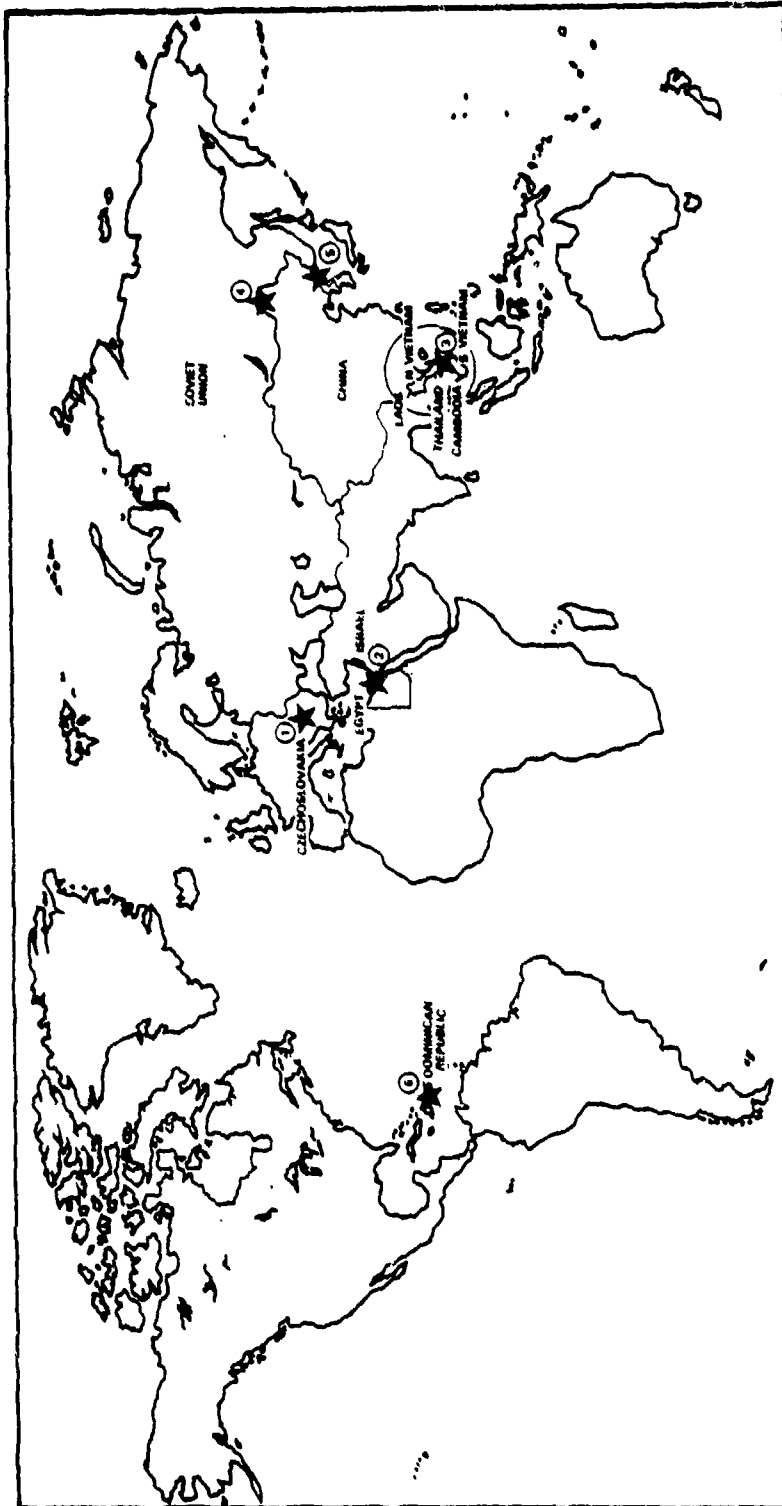
The years 1965-1970 found the Vietnam conflict at the center of US foreign policy concerns. The magnitude of the US investment in men, money, and materiel was unprecedented for any of the preceding time periods. Indeed, as the US investment in the region increased, so too did the frequency with which policy advisers stressed the need to uphold US commitments to its allies and to preserve the credibility and prestige of the US both at home and abroad.

Globally, the US found itself in a less turmoil-ridden environment as compared to the 1960-1965 period. With the exception of Vietnam, the focus of US policy came to rest briefly on the Dominican Republic and on the Middle East. Map 1-5 depicts these and other events which affected US policy for the period under consideration.

1. Interests and Objectives

a. 1965-1968

As in the 1960-1965 period, the US continued to view the containment of communist-inspired aggression in Southeast Asia as a major



- 1 USSR INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1968
- 2 US AIRCRAFT DOWNED IN NORTH VIETNAM, 1967
- 3 VIETNAM CONFLICT CONTINUES, SPREADS INTO SOUTHEAST ASIA
- 4 CAMBODIA AND LAOS, 1970
- 5 USSR PRC BORDER CLASHES, 1969
- 6 SEIZURE OF USS PRIBILBY BY NORTH VIETNAM, 1968
- 7 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC INTERVENTION, 1965

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Map 1-5. Major Crises and Significant Events Affecting US Policy for the Period 1965-1970

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US policy objective. Communist China was perceived to be the primary instigator of aggression in Southeast Asia and, hence, US national interests included the containment of this aggression prior to its eruption into a major global confrontation. Guided by the lesson that "aggression is never satisfied," ^{39/} the preservation of US and allied security in the face of a potential third world war was considered to be of vital importance.

While the frequency of statements regarding the strategic significance of Vietnam decreased during this period, US policy advisers did continue to view the region as vital to US national security.^{41/} More prevalent, however, were statements regarding the preservation of US credibility with its allies. As Secretary Rusk stated in August 1965,

...we know we have a commitment. The South Vietnamese know we have a commitment. The Communist world knows we have a commitment...This means that the integrity of the American commitment is the heart of this problem. ...if our allies, or, more particularly, if our adversaries should consider that the American commitment is not worth anything, then the world would face dangers of which we have not yet dreamed. And so it is important for us to make good on that American commitment to South Vietnam.^{42/}

The US commitment to SEATO and successive presidential pledges served to reinforce the significance of the US investment in Vietnam. The preservation of US integrity and honor, therefore, became a high priority interest, both in waging the war, and, as will be seen, in terminating it.

b. 1969-1970

In this sub-period, the US continued to view the preservation of a free South Vietnam as a vital objective, but in contrast with earlier periods, more emphasis was placed on South Vietnamese participation as a method for securing this objective. This policy, one facet of the Nixon administration's strategy for terminating the conflict, was an election campaign promise and a major objective of this sub-period and the following one.

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While still committed to containing communism in Asia and throughout the world, the US began to focus substantial attention on securing the objective of peace in Southeast Asia. The war's unpopularity, its seemingly endless duration, and its adverse effects on the US economy made the realization of this objective particularly vital.

Consistent with this aim, then, was the objective of reducing tensions with both the USSR and the PRC. The reduction of tensions on a global basis was regarded as a way to eventually terminate the conflict in Southeast Asia. Therefore, this sub-period saw an increase in statements highlighting the US desire to pursue detente; it also witnessed a greater appreciation of Sino-Soviet hostilities, as well as of the potential for exploiting these hostilities as one method for realizing US global objectives.

2. Threats

a. 1965-1968

Similar to perceptions maintained in the 1960-1963 period, in the 1965-1968 sub-period, Communist China was regarded as the most significant danger to the security of Southeast Asia and, therefore, to the security of the US as a Pacific power. In its effort to secure South Vietnam, the US was faced with the threat of cross-border insurgency. This phenomenon made it exceedingly difficult to create and preserve regions in the South "free" of communist infiltration and subversion. Hence, brush-fire aggression, with its tactics of "spread and conquer," was seen not only as threatening the security of Southeast Asia, but also the US ability to counter limited, guerrilla warfare.

A possible withdrawal of US forces from the conflict area was seen by US national security advisers as a psychological threat, with both domestic and international repercussions. If the US failed to curb the advance of communism in Asia, then as President Johnson stated in July, 1965, "no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise or in American protection."43/

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The Third World continued to experience a high degree of turbulence as it moved towards independence, and the US feared this chaos would lend itself too easily to communist subversion. The United States' 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic reflected the Johnson administration's uneasiness over political shifts in the world's developing nations. It was felt that the Soviet Union, while perceived as almost docile when compared with the extremely militant and vocal PRC, would not pass up an opportunity to influence events in a turbulent, Third World nation.

b. 1969-1970

The Third World continued to be a major concern for the US during this sub-period; in addition to lending itself to communist subversion, it was also regarded as a potentially disruptive annoyance, encumbering the US-Soviet-Chinese approach towards detente. The Vietnam conflict was, therefore, in itself, perceived as a threat to detente, as well as to the economic prosperity of the US both domestically and internationally. Widespread inflation coupled with a devalued dollar, outgrowths of managing a war on a peacetime economy, were very real threats to US strength during this sub-period.^{44/} Concurrently, the rise of Japan and the Common Market as strongly endowed competitors threatened to exacerbate the critical US economic situation.

In Southeast Asia, guerrilla warfare and cross-border insurgency, now seen as a predominantly North Vietnamese export, continued to be seen as a major threat to the preservation of a free South Vietnam. In addition, over-reliance by US allies on American assistance and expertise was viewed as a liability to allied self-defense, diminishing allied initiative in meeting their own defense needs. As Richard Nixon said, "for if domination by the aggressor can destroy the freedom of a nation, too much dependence on a protector can eventually erode its dignity."^{45/} The situation in South Vietnam reflected this concern.

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3. Strategies

a. 1965-1969

Just as the interests and objectives for the 1960-1965 period were markedly similar to those for this sub-period, so also were the strategies employed for realizing these objectives during this and the previous period: The significant difference lay in the level of the US commitment - the number of troops, the amount of aid appropriated, and the intensity of bombing - to realizing its policy objectives in Southeast Asia. Consistent with its objective of maintaining a non-communist South Vietnam, the US initiated its "talk-fight" strategy, designed to induce Hanoi and its allies to cease aggression and eventually move towards a position considered by the US as favorable to North-South-US negotiations.

The US continued to commit its resources to South Vietnam; troops, materiel, and economic aid served to reinforce the US investment in the region. They also served to weaken the strategy aimed at inspiring South Vietnamese self-reliance and initiative in developing their own defense capabilities.

b. 1969-1970

The most significant strategy developed during this sub-period for realizing US policy objectives in Southeast Asia was the Nixon Doctrine, laying the groundwork for the gradual termination of hostilities in the region. Its central thesis, said President Nixon:

is that the United States will participate in the defense and development of allies and friends, but that America cannot -- and will not -- conceive ALL the plans, design ALL the programs, execute ALL the decisions, and undertake ALL the defense of the free nations of the world. We will help where it makes a real difference and is considered in our interest.^{46/}

The Nixon Doctrine reflected a vast array of concerns: the economic well-being of the US was jeopardized by over-spending on the war, US NATO allies expressed displeasure over what they perceived as the US

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over-extension in Vietnam, and a commitment to reducing tensions with the USSR and the PRC required a timely resolution of the Vietnam conflict. Hence, this sub-period saw the initiation of the "Vietnamization" strategy, of gradual withdrawal of US troops from South Vietnam, and of attempts at negotiating a durable and honorable peace.^{47/}

While committed to an "era of negotiation," the US continued to provide a high level of military assistance to South Vietnam as a means of preserving the country from a communist takeover and, in addition, as a way to bolster Saigon's morale as the US force withdrawal commenced. Military operations in and over Cambodia were also directed towards these ends.

The Kissinger-Nixon style of diplomacy, characterized by personal and often secret dialogue, served as a tool by which to realize negotiation objectives -- with the PRC and USSR for the purpose of detente, and with Hanoi for the purpose of terminating the war. As will be seen in the next period, 1970-1975, this style of diplomacy did allow for progress in both of the above-mentioned areas. It also allowed for a commitment to be made to South Vietnam which, given the attitude of the US Congress at the time, had little chance, if any, of being upheld.

G. 1970-1975

The 1970-1975 time period evidenced a thematic continuation of the major interests and objectives, perceived threats, and strategies enumerated for the 1969-1970 sub-period. During this final time period, the US found itself in the midst of a major foreign policy reevaluation which had a significant influence on the nature and shape of US international relations. In essence, a set of new objectives dictated that the ideologies of the post-WW II period be substantially discarded; the US objective of terminating hostilities in Southeast Asia and of realizing a durable and honorable peace stimulated the development of a significantly different US foreign policy.

A desire to limit aggression (and the tools of aggression) and establish an international order based on stability, restraint, and peace were

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the major US global objectives during this period. Their realization required a commitment to international partnership, national strength, and a willingness to negotiate.^{48/} In addition, the executive branch's boldness of purpose, built upon linkage and personal diplomacy, served as the driving force for realizing major US objectives during this time period.

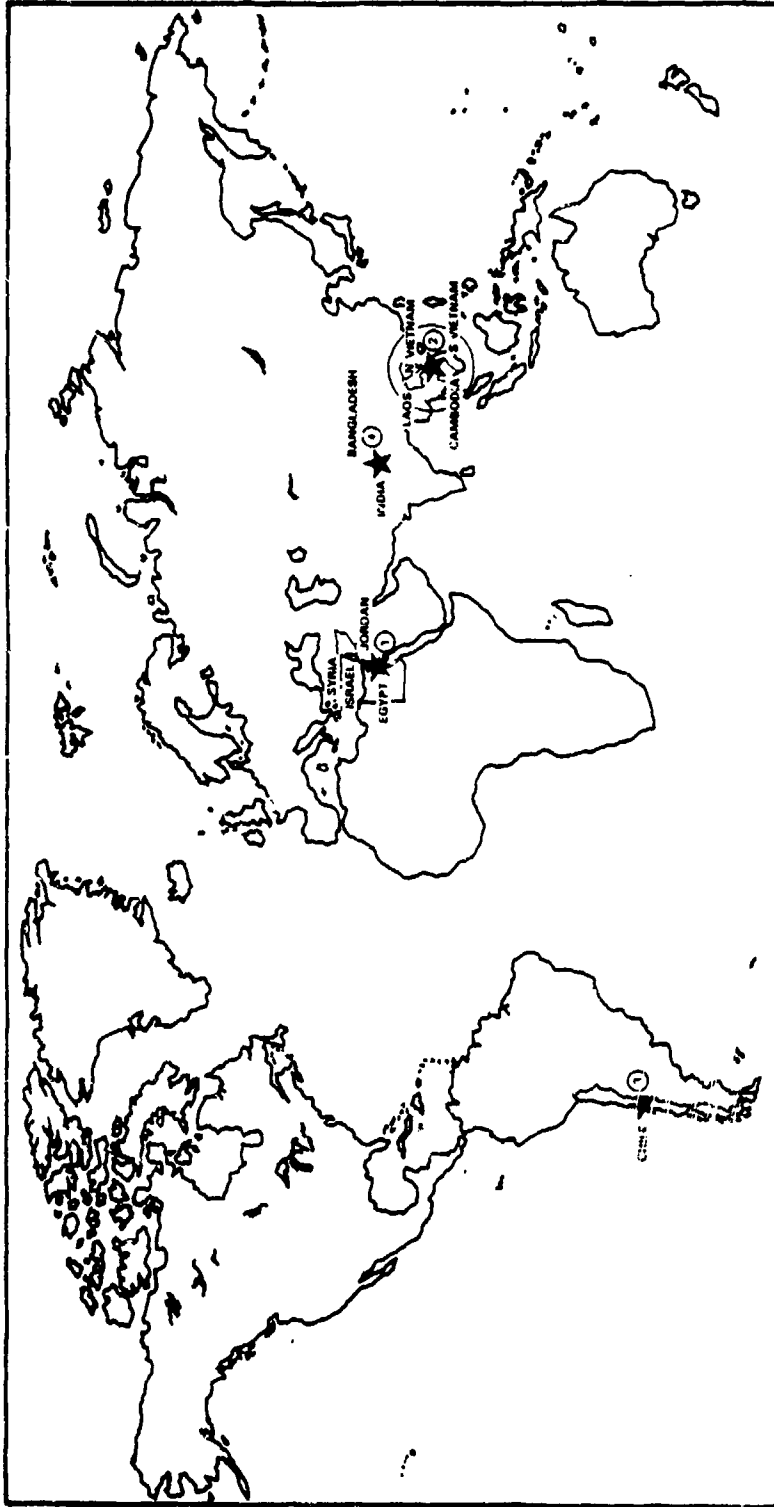
The problem of turbulence in Southeast Asia remained a major concern of US national policy makers. Yet, the desire to progress towards detente with the PRC and the USSR was of equal, if not greater, significance. The Sino-US and Soviet-US rapprochement came to be seen as a powerful diplomatic tool for resolving Southeast Asian hostilities.

As Map 1-6 indicates, other global concerns captured the attention of US policy makers during this period. The Yom Kippur War and the Arab oil embargo of 1973 drew US attention away from Vietnam for which a peace settlement had been negotiated the same year. From the US experience with the Middle East came a greater appreciation of the potency of economic and political regionalism; the Arab-Israeli conflict brought the compatibility of US-allied interests (particularly those of Japan and Western Europe) into question.

1. Interests and Objectives

US interests and objectives for Southeast Asia for the 1970-1975 period emphasized the elimination of hostilities in the region, the realization of a peace which was durable and honorable for both the US and South Vietnam, and the promotion of South Vietnam's (and of other countries' of the region) self-reliance in defending its own national interests and objectives.

The elimination of hostilities in the region paralleled the US global objective of resolving local conflicts prior to their resulting in a major superpower confrontation and prior to the antagonists' use of force to resolve the conflict. The US objective of decreasing tensions with both the PRC and the USSR served the purpose of avoiding a major superpower confrontation as well as of securing Hanoi's acceptance to negotiate more willingly and with less intransigence. While the US gradually withdrew its



1 MIDDLE EAST WAR AND OTHER TENSIONS INCLUDING THE ARAB OIL EMBARGO 1973
2 CONFLICT IN VIETNAM CONTINUES SPREADS INTO CAMBODIA, LAOS
3 PEACE ACCORDS 1973 SOUTH VIETNAM FALLS 1975 COMMUNIST REGIMES
4 TAKEOVER OF CAMBODIA BY KHMER ROUGE IN APRIL 1975
5 COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF LAOS IN DECEMBER 1975
6 BANGLADESH WAR 1971

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Map 1-6. Major Crises and Significant Events Affecting US Policy for the Period 1970-1975

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troops from the South, it increased its bombing activities to compensate for the RVNAF's weakness, to decrease further the number of US war casualties, and to serve notice to Hanoi that it was inherently in its interests to halt insurgency and negotiate a settlement. This objective did, in fact, conflict with the objectives of securing detente and deterring a major confrontation with the world's leading communist powers: the decision to mine Haiphong harbor and, in general, to escalate just prior to the 1972 Moscow summit, was not only a bold move, but a risky one. Yet, in retrospect, the decision appears to have been made based upon a balancing of seemingly opposite objectives. The US had gained a greater appreciation of the Sino-Soviet rift, of the objectives and interests pursued by each of these countries, and of Hanoi's independence in policy formation.^{49/} With these factors in mind, it was possible (albeit risky) to pursue concurrently these two major objectives.

The preservation of US credibility, both domestically and internationally, continued, as before, to be a major US objective. Hence, in Southeast Asia, the search for a lasting and honorable settlement, providing for the maintenance of a free South Vietnam, reflected the US interest in standing by its commitments and in protecting its past investment (of men, materiel, monetary assistance, and pride) in the region.

The US objective of maintaining viable and mutually beneficial security programs, particularly with Western Europe, Japan and Taiwan, found itself jeopardized by US foreign policy initiatives with the Soviet Union and Communist China. The US pro-Israel stance in the face of the Arab oil embargo, the US resistance to British and French efforts to create an independent nuclear force (an objective theoretically in line with the US aim of encouraging greater allied self-reliance), the US non-consultation with its allies concerning its major policy changes regarding the USSR and the PRC, and the US changes in its trade and monetary policies all served to bring the sincerity of this US objective into question. The allied response to US behavior indicated that the post-war era was, indeed, drawing to a close.^{50/} The 1970-1975 period was dynamic, placing in

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opposition, often purposefully, many long-held interests and objectives with new.

2. Threats

A closed, compartmentalized world, divided into a number of dominant and competing blocs consisting of the US, PRC, USSR, Japan, the Common Market, and OPEC - all pursuing self-serving objectives and interests with little regard for international cooperation - was perceived by US policy makers as a threat to both global stability and to US-allied economic and military partnerships.^{51/} Thus, as Winston Lord, Director of the Policy Planning Staff, noted in 1974,

Partners in international politics, as in marriage, take each other for granted only at the risk of divorce. Our alliances must grow or they will wither - adjust to new conditions or become anachronistic...we will advance together, or we can all slide back together. Nations no longer can afford to pursue national or regional or bloc self interest without a broader perspective. Countries must find their self-interest in the common interest and, indeed, recognize that the two are often identical.^{52/}

Threats to global stability evolved in response to US-allied reevaluations of their common objective. Perceptions of the monolithic communist threat and the concomitant policy to contain this threat were considered misguided.^{53/} Therefore, while communist insurgency and terrorism continued to be regarded as a major threat to US (and allied) security interests, the fact that these activities were independently initiated or exported, rather than monolithically conceived, made it more difficult to garner broad-based support for alliances based upon the principles of containment.

The economic difficulties of the US during this time period also served to threaten US-allied economic and political relations. Deficit spending, a weakened dollar, massive inflation, and Arab oil politics prompted the Nixon administration to develop a number of economic policies designed to stabilize the US economy; many of these actions were met with

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considerable allied consternation. Global interdependence, based on mutual understanding and restraint and applied not only to US-Soviet and Sino-US relations, but also to US-allied relations, was regarded as a major US objective; the inability to realize this goal was, in itself, a threat. According to Mr. Lord,

Global interdependence is no longer a slogan, but an insistent reality. The crises of oil, food, and inflation cast shadows over the future of developed and developing, rich and poor, consumer and producer nations alike. Not only the prospects for world growth are at stake. A serious economic decline could trigger widespread domestic instability and tear the fabric of international political cooperation upon which peace itself depends.^{54/}

Domestic difficulties generated by the Watergate scandal also posed a serious threat to US credibility, both at home and abroad.

In Southeast Asia, US national policy makers identified several threats. Prior to the 1973 peace settlement, the most significant threats appeared to be Hanoi's (and the Viet Cong's) continued aggression coupled with intransigence regarding negotiations, and South Vietnam's internal weaknesses - economical, political, and military. Communist infiltration from the North, Hanoi's use of supply routes and sanctuaries in neighboring countries, and the replenishing of the North's military stockpile, primarily by the USSR, represented major obstacles to the US objectives of preserving a free South Vietnam (and Cambodia) and of reaching a negotiated settlement.

The US goal of peace with honor (and of diminishing its own presence in the region) was also obstructed by South Vietnam's initial refusal to accept an in-place cease-fire and by its rejection of the Vietnamese-language version of what had been considered the final text of the treaty.^{55/} South Vietnam felt threatened not only by communist aggression but also by its own realization that its forces were not yet adequately prepared to fulfill the objectives of the Nixon Doctrine.

After the peace settlement was signed, US national policy makers identified two serious threats to US interests in Southeast Asia: South

Vietnam continued to have difficulties in self-defense and the North continued its aggression after a brief respite. By mid-1974, the situation in South Vietnam and Cambodia had begun to deteriorate significantly. From this point until the communist successes in these countries in the spring of 1975, the US executive sought a way to counter this threat. As will be seen in Chapter 3 of this volume (in the sections dealing with the Nixon and Ford administrations), Congressional restraints on the provision of US aid to the region came to be considered, at least from the executive perspective, a threat as great, if perhaps not greater, than Hanoi's aggression.^{56/}

3. Strategies

The basic strategies used by US national policy makers for realizing US objectives during this time period were, essentially, those determined in the 1969-1970 sub-period. In the international arena, the US sought to accomplish its goal of relaxing tensions with the Soviet Union and Communist China; the basic strategy employed was that of personal diplomacy which included a tough negotiating posture and the strategy of linkage. The Nixon-Kissinger initiatives in summit negotiations served as major vehicles for realizing a number of important arms limitations negotiations, specifically the SALT I agreement and the MBFR and SALT II talks. The strategy of exploiting the hostilities existing between Moscow and Peking was also utilized as a means both for realizing detente with each of the powers and for bringing pressure on Hanoi to negotiate.

The strategies set forth in the Nixon Doctrine also obtained for the 1970-1975 period: In Southeast Asia, "Vietnamization" continued as did the provision of US military assistance to those countries in the region dependent upon the US for the development of their indigenous defense capabilities. Prior to the 1973 peace settlement, the US also employed coercive diplomacy in the region (a strategy which was, in essence, a continuation of Johnson's "talk-fight" strategy) as a way to compel Hanoi towards negotiations.

The maintenance of US bilateral and multilateral defense arrangements, such as SEATO, was emphasized during this period, both as a way to

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assuage suspicions regarding the US sincerity in upholding its commitments as it withdrew gradually from South Vietnam, and as a way to deter aggression in countries aligned with the US.

The applicability of these strategies to US-Southeast Asian relations during this time period was, however, limited: their effectiveness was diminished both by US Congressional (and public) constraints on renewing US involvement in the region and by national-level confusion generated by the Watergate crisis. In theory, the Nixon Doctrine could have been both a realistic and effective strategy if applied to a country which had not been exposed to a high level of US presence or, for that matter, to the US willingness to fight the "host" country's battles. For South Vietnam, the strategy of self-reliance was so poorly understood and applied that it stood little chance of succeeding.

H. ANALYTIC SUMMARY AND INSIGHTS

The 1945-1950 period was marked by an ardent and perhaps idealistic desire for a tension-free international system; it also witnessed an attempt by national policy makers to reconcile US anticolonialist and anticommunist policies. With the outbreak of the Korean war, the second period, 1950-1955, saw the advance of monolithic communism as the major threat to US interests and objectives. The US strategy of "massive retaliation" and the "liberation" doctrine ("roll back") earmarked the US for the role of "world policeman." The third period, 1955-1960, saw a degree of continuity with the preceding period regarding perceptions of the monolithic communist threat; however, while the bi-polar world continued to be marked by considerable tension between the two superpowers, the US and the USSR, a perceptible softening in the rhetoric of "massive retaliation" and "liberation" occurred, illustrating the US policy makers' gradual approach to arms limitations and the reduction of international tensions. A new strategy, "flexible response," which included counterinsurgency to fight what Khrushchev termed "wars of national liberation," marked the 1960-1965 period; in addition, the preservation of US credibility was found to be of

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increasing relevance as a major national interest and its potential loss, a threat to US international and domestic prestige.

The fifth period, 1965-1970, was divided into two sub-periods: The first, terminating with the close of the Johnson presidency, saw a continuation of themes from the preceding period, although greater emphasis was placed on the PRC as the major threat to US interests and objectives. The second sub-period ushered in a substantially new era of national policy which, while characterized by similar objectives and interests, saw the development of several new strategies for their realization. In the 1970-1975 period, the major goal and preoccupation of US policy makers was the establishment of a stable, international system based on mutual understanding and restraint, an objective which was remarkably similar to that of the 1945-1950 period (see Figure I-1). The credibility and prestige themes continued to permeate US national policy during this period, and the employment of coercive and secret diplomacy came to the center of US foreign policy conduct.

In the majority of time periods discussed, the US found itself constrained by its perceptions of its own leadership role in the world and of the threats which appeared to obstruct the realization of US objectives. As the strongest post-World War II power - both economically and militarily - the US fashioned its global policy on the premise that it was America's duty to assume the role of global arbiter and policeman. Although this perspective was a "natural" response precipitated by the realities operating in the immediate post-war environment, it was also one founded upon what many prominent individuals have termed arrogance. This viewpoint came to be so firmly ingrained in the minds of US policy makers, that, in essence, it served to limit the US appreciation of the other forces at work in the global environment, particularly of nationalism.

Inconsistencies in policy served to undermine the effectiveness and credibility of the United States. For instance, the US World War II objective of defeating the Japanese served as the basis for cooperation and friendship between US forces in Southeast Asia with Southeast Asian, particularly Vietnamese, nationalists. Yet, after their common enemy had been

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defeated, the predominantly Eurocentric US policy perspective reasserted itself; to many Vietnamese nationalists, this appeared to be a betrayal of confidence, laying the foundation for future anti-American (and anti-imperialist and anticolonialist) attitudes on the part of numerous Vietnamese people.

The objective of containing the communist threat, globally and in Southeast Asia, was the major US objective throughout most of the time periods discussed. This aim conflicted steadily with the US objective of promoting self-determination and civil liberties on a global basis, particularly in Vietnam. The battle against communism took precedence over these other US objectives. Hence, the US came to support predominantly authoritarian, repressive regimes, as in South Vietnam and South Korea, rationalizing this support by citing the domino theory and the lessons of Munich. The differences between civil wars, colonial wars, and "wars of national liberation" were too frequently clouded by perceptions of the monolithic communist threat.

Finally, terms such as "interest," "objective," and "threat" have been frequently misunderstood, overused, or misapplied by US national policy makers. In scrutinizing the major US policy statements for the period 1945-1975, especially regarding Southeast Asia, one is immediately struck by the frequency with which these terms are employed, often emphasized by the adjective "vital." Such verbal extravagance leads to generalization and ambiguity, making it difficult for the US public, US policy makers, and US allies and non-allies to grasp the true level of priority attached to US interests, objectives, and threats. For the purpose of a coherent and consistent US foreign policy, it is of paramount importance that such terms be applied carefully, with the utmost attention given to identifying real US objectives and interests in a realistic manner. Frequent US national level reviews of long-held objectives and interests, of perceived threats, and of strategies to meet the threats or accomplish US national objectives and interests would facilitate this process of evaluation and reevaluation.

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CHAPTER 1 ENDNOTES

1. These definitions were drawn primarily from the JCS manual, Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, Publication 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968). Modifications were made, however, to reflect a blend of military and civilian usage of these terms.
2. The five year "slice" approach was utilized by Paul Kattenburg in "Vietnam and US Diplomacy 1940-1970," Orbis, 15, #13 (Fall 1971), pp. 818-841. Although Kattenburg uses the device as an analytic tool as the Vietnam Study team does, his methodology and conclusions are somewhat different. Nevertheless, his article served as the basic inspiration for this chapter's five-year breakdown.
3. Figure 1-1 was compiled from sources which appear in the Volume III Bibliography. The major source used in drawing up this graphic was United States - Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967, Study Prepared by the Department of Defense (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971) hereafter DOD US/VN Relations. All entries are paraphrases of US national policy statements made by US national level policy makers.
4. See DOD US/VN Relations, Book 1 for a discussion of US wartime interaction with Ho Chi Minh. The US OSS had cultivated ties with Ho, prompting the latter to view the US as the only major post-war power truly interested in and capable of intervening for the Viet-Minh on the side of independence, countering the French colonialist drive in Indochina.
5. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, p. 266, "Report by NSC on US Position in Indochina."
6. Churchill's "iron-curtain" speech, in Paul Hammond, Cold War and Detente (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanich, 1975), p. 32.
7. See Kattenburg, p. 821. For a discussion of the US handling of the Dutch colonialist problem, see Henry Kenny, "The Changing Importance of Vietnam in United States Policy: 1949-1962," Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1974.
8. President Truman in his March 1947 message known as the "Truman Doctrine," cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 1, IV A 5.
9. For an illuminating and controversial treatment of the Truman Doctrine, NSC 68, and Cold War Strategies, see Richard M. Freeland's work, The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism (New York: Schocken Books, 1974).

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10. Walter La Feber, America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1975, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976); see also Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism (London: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 188-191; NSC 68 was indeed a highly controversial document which decreed that the Soviet Union sought complete dominion over the entire globe. Regardless of a number of top-ranking State Department officials' opposing viewpoints (including those of Kennan and Bowlen), who argued that this was not the USSR's intention, the document and strategy it proposed served the aim of providing an "enemy" for the US, giving purpose and definition to the US in the new post-war environment. See also Hammond, pp. 61-62.
11. See Chapter 3 of this volume - "The Truman Administration" for more details on the provision of aid.
12. See, for example, Under Secretary of State Bedell Smith's statement of April 19, 1954, in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 7, B-12; Dulles' statements in Book 1, II B-21, and in Book 7, B-15; Eisenhower's statement in Book 7, B-10. Interestingly, the 1950-1955 and 1955-1960 periods were, in fact, the only periods during which the economic significance of the Southeast Asian region was given primary stress. Some analysts (Schlosinger, for example) indicate that with the development of synthetic rubber, the natural rubber of Southeast Asia was no longer of prime interest to the US or Japan. Other analysts contend that the US emphasis on the significance of Southeast Asia as a resource base was extremely exaggerated; their view sees Southeast Asia's economic merits as having little or no importance. It should be noted that Japan's resurgence as an industrial power derived mainly from US requirements for support of US/UN forces in Korea.
13. See, for example, the JCS memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, 10 April 1950, on the strategic importance of Southeast Asia, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 8, pp. 308-313.
14. Ambrose, p. 229; and Kenny, p. 326.
15. See Kenny, p. 326, and DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 2, p. A-2.
16. See Chapter 3 of this volume - "The Eisenhower Administration" for additional information on the strategy of "united action."
17. For example, see NSC 124 (February 1952) which recommended in the case of overt Chinese intervention:
 - o naval, air, and logistical support of French Union forces;
 - o naval blockade of Communist China; and
 - o attacks by land and carrier-based aircraft on military targets in Mainland China. DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 1, II.B. 1.a., p. B-5.
18. Fred Greene, US Policy and the Security of Asia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 72-73.

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19. See Chapter III of this volume - "The Eisenhower Administration" for a detailed discussion of the US call for united action during the Dien Bien Phu crisis.
20. John Foster Dulles, "The Doctrine of Massive Retaliation", in Richard Head and Ervin Rokke, eds., American Defense Policy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
21. Ibid.
22. Ambrose, p. 258.
23. Ibid., p. 262. This "softer" approach, apparent in late 1957-1958, particularly after Dulles' departure from the administration, waned at the close of the Eisenhower administration. Tensions over Berlin, the Cuban Revolution, and the U-2 incident (leading to the aborted summit) were major factors in this US turn away from the mini-detente evident during these years.
24. President Eisenhower, Address at Gettysburg College, "The Importance of Understanding," April 4, 1959, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, B-51.
25. Taken from NSC 5809, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 10, 1115, and NSC 5602/1, pp. 1054-1056.
26. See NSC 5809, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 10, p. 1115.
27. President Eisenhower, "Special Message to the Congress on the Mutual Security Programs," May 21, 1957, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, B-32.
28. For a brief discussion of the basic tenets of "Flexible Response," see Maxwell Taylor's "Flexible Response: A New National Military Program," in Head and Rokke, pp. 65-67.
29. During this period, Secretary of State Dean Rusk went to great lengths to highlight the Peking-Hanoi alliance. He consistently pinpointed the PRC as responsible for the aggression in Vietnam. See for example, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 12, VI B, p. 8 - Interview with Rusk on February 25, 1965; also, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, D-25 - NBC conversation with Rusk on January 18, 1965; also Ambrose, pp. 301-302.
30. See "Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense" from the JCS on the strategic importance of the Southeast Asian mainland, January 13, 1962, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 12, V B 4, pp. 448-453.
31. While this period did not witness a great deal of progress in detente in general, and in arm limitations in particular, it should be noted that an underground nuclear test ban and the establishment of the Moscow-Washington hot-line occurred during this time frame.

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32. See, for example, NSAM 288, an extract of which appears in DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 3, IV C 1, p. 47, as an indication of the national level acceptance of Vietnam as a "test-case."
33. Memo for the Secretary of Defense, 13 January 1962 from the JCS on the strategic importance of the Southeast Asian mainland, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 12, V B 4, p. 450.
34. See President Kennedy's speech at the University of California, March 23, 1962, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, C-18. Kennedy's appreciation was also rather limited in that, while he admitted international communism was suffering from disunity, he also maintained that the USSR and PRC were still pursuing the goal of a monolithic communist world.
35. See Secretary Rusk's news conference in which he quoted President Johnson, February 25, 1965, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 12, VI B, p. 4. From 1962-1964, the split was particularly obvious. During the Brezhnev power consolidation period (1964-1965), however, the USSR and PRC did attempt to initiate a healing of the rift, which, ultimately, failed. In all fairness, President Johnson may have taken notice of this brief "thaw" between the USSR and the PRC and assumed the two powers were united and unified in their objectives and strategies regarding Vietnam.
36. President Kennedy's address at graduation exercises of the US Military Academy, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, p. C-23.
37. De Gualle, already distrustful of US independence in deciding to threaten a nuclear attack without consulting its NATO allies in Europe (re. missiles in Cuba), was further dismayed by the US veto in multi-lateral force decision making. See Ambrose, p. 295.
38. J. F. Kennedy, "Special Message to Congress on the Defense Budget," March 28, 1961. DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, C-7.
39. From General Maxwell Taylor's "Flexible Response: A New National Military Program," Rokke and Head, p. 65.
40. LBJ speech at John Hopkins, April 17, 1965, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 12, VI B-13.
41. See, for example, Address by Leonard Unger, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, "Present Objectives and Future Possibilities in Southeast Asia," April 19, 1965, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, D-33; also, Statement by Secretary Robert McNamara before the Subcommittee on Department of Defense Appropriations, August 4, 1965, "Build up of US Forces in Vietnam," Bk. 7, D-51.

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42. Secretary Rusk, Interview with Mr. Reasoner and Mr. Kendrick, August 8, 1965, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 7, D-55.
43. LBJ press conference, July 28, 1965, DOD US/VN Relations, Bk. 12, VI B-17.
44. See Volume IV - U.S. Domestic Factors Influencing Vietnam War Policy Making, Chapter 4 "US Economy and the Vietnam War," for a detailed discussion of the war's impact on the US economic situation.
45. Elliot Richardson, quoting President Richard M. Nixon, "The Foreign Policy of the Nixon Administration: Its Aims and Strategies," Department of State Bulletin, LXI, 1978, p. 258.
46. Richard M. Nixon, "United States Foreign Policy for the 1970's," in Head and Rokke, pp. 75-76.
47. See Chapter 3 of this volume, the Nixon administration, for a more detailed discussion of the Vietnamization, withdrawal, and negotiation strategies.
48. President Richard M. Nixon, "US Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace," Report to the Congress, February 18, 1970, Department of State Bulletin, LXII, 1602 (March 9, 1970), p. 275; and Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush, "Department Discussed Security Assistance Program for Fiscal Year 1974," Department of State Bulletin, LXVII, 1770, p. 697.
49. See, for example, Nixon's "US Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace," op. cit. For a well developed discussion of the US balancing of these objectives, see Hammond, pp. 269-278.
50. The allied response, while varied, indicated a position marked by more independence and initiative: West Germany moved to settle the Berlin issue; Western Europe and Japan, in line with their own national interests and needs, moved to support the Arabs in the Middle East as the oil embargo took its toll on their economies. For a detailed discussion of US policy during this period and its impact on US-allied relations, see Hammond, Chapter 11, "Nixon and the New 'Era of Negotiations.'" Also, see LaFeber, pp. 275, 283.
51. LaFeber, p. 265.
52. Address by Winston Lord, Director, Policy Planning Staff, "America's Purposes in an Ambiguous Age," Department of State Bulletin, LXXI, 1845, (November 4, 1974), pp. 618, 621.

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53. Lord, pp. 618-619; President Nixon, "US Foreign Policy for the 1970's," pp. 274-275; and Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush, "The US Commitment to a Generation of Peace," Department of State Bulletin, LXX, 1825, p. 649.
54. Lord, p. 621.
55. Hammond, pp. 280-281.
56. See, for example, Secretary of State Kissinger's "America's Strength and America's Purposes," Department of State Bulletin, LXXI, 1838, p. 377.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS WHICH INFLUENCED US INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

A. INTRODUCTION

Past history shapes perceptions of present day events as well as the evolution of future events. This statement, albeit unoriginal, is extremely relevant to a discussion of US foreign policy for Vietnam. During the course of the war, US policy makers frequently drew from the "lessons" of history in explaining a particular course of action - political or military. Simplistic adages, such as "never again" or "remember Munich," were often used in lieu of developing more precise and perhaps more convincing explanations for making a particular policy decision. In addition, they often came to be voiced indiscriminately, leading to generalization, overuse, and misapplication.

This chapter focuses on "historical precedents" and US policy makers' perceptions of these precedents. The discussion centers on the use of these precedents their role in determining and constraining US policy formation for Vietnam. The term "historical precedent" is defined in this chapter as a decision or event that occurred in the past which served as an example or lesson justifying a subsequent action. The precedents analyzed in this chapter are chosen only insofar as they relate to US involvement in Vietnam. Those chosen are considered to have been the most important and most frequently cited precedents influencing US national-level policy makers. 1/ Figure 2-1 provides an overview of the historical precedents discussed in this chapter and summarizes their role in shaping or constraining US involvement in Vietnam. 2/

B. APPEASEMENT IN MUNICH

The 1930s taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. 3/

(President John F. Kennedy, 1962.)

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HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS AS INFLUENCES IN THE VIETNAM WAR	
PRECEDENTS	HOW THE PRECEDENTS INFLUENCED US POLICIES
JUSTIFICATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM	
APPEASEMENT AT MUNICH	APPEASEMENT ENCOURAGED NAZI AGGRESSION; SIMILAR APPEASEMENT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE COMMUNISTS.
"LOSS" OF CHINA	THE DEMOCRATS WERE ACCUSED OF LOSING CHINA, WHICH, INTER ALIA, RESULTED IN THE MCCARTHY ERA; ALSO LOSS OF VIETNAM TO THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT CRIPPLE ANY INCUMBENT ADMINISTRATION.
CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS AND BERLIN CRISES	FIRMNESS WITH THE ENEMY, GOOD CRISIS MANAGEMENT, AND GRADUAL PRESSURE ON THE ENEMY LED TO SUCCESS IN THESE CRISES AND PROVIDED A BASIS FOR THE SUBSEQUENT US POLICY OF GRADUALISM IN VIETNAM.
LIMITED INTERVENTION TO CONTAIN COMMUNISM INCLUDING LEBANON, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND THE BAY OF PIGS.	US INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WERE RELATIVELY BLOODLESS, SHORT-TERM AND DECISIVE OPERATIONS. CONVERSELY, FAILURE AT THE BAY OF PIGS PROVIDED AN INCENTIVE FOR PRESIDENT KENNEDY TO DEMONSTRATE SUCCESS IN VIETNAM.
CONSTRAINTS ON THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR	
FAILURE OF THE BAY OF PIGS	US FAILURE IN THE BAY OF PIGS OPERATION MILITATED AGAINST DIRECT US INTERVENTION IN LAOS IN 1961 AND 1962. HAVING FAILED TO DESPOSE CASTRO IN CUBA, KENNEDY APPROVED THE DIEM COUP ONLY AFTER BEING ASSURED IT WOULD SUCCEED.
CHINESE INTERVENTION DURING THE KOREAN WAR	SUPRISE CHINESE INTERVENTION IN KOREA DRASTICALLY CHANGED THE COURSE AND COST OF THE KOREAN WAR. THEREAFTER US ADMINISTRATIONS AVOIDED ACTIONS THAT MIGHT BE PROVOCATIVE TO THE CHINESE.
THE RESPECTED ADAGE: "NEVER AGAIN" SEND TROOPS TO FIGHT IN THE ASIAN MAINLAND (AS IN KOREA)	EISENHOWER DECIDED NOT TO SUPPORT THE FRENCH AT DIEN BIEN PHU. KENNEDY RESISTED COMMITTING GROUND COMBAT FORCES IN LAOS AND VIETNAM. JOHNSON COMMITTED GROUND COMBAT FORCES ONLY AFTER AIR POWER FAILED TO DETER THE DRV.

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Figure 2.1. A Summary of Historical Precedents as they Influenced US Involvement in Vietnam. 2/

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When Senator Henry Jackson accused President Carter of "appeasing" the Soviets with the SALT II treaty, he was invoking one of the most agonizing memories of his generation. 4/ The lesson, derived from the 1938 appeasement of Hitler in Munich, has been frequently cited by US post-WWII administrations to gain support for a policy of containing communism and aggression. US presidents and congressmen repeatedly warned that "appeasement" in Greece, Berlin, Quemoy, Cuba, or Indochina would only encourage more aggression. In 1947, Congressman Lyndon Johnson cited Munich to support Truman's aid proposal for Greece and Turkey. 5/ During the Vietnam conflict, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson both stressed that US vital interests would be jeopardized if the US failed to meet force with force, thereby showing strong determination to halt communist expansion in the Third World.

As a result of the Munich experience, the concept "appeasement" has come to connote weakness and conciliation -- "peace at any price" -- rather than a means for buying time. 6/ The traumatic Munich experience seemed to teach that US national leaders meet aggression quickly, decisively, and ideally multi-laterally; moreover, it cautioned that unchecked aggression is less restrained with each success, prompting states to fall like dominoes, as happened after Munich. Finally, the Munich experience warned that a statesman must be willing to go to war if his policy and determination are to appear credible.

Each of the major decisions that increased US involvement in Vietnam, beginning with the 1950 decisions to recognize Bao Dai and provide aid and advisers (MAAG) to the Associated States, was based on a belief that the Munich analogy applied to Vietnam. In June 1950, with the outbreak of the Korean War, President Truman justified his request for the rapid dispatch of aid to Indochina by stating,

The Communists...are engaged in a monstrous conspiracy... the best time to meet the threat is in the beginning...if [peace loving nations] don't act together, they are likely to be picked off, one by one. 7/

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Eisenhower called for united action in 1954 when he asked Churchill to join forces with the US in preventing the collapse of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu:

We failed to halt Hirohito, Mussolini, and Hitler by not acting in unity and in time. That marked the beginning of many years of stark tragedy and desperate peril...May it not be that our nations have learned something from the lesson? 8/

Winston Churchill, however, rejected the applicability of the Munich analogy to the situation in Indochina. 9/

To justify the deepening of America's involvement in Vietnam, President Johnson and his advisers cited the danger of appeasement and the domino effect: "aggression feeds upon aggression." 10/ Only a week before the Gulf of Tonkin incident, President Johnson stated,

...we learned from Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite of aggression. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another country, bringing with it perhaps even larger war and crueller conflict as we have learned from the lessons of history. 11/

President Johnson's Secretary of State, Mr. Rusk, extended the Munich analogy further, equating Hitler's Mein Kampf with Chinese Defense Minister Lin Piao's 1965 message to the Third World. 12/ President Johnson also alluded to the Munich analogy when he suggested that US involvement in Vietnam was probably deterring World War III:

Your American President cannot tell you with certainty that a Southeast Asia dominated by Communist power would bring a third world war much closer to terrible reality. One could hope that this would not be so. But all that we have learned in this tragic century strongly suggests to me it would be so. 13/

With the Tet offensive of 1968 and the subsequent winding down of the US involvement in Vietnam, the Munich analogy as applied to Vietnam was dropped from the speeches of key US policy makers. However, the necessity

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of showing domestic and international audiences that the US was not selling out an ally or appeasing an aggressor was reflected in phrases such as "peace with honor" used by the Nixon administration.

Was the Munich analogy misused and overused? Indeed, this analogy was frequently drawn by US national leaders to justify or explain the US need to meet aggression anywhere (in this case, in Vietnam) in an assertive, aggressive, non-appeasing manner because it served as a convenient and familiar rallying device for eliciting a strong, often emotional response from the US public in support of US policies directed at forcefully containing or curtailing (communist) aggression. Frequent application of historical analogies, however, often leads to misapplication and generalization. They often come to serve as a basis for action, causing the necessary reflective analysis of each singular case to be neglected or even avoided. The Munich experience and the circumstances surrounding it were unique, not wholly or even partially applicable to the US experience in Vietnam. It appears that of the post-WWII presidents, only President Kennedy seemed to appreciate that historical analogies must be drawn sparingly and with great care; 14/ for few if any contemporary events or crises mirror those found in past history.

In the case of Vietnam, memories of Munich encouraged a forceful US response; they may also have contributed to the United States' reticence in negotiating with the North Vietnamese, particularly in the 1960-1965 time-frame. Broadly speaking, reticence to negotiate based on the fear that negotiating might be construed as or result in "appeasement" illustrates an incorrect usage of the Munich analogy. 15/ The diplomatic tragedy of Munich, however, had such international consequence that its use (and, hence, misuse) as an historical analogy, especially regarding Vietnam, was, problematically, a "natural" response to aggression in the post-WWII environment.

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C. THE FALL OF CHINA

The United States is determined that the Republic of Vietnam shall not be lost. 16/

(President John F. Kennedy, 1961.)

I am not going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the president who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went. 17/

(President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963.)

China's "loss" to the communists in 1949 served as an historical precedent compelling each successive post-WWII president to support South Vietnam in order to contain communism and prevent the loss of another Asian nation. Mao Tse-tung's victory over Chiang Kai-shek was indeed a traumatic event for the United States. At the time, the Chinese Communist victory was considered a severe threat to US global, strategic interests. On the domestic front, it had severe consequences for the Democratic administration and provided ample ammunition for Senator Joseph McCarthy in his proceedings against alleged communists in the US government.

Although the Chinese mainland was not actually the United States' to "lose," its fall has been considered by some analysts to have been "the greatest single tragedy of modern times." 18/ Peking's alignment with Moscow significantly altered the balance of power in Asia. 19/ And Mao's vociferous anti-US stance was also a grave disappointment for the US: before his death, President Roosevelt had hoped that China would serve as a stabilizing influence in Asia during the continent's transition from colonialism to nationalism. 20/

After the fall, communist activities in Asia were seen as directly inspired by Peking. Soviet support for the Mao regime during the early and mid-1950's intensified the US fear of international communism, serving as the basis for US perceptions of communism as a monolithic entity, even after the Peking-Moscow union had become severely strained.

On the domestic front, the "loss" of China, followed shortly by the Korean War, contributed to the 1952 defeat of the Democratic party. 21/

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The view that China's fall occurred because of communist plotting from within the Department of State led to the McCarthy hearings. As a result, the US government lost officials who best understood Asian communism. The purge of China experts also discouraged Foreign Service Officers from independent thinking and encouraged many to assume a rigid anticommunist stance. 22/

China's "loss," or the "fall of China syndrome" 23/ prompted subsequent post-WWII presidents to intervene actively and often forcefully in Asia in support of non-communists faced with communist aggression. Both Korea and Vietnam can be seen in this light. The "loss" of South Vietnam to communism was feared by US national level policy makers because it could potentially,

- Alter the strategic balance of power in Asia, benefiting the communist world;
- Lead to a domino-like fall of other states in Southeast Asia;
- Encourage the communists to foment additional "wars of liberation;"
- Weaken the SEATO alliance;
- Weaken US allies' faith in America's commitments abroad;
- "Stimulate bitter domestic controversies in the US and be seized upon by extreme elements to divide the country and harass the administration"; 24/ and
- Mar the place in history of the president who "lost" South Vietnam.

During the United States' involvement in Vietnam, the "fall of China syndrome" weighed heavily on US national level policy makers. According to Charles Yost,

The US leaders recollection of the domestic-political consequences of the "loss" of China and their fear of similar consequences to them if Vietnam were "lost" was perhaps the decisive factor in determining their policies and behavior. 25/

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Even Republican President Nixon, while withdrawing US forces from Vietnam, was fearful of a political backlash reminiscent of the 1952 and 1968 Democratic Party's defeat if he were to "lose" South Vietnam. Mr. Yost states,

President Nixon continued to be so convinced that the "silent majority" would still react with political fury to a defeat in Vietnam that for four more years he pursued the will o' wisp of winning the war while withdrawing from it. 26/

Was the "loss" of China and the events surrounding it analogous to the situation in Vietnam? The evidence indicates that the Nationalists "lost" China because of their corrupt, inefficient leadership, a lack of broad based popular support, and a lack of ideological purpose. The eminent Sinologist John King Fairbanks pointed out that, although from 1945-1959 Soviet aid to the Chinese Communists was less than US aid to the Chinese Nationalists, Mao's forces were, nevertheless, capable of mobilizing and utilizing the potentialities of revolution while the Nationalists were not. 27/ Some analysts contend that the Chinese Nationalists would have been defeated even if the US had committed one million men to the region. 28/ In Vietnam, during the 1968 Tet offensive, US gradualism left open the possibility of sending an additional 200-250 thousand US troops to Vietnam in order to deal with the growing number of communist troops in South Vietnam. 29/ Although President Johnson did not fulfill this request, the already large number of US troops in Vietnam indicated the administration's fear of being the second Democratic administration since World War II to "lose" an Asian country to communism.

It is possible to draw some parallels between the leadership capabilities of Nationalist Chinese Chiang Kai-shek and South Vietnamese Ngo Dinh Diem. The regimes of both men were corrupt, repressive, and without broad based popular support. Broadly speaking, a government that is incapable of demonstrating real leadership has little chance for survival. A State Department cable dated May 1949, transmitted over Secretary Acheson's name to the US consulate in Hanoi, made this point regarding Bao Dai's political

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viability at the time. Drawing from the US China experience, a comparison was made between the leadership problems in China pre-Mao and Vietnam:

The experience [of] China has shown [that] no amount [of] US military and economic aid can save [the] government, even if recognized by all other powers and [if it] possessed full opportunity [to] achieve national aims, unless it can rally support [of the] people against commies by affording representation [of] all important national groups, manifesting devotion to national as opposed [to] personal or party interests, and demonstrating real leadership. 30/

Had this cable been written a decade or so later regarding the Diem government, it would have been an equally realistic assessment.

Finally, at the time of China's fall, there were a number of talented, experienced China "watchers" within the US government who were capable of assessing the situation in civil war-torn China. The purge of these old China hands, a by-product of the McCarthy era, left a void in the State Department's pool of Asian experts. 31/ This purge also had an effect on US Vietnam policy making; whereas the old Asian experts had generally promoted compromise between the Communists and Nationalists in China, the new Asian hands urged intervention at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. 32/ By way of contrast, the Cuban missile crisis found a number of well-informed Sovietologists on hand to gauge the situation and advise the President accordingly.

The "loss" of China, therefore, served as a justification for US involvement in Vietnam as it had for US participation in the Korean War. As an historical precedent, it served as the basis for a gradualist approach to the insurgency in Vietnam, particularly since many US policy makers believed that the US had done too little in trying to "save" China in 1949. Strong criticism regarding Congressional aid limitations at the time of Mao's victory may also have encouraged the Congress, especially during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, to be less "budget-conscious" and more willing to appropriate funds for the Vietnam war effort.

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D. THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS AND BERLIN: FIRMNESS WITH THE ADVERSARY

The challenge that we face in Southeast Asia today is the same challenge that we have faced with courage and that we have met with strength in Greece and Turkey, in Berlin and Korea, in Lebanon and in Cuba, ...there can be no peace by aggression and no immunity from reply. 33/

(President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964.)

The Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and successive crises over Berlin served as precedents illustrating the benefits inherent in good crisis management, in dealing firmly with an adversary, and in employing gradual coercion as an indication of US resolve, while simultaneously allowing the antagonist time to comply with US demands. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson both hoped to resolve the Vietnam challenge by employing similar tactics in order to compel Hanoi to halt its subversive activities. The Cuban missile crisis brought the US and USSR very near to a major nuclear confrontation; this fact counseled the need for more moderate policies of co-existence on the part of both the US and the Soviet Union. The 1963 nuclear test ban treaty and the establishment of the Moscow-Washington hot-line illustrated the moderating influence of that crisis, marking a watershed in Soviet-American relations 34/ and prompting both countries to refrain from a nuclear confrontation over Vietnam.

After three years of post-WWII bureaucratic wrangling between the four occupying powers in Berlin over the city's status, the Soviets and East Germans attempted to blockade Berlin in order to prevent Western access. The US responded with the famous Berlin Airlift of 1948. 35/ Minor crises erupted in Berlin during the 1950s, culminating in the 1961 erection of the Berlin Wall which the Soviets and East Germans hoped would halt the flow of East Berliners to the West. Construction of the wall resulted in a tense confrontation between US and Soviet forces during which President Kennedy mobilized US reserve forces to reinforce the West Berlin garrison. 36/

The installation of missiles in Cuba, 90 miles from the United States, was considered a significant threat to US security. US national policy makers felt their installation would enhance the Soviet Union's strategic

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posture and, perhaps more importantly, would damage US prestige and threaten US strategic interests. If the Soviets were successful in establishing and maintaining a missile base in the Western Hemisphere, then, in the view of the Kennedy administration, the politico-diplomatic damage to the US would be sizeable. After the crisis, President Kennedy indicated that a Soviet success "would have politically changed the balance of power. It would have appeared to, and appearances contribute to reality." 37/

The US experiences in Berlin and Cuba illustrated the US ability to deal firmly with the Soviet Union in order to achieve US objectives while also avoiding a nuclear conflict. In both crises Kennedy respected the rules of good crisis management:

- Never corner an opponent and always assist him to save face;
- Convince the opponent that the situation threatens US vital interests;
- Clearly communicate to the opponent one's own goals and intentions, and pressure the opponent by gradual steps;
- Provide a time limit within which the opponent may respond;
- Convincingly threaten the opponent if he fails to respond in a favorable or timely fashion; and
- Offer an incentive or "carrot" as well as a "stick." 38/

In the 1961 Berlin crisis, President Kennedy moved gradually to increase US pressure on the Soviets. In order to convince Khrushchev how strongly the US regarded Berlin as a vital interest, President Kennedy called up the Reserves and mobilized for a possible conflict. Khrushchev finally removed his deadline for Kennedy and the US president removed his threat of attack. The Berlin Wall marked the termination of the crisis, halting the flow of refugees yet allowing Western access to Berlin. 39/

In the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy again moved in gradual steps, increasing US pressure on the Soviet Union to remove its missiles; he provided a time limit and, if the Soviets persisted, a threat of nuclear attack. Kennedy employed the "carrot and stick" strategy: the "carrot" was a promise not to invade Cuba, and the "stick" - a tacit ultimatum of nuclear war. In addition, Kennedy privately assured Khrushchev that the US

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would remove its own missiles from Turkey after the crisis. 40/ Khrushchev valued the political significance of this act, aware that US missiles in Turkey were obsolete. 41/ After the missile crisis was defused, President Kennedy observed that the lesson "toughness with the communists guarantees their collapse or compliance" should not necessarily be concluded from his administration's victory. 42/

The Cuban missile crisis tested the strength of American leadership and its ability to manage power effectively. Theodore Sorenson, Kennedy's Special Assistant at the time, provided this assessment,

To the whole world it displayed the ripening of an American leadership unsurpassed in the responsible management of power. From the moment of challenge the American President never had a doubt about the need for a hard response. But throughout the crisis he coolly and exactly measured the level of force necessary to deal with the level of threat ... At every stage he gave his adversary time for reflection and reappraisal, taking care not to force him into "spasm" reactions or to cut off his retreat. 43/

Southeast Asia posed no sudden crises of the magnitude that the Berlin or Cuba crises caused for the Kennedy Administration (the Laotian crisis was temporized by the neutrality agreement of 1962). Nonetheless, Kennedy responded to communist subversion and terrorism in Vietnam with a similar, gradual approach, increasing the amount of US aid and the number of US advisors allocated for South Vietnam. President Kennedy was determined to prove that "wars of national liberation" would not succeed and that the US was capable of meeting this type of challenge through counter-insurgency tactics.

The situation in Vietnam reached crisis proportions during the Johnson administration. As vice president under Kennedy, Johnson had observed the administration's management of the Berlin and Cuban crises, concluding that the danger of nuclear blackmail could be removed by facing down the Soviet threat. 44/ Johnson had hoped for similar success in forcing Hanoi to desist in its support of Southern insurgency by gradually escalating US bombing against the North. When this strategy failed, he decided upon the

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next gradual step of committing US combat forces to curtail Hanoi's aggression. In the case of Vietnam, however, each increase in US pressure was met by an increase in pressure from the DRV and the NLF.

During the Nixon administration, Henry Kissinger employed a similar "carrot and stick" strategy as a way to move Hanoi towards negotiations. In this instance, the "carrot" was an offer of substantial aid to rebuild the North; the "stick" - more bombing. 45/ This strategy was not, however, effective for dealing with the Vietnam conflict. Two essential elements present in the Cuba and Berlin crises were absent from the Vietnam situation. While the Soviet Union had apparently set its own limits as to the level of US punishment it was willing to endure for involvement in Berlin and Cuba, the DRV was uncompromising in its determination to reunify Vietnam and seemed to have no such limitations. In the Berlin and Cuba crises, the US employed a potent threat that, if absolutely necessary, would have been fulfilled; in Vietnam, the US was unwilling to exert the kind of military pressure (i.e., nuclear attack) sufficient to threaten the North's survival, thereby compelling Hanoi to meet US demands and desist from aggressive activities. Time limits proved to be inapplicable to Vietnam.

Therefore, while the Berlin and Cuba precedents influenced both President Johnson and Nixon to meet the adversary firmly, both in war and negotiations, the Vietnam conflict was actually too long and complex to be handled as Berlin and Cuba were; the lessons learned from Cuba and Berlin by both Moscow and Washington cautioned against employing the "carrot and (nuclear) stick" in Vietnam.

E. THE BAY OF PIGS: LIMITED INTERVENTION AS A MEANS OF CONTAINMENT

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their destinies in their own way. 46/

(President Harry S. Truman, 1947.)

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The principle espoused by President Truman in his 1947 speech regarding aid to Greece and Turkey became the basis for the majority of US economic and military assistance programs during the next thirty years. The purpose of the Truman Doctrine, as it came to be called, was to contain communist aggression and protect US strategic economic, and political interests on a global basis. It served as the basis for covert intervention in Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, the Philippines, and Chile; and overt action in Korea, Lebanon, the Dominican Republic, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. 47/ A number of these earlier operations, such as the 1953 reinstatement of the Shah of Iran, came to be regarded by US national policy makers as having been so successful that future presidents were also prompted to endorse strategies of limited covert politico-military intervention.

In 1958, when President Eisenhower sent US Marines to Lebanon to quell pro-Nasser Arabs and protect US oil interests, he cited the Truman Doctrine as the justification for the action. Eisenhower limited the action to a take over of the airfields, capital, and other key installations while the Lebanese government regained stability. 48/ In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson sent US Marines and an airborne division to the Dominican Republic to restore order, protect American citizens and their interests, and deter a possible communist coup. The intervention was limited in time, economic cost, and number of troops and casualties. This experience probably encouraged President Johnson in his hope that Vietnam would also be a short-term limited war which would be resolved quickly and satisfactorily. 49/

One of the most significant examples of limited intervention, from the standpoint of lessons later applied to US involvement in Indochina, was the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961. The invasion was an American-planned attempt to depose Fidel Castro and establish a government more amicable to the US. Only ninety miles from the Florida coast, a communist Cuba was seen as a direct threat to the US, capable of exporting communist subversion to neighboring Latin American countries.

Encouraged by a 1954 success in Guatemala, the CIA drew up invasion plans during the Eisenhower administration. 50/ After his inauguration,

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President Kennedy soon came under heavy pressure to accept and act upon these plans. 51/ The new President, while agreeing to the plan, imposed one condition on the invasion: he ruled out any direct, overt participation of US armed forces in order to avoid the appearance of direct interference in Cuba's internal affairs and any associated international criticism of US activities, particularly by the OAS. This limitation, however, greatly weakened the CIA-sponsored operation; the spring 1961 invasion by Cuban exiles failed miserably.

The operation's failure had a substantial impact on the US, particularly on its international relations. US support of the invasion strengthened Castro's popular support in Cuba and revived Latin American fears of American imperialism, negating Kennedy's attempt to identify the US with anticolonialism. It undermined American allies' confidence in US leadership, while the Soviet Union gained prestige as a protector of small nations, threatening the US with retaliation for its actions. More important, the humiliation compelled Kennedy to follow a harder line in the Cold War to prove his toughness both to domestic critics and to the Soviet leaders. 52/

President Kennedy learned some valuable lessons from this experience at a relatively low cost. The most important lesson counseled the need for caution before embarking on military ventures in the Third World. President Kennedy's appreciation of this lesson was reflected in his statement after the invasion's failure: "If it hadn't been for Cuba, we might be about to intervene in Laos....I might have taken [Lemnitzer's] advice seriously," referring to the JCS's urging to bomb and/or invade Laos. 53/ Thus, Kennedy was more wary of advice from the JCS and CIA, instituting stricter controls over CIA activities. For alternative military advice, he turned to his newly appointed Special Military Representative, General Maxwell Taylor. Furthermore, the White House staff was given more responsibility in foreign and defense affairs; the staff offices were moved closer to the president, providing better coordination within the executive branch.

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The US attitude towards the overthrow of South Vietnam's President Diem was also influenced by the Bay of Pigs experience. Several of President Kennedy's advisers, in particular Ambassador Frederick Nolting and Vice President Johnson, urged that Diem be allowed to continue as president, hoping Diem would institute much-needed reforms to gain the confidence and support of the South Vietnamese populace. As US patience with Diem dwindled, the South Vietnamese generals advised US officials they were prepared to remove Diem from power. President Kennedy, however, remained noncommittal, wishing to avoid world criticism for interfering in the internal affairs of another Third World nation.^{54/} (For a detailed discussion of US involvement in the Diem overthrow see Chapter 3 - The Kennedy Administration.)

Although the Bay of Pigs experience imposed certain constraints on US activities in Southeast Asia, the experience also served as an incentive to succeed in Vietnam. Kennedy's embarrassment over the invasion's failure, his settling for the neutralization of Laos and for the USSR's erection of the Berlin Wall, and, finally, his 1961 Vienna encounter with the gruff and vociferous Nikita Khrushchev prompted the President to remark to James Reston,

...the only place in the world where there was a real challenge was in Vietnam, and now we have a problem in trying to make our power credible, ... Vietnam looks like the place. ^{55/}

President Kennedy felt compelled to balance what he perceived as blows to his and America's prestige by taking an aggressive stand in Vietnam. South Vietnam, therefore, was to serve as a "test-case" of America's capabilities in containing Third World based communist aggression in a limited war, the successful outcome of which was of paramount importance to the United States.

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F. THE CHINESE INTERVENTION IN KOREA

...it is clear that, to bomb the North sufficiently to make a radical impact on Hanoi's political, economic and social structure, would require an effort which we could make but which would not be stomached either by our own people or by world opinion; and it would involve a serious risk of drawing us into open war with China. 56/

(Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, 1966.)

The fear that the Chinese might intervene as they did in the Korean War acted as one of the most significant constraints on US policy makers in their determination of a military strategy for Vietnam. The Chinese intervention in Korea changed the direction of both the Korean War and of the Cold War: it prevented a UN victory and led to a stalemate involving two painful years of negotiations. Moreover, it resulted in greater hostilities between the US and Communist China, tensions which continued for the next 20 years. 57/

In 1952, American policy makers expected the Chinese Communists to intervene in Vietnam against the French, regarding as evidence of this intention the massing of Chinese troops on the Tonkin border. 58/ The US contingency plans for responding to massive Chinese intervention at that time included a naval blockade, interdiction of Chinese communication lines, and possible air strikes against military targets in China. 59/ It was generally assumed by US strategists that if a "wider war" resulted owing to Chinese intervention, then nuclear weapons would be used to terminate the conflict. In April 1954, at the time of the Dien Bien Phu siege, Secretary of State Dulles met with Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai in Geneva. Based on his discussions with the two ministers regarding the situation in Vietnam, Dulles remarked in a memo to Washington:

The attitude here of Molotov and Chou En-lai's statement yesterday lead me to rate more highly than heretofore the probability that any open US intervention

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would be answered by open Chinese intervention with consequences of general war in Asia.60/ (Emphasis added.)

Hence, US fears of Chinese intervention in Vietnam arose early in the history of US involvement in that area, continuing throughout most of the war.

The "flash point" (or point beyond which Communist China could no longer tolerate US actions in Vietnam, prompting them to intervene) was difficult for US policy makers to quantify. Although fear of Chinese intervention persisted throughout most of the war years, speculations as to which US action would trigger Chinese intervention changed over time. The level of escalation considered by the US as being tolerable to the Chinese was reassessed frequently during the war. In 1954, Secretary Dulles defined the "flash point" as that time when the US initiated "any open intervention;" in 1965, the Chinese themselves defined the "flash point" as the moment when US troops entered North Vietnam. 61/

During the United States' intermittent bombing of North Vietnam, specific targets most likely to be provocative were avoided. President Johnson believed that a "wider war" with China or the Soviet Union could be prevented if certain actions were avoided, including:

- Use of nuclear weapons;
- Invasion of North Vietnam;
- Destruction of the dike system in North Vietnam;
- Bombardment of civilian population centers;
- Attacks on lines of communication close to the Chinese border;
- Mining of North Vietnamese ports; and
- Increases in clandestine operations in, or an invasion of, Cambodia and Laos.

The prohibitions against the first four were so strong that these particular actions were never seriously proposed; the others were suggested by the JCS at various times and rejected. 62/ Yet US policy makers were never absolutely sure that by avoiding certain provocative actions, the Chinese would not intervene. As George Ball said in 1966, "Unhappily we will not find out [where the flash point is] until after the catastrophe." 63/

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Later, President Nixon and his policy advisers appeared less fearful of triggering Communist Chinese intervention. The Nixon administration's initiation of detente with the PRC and the USSR decreased the likelihood that a "flash point" would be reached. This leverage allowed the US to conduct bombing of and operations in Cambodia and Laos, as well as to bomb targets and mine waters in North Vietnam heretofore considered too provocative.

The collection, US-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, (the DoD Pentagon Papers) includes many memos and conversations in which a decision to escalate operations against North Vietnam or its sanctuaries was postponed or never approved out of fear that the Chinese would intervene. When considering the US intervention at Dien Bien Phu, the State Department urged caution, suggesting that the US make clear to both the PRC and US allies that US intervention would not have as its aim the overthrow or destruction of the Peking regime. 64/ Ten years later, because of uncertainty as to the Chinese response, the US refrained from a retaliatory strike after the Viet Cong attack on the Bien Hoa base in November 1964. 65/ For the same reason, air strikes against POL facilities, power stations, airfields, and surface-to-air missile sites were postponed in 1964-65. US decision makers also postponed destruction of the MIGS and airfield in Phuc Yet for three months in 1965. 66/ Likewise, in August 1967, President Johnson rejected using air power to close the port of Haiphong and to destroy a section of the dike system. 67/ Decisions to mine the North's major ports were also constrained by fears of possible Soviet retaliation, either directly in Vietnam or elsewhere, such as in Berlin. 68/

Chinese and Soviet warnings increased in number when President Johnson initiated the first US bombing campaigns against the North and committed troops to the South. In March 1965, both Brezhnev and Chou En-lai offered to send in troops in support of Hanoi. 69/ The Chinese did, in fact, intervene in the war between 1964 and 1971 by sending military personnel to North Vietnam, including engineers, railroad construction workers, and anti-aircraft personnel, some of whom were casualties of American bombing. 70/ But the Chinese never responded by sending a "yellow horde" into Vietnam as happened in Korea.

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The major effect that the fear of Chinese intervention had on the US conduct of the war from 1961-1968 was that it limited the scope and nature of US military operations. By proceeding gradually (in reaction to increasing DRV-NLF pressure), the US felt it could gauge the Chinese-Soviet reaction and, thereby, avoid a major confrontation with either power. The United States' gradual escalation, however, afforded North Vietnam the time to replenish both men and materiel, as well as to augment its resources with those provided by the USSR and the PRC. In 1968, Clark Clifford offered this pessimistic appraisal:

If we send in 100,000 men, the North Vietnamese will meet us. If North Vietnam runs out of men, the Chinese will send in volunteers. Russia and China don't intend for us to win the war. 71/

The JCS argued that once the US had committed itself to the defense of South Vietnam, no restrictions should be placed on the US conduct of the war; 72/ nevertheless, each administration felt compelled to limit US military action out of concern for a wider war. Admiral Sharp, among others, criticized the restrictions placed on the US military; he argued that the "political and diplomatic circles in Washington were disproportionately concerned with the possibility of Communist Chinese and Soviet intervention, throttling the military's ability to conclude successfully the commitment into which that leadership had drawn us." 73/ Others maintained a similar point of view. According to Bernard Brodie,

We have seen the US engage itself in a foolish and costly war in Vietnam, but with critical restraint with respect to anything that might involve China or the Soviet Union, and doing so despite the fact that the cost of that restraint was humiliation and military failure in Vietnam. 74/

Whereas the US military enjoyed considerable flexibility in the conventional fighting employed in Korea short of using nuclear weapons or violating the Manchurian sanctuary, in Vietnam US military planners were frustrated by the constraints on operations against Hanoi which had been imposed from fear that the Chinese or Soviets might intervene in response.

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It is possible, however, that fear of a wider war constrained the Chinese more than the US. In the 1960s, the Chinese had many internal difficulties with which to contend, including the upheaval caused by the Cultural Revolution from which they are still trying to recover. These problems may have restrained the PRC from intervening in Vietnam, making their provision of aid to Hanoi a more realistic and feasible course of action for them at the time. General Maxwell Taylor suggested that the Chinese and Soviets may have feared confrontation with the US more than the US feared one with them. 75/ Certainly the idea of a major superpower confrontation prompted both the US and the two major communist powers to be cautious during the Vietnam conflict. Even if the Chinese had been ready to directly intervene, the North Vietnamese would not have been enthusiastic about having great numbers of Chinese on their soil again. Historically, considerable enmity has existed between the Vietnamese and Chinese for centuries; China controlled Vietnam for over a thousand years. As an example of the Vietnamese disdain for the Chinese, Ho Chi Minh stated in 1945:

The French are foreigners. They are weak...Colonialism is dying out. Nothing will be able to withstand world pressure for independence. They may stay for a while, but they will have to go because the white man is finished in Asia. But if the Chinese stay now, they will never leave. For me, I prefer to smell French sh-- for five years, rather than Chinese sh-- for the rest of my life. 76/

Fear of Chinese intervention coupled with a desire to avoid a nuclear confrontation between the major superpowers, therefore, counseled US restraint in determining military strategies for Vietnam. The Korean precedent of Chinese intervention shaped this attitude. The gradual Sino-US rapprochement of the early 1970s eased the intensity of this heretofore prevalent US fear, allowing for actions to be taken previously considered too provocative.

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G. "NEVER AGAIN" EMPLOY COMBAT TROOPS IN AN ASIAN LAND WAR

We don't want our American boys to do the fighting for Asian boys. We don't want to get involved in a nation with 700 million people and get tied down in a land war in Asia. 77/

(President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964.)

The fear of another protracted Asian land war like Korea served to restrain Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy from committing US ground forces to Vietnam. After the Korean War, which resulted in a stalemate after long negotiations, a number of high-ranking US military leaders 78/ and civilians stressed the importance of "never again" committing American ground forces to a ground war in Asia.

Several factors militated against such a commitment:

- The vast expanse of Asia with its huge population historically placed the foreign invader at a disadvantage;
- Geopolitical boundaries provided numerous potential sanctuaries;
- The terrain and climate of many parts of Asia, particularly in Indochina, were not conducive to operations by modern, sophisticated armed forces;
- The communications infrastructure was primitive, lacking modern roads, railroads, ports, harbors, and airfields needed to support US combat forces;
- The enormous engineering and logistical problems involved in supporting combat operations in Indochina required exceptionally heavy commitments of combat service support units;
- Heavy casualties could be expected to result from a combination of enemy action, disease, and sickness during a protracted war; and
- The communists in Asia had ready access to almost unlimited personnel and materiel and enjoyed relatively safe lines of communication.

Advocates of air and naval power during the Dien Bien Phu crisis contended that ground combat troops were not needed in Indochina; air support

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alone would do the job, although tactical nuclear weapons would possibly be required. The Chairman of the JCS at the time, Admiral Radford, was such an advocate. He proposed "Operation Vautour" (Vulture) which would have provided approximately 200 Naval aircraft from two US carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin and land-based US Airforce planes from the Philippines to attack General Giap's three divisions of Viet Minh surrounding Dien Bien Phu. Vice President Nixon and Secretary of State Dulles supported Admiral Radford, but Congress and others in the military who opposed his plan prevailed. It was felt that air and naval power alone could not do the job intended and that ground forces would inevitably be needed. 79/ General Matthew B. Ridgeway, US Army Chief of Staff, cautioned President Eisenhower in the strongest terms not to intervene at Dien Bien Phu:

If we did go into Indo-China, we would have to win. We would have to go in with a military force adequate in all its branches, and that meant a very strong ground force--an Army that could not only stand the normal attrition of battle, but could absorb heavy casualties from the jungle heat, and the rots and fevers which afflict the white man in the tropics. We could not again afford to accept anything short of decisive military victory. 80/

Not only would intervention at Dien Bien Phu be infeasible, but also costly and neocolonialist. 81/ Senator John Stennis also drew from the Korean experience, stating in a letter to Secretary of Defense Wilson in January 1954:

We should certainly stop short of sending our troops or airmen to this area...when we send one group, we shall have to send another to protect the first....I do not think we can at all afford to take chances on becoming participants in Indo-China. 82/

President Kennedy was consistently opposed to sending ground troops to Vietnam, although he did not openly admit his opposition for fear of criticism. 83/ He had been warned against future involvement in Asian land wars by both President Eisenhower and General MacArthur. Kennedy's aversion to waging a "white man's" war contributed further to his reluctance to

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commit combat forces to Vietnam; in lieu of this course of action, he continued to send aid and advisors to South Vietnam and promoted the development of a counterinsurgency program. 84/

By March 1965, the imperatives of the deteriorating situation in South Vietnam, however, convinced President Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson and his principal advisers that a cautious, carefully orchestrated commitment of US forces to the South could prevent its loss to the communists without enlarging the war beyond the two Vietnams. The decision to commit US ground forces to Vietnam was based on a number of reasons, including:

- The need to counter the South's deteriorating situation in the war;
- The need to bolster South Vietnam's morale and determination;
- Prior US bombing campaigns had failed to slow DRV and NLF aggression;
- By 1965, the US conventional force posture had improved; 85/
- The Chinese, it was felt, would not intervene as long as US troops conducted operations in the South without crossing into North Vietnam; 86/ and
- The need to prove US capabilities in Vietnam.

It is quite possible that the above reasons negated the potency of the "never again" adage in the minds of Johnson administration decision makers. President Eisenhower gave credence to "never again" owing to the freshness of the United States' Korean experience. President Kennedy, warned by both President Eisenhower and General MacArthur to avoid US involvement in an Asian land war, was also, thereby, constrained from sending US combat troops to Asia, particularly to Indochina. Had the Bay of Pigs mission succeeded, however, Kennedy might have been more receptive to the idea of committing US forces to Laos and/or Vietnam. While not an overt commitment of US combat forces to an Asian land war, counterinsurgency operations and bombing campaigns prior to the 1965 force commitment did lay the groundwork for successive increments of involvement; the 1965 decision can, therefore, be seen as one step in a series of gradual steps which moved three successive administrations away from the potency of the "never again" adage.

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In addition, the strength of "never again" was further diluted when counterbalanced with a number of the justifications for US involvement in Vietnam. (See Figure 2-1). Frequently used analogies such as the "loss of China" and "appeasement at Munich" very likely outweighed "never again," especially for the Democratic Johnson administration. Yet, if the constraining influence of the "never again" adage abated to allow for the 1965 decision to commit US combat forces to Vietnam, it soon regained a prominent position in the hierarchy of historical analogies. The majority of reasons given for avoiding a land war in Asia were soon found to be applicable to the US combat experience in Vietnam.

H. ANALYTIC SUMMARY AND INSIGHTS

The fear of another "Munich" - of appeasing an aggressive antagonist and, thereby, unleashing an extreme political backlash - served to justify the US long-held policy of containment for Southeast Asia. The phrase "appeasement," generally invoking an emotional response, serves to convince domestic and international audiences that firmness is the best response for handling a threatening aggressor. Yet moderation and compromise should not be confused or equated with "appeasement." The Munich experience and the circumstances surrounding it were unique in world history and should not be haphazardly applied to any situation in which the US chooses a policy course of moderation or compromise as a means for achieving its objectives or protecting its interests.

Appeasement deserves consideration from two angles: on the one hand, a nation may appease an enemy; on the other, a nation may also appease an ally. Both acts of appeasement may be detrimental to a nation's interests and objectives. The US-French relationship, from 1945 through the French exit from Indochina in the mid-1950's, illustrates this latter notion of appeasement. Fearing a French refusal to participate in US-sponsored European defense programs, American policy makers "appeased" France with regard to French territorial claims in Indochina.

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South Vietnam also exploited its relationship with the United States, using intransigence, animosity, and non-compliance to obtain desired responses from the US. As a result, US policy makers occasionally found themselves actively soothing, if not "appeasing," the aroused leadership of South Vietnam. This second brand of appeasement, while perhaps not equivalent to Munich in international significance, significantly constrained US policy making for Vietnam during a major portion of the US involvement in Southeast Asia.

The "loss of China" adage was frequently, if not excessively, utilized by US policy makers in warning against such a "loss" in Southeast Asia, particularly with regard to Vietnam. The fear of possible political repercussions if another nation were to be "lost" to communism served to justify the US commitment to Vietnam. Both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson were particularly fearful of the implications that another "loss" would have for their presidencies and for their political party as a whole. This broad-based fear, moreover, tended to mitigate the fact that "loss" generally connotes possession. It is arguable therefore, that statements regarding the US ability to "lose" another sovereign nation are, in themselves, indications of America's post-WW II vision of its own global responsibilities and power.

The US experience in handling the Cuba and Berlin crises stressed the virtue of dealing firmly with an adversary, employing gradual coercion to elicit a desired response. The politico-diplomatic lessons derived from these crises were then applied to the insurgency problems in Vietnam. It is arguable, however, that these lessons were not wholly applicable to the situation in Indochina. A crisis situation differs significantly from aggression evolving in a gradual, spurt-like fashion as manifested in Vietnam during the 1960's. Additionally, while time-limits and cautious US threats of nuclear retaliation apparently prompted the USSR to meet the US demands regarding Cuba and Berlin, such strategies, in effect, were inappropriate for dealing with Hanoi. A Third World country which perceives it has little to gain, but much to lose by acquiescing to a superpower's demands (in this case those of the US) cannot be expected to respond "appropriately" to a

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strategy designed for use in superpower confrontations. Broadly speaking, strategies useful in the superpower arena may be wholly unsuitable for engendering change in or achieving compliance from a Third World country.

The Bay of Pigs precedent offered a number of potential lessons to the Kennedy administration: it cautioned against initiating overly ambitious plans for overthrowing Third World leaders perceived as inimicable to US global interests; it strengthened the Kennedy administration's resolve to counter communist (Soviet) successes in the Third World by developing a brand of warfare effective for fighting "wars of national liberation;" and it advised against sponsoring a coup unless a reasonably sound assurance for its success could be guaranteed.

Of the lessons derived from the Bay of Pigs experience, it appears US national policy makers learned the lesson of "resolve" the most readily. The Bay of Pigs experience should have cautioned against military and/or political involvement in a country prior to cultivating a thorough appreciation of the political realities in that country. The invasion's failure also should have illustrated the potential liabilities and risks in restricting US military resources for a given operation, conventionally and/or unconventionally. These same insights have even more relevance in assessing the US experience in Vietnam.

Fear of provoking Communist China to intervene on behalf of Hanoi permeated US policy deliberations regarding military operations in and over Vietnam for both the Eisenhower and Johnson administrations. The PRC's reported massing of troops in 1954 and Peking's protracted vocal militancy during the 1960's forewarned US policy makers that the Chinese leadership could indeed be provoked. India's intermittent difficulties with China illustrated Peking's resolve to pursue boldly its national policy objectives. It is plausible, however, that Peking's militancy, both verbal and physical, was displayed by the Chinese leadership for the purpose of gaining international credibility at what were perceived as politically opportune moments. President Kennedy's observation that "appearances contribute to reality" may have had its Communist Chinese proponents as well. Generally speaking, high-level US observations as to the nature of

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the Chinese threat during the years of US military involvement in Vietnam were generally based more on presumption than reality. The fact that both the political rift between Peking and Moscow and the cultural enmity between the Vietnamese and Chinese were largely understated throughout the conflict serves to substantiate this insight.

"Never again" served as only a minor constraint on the formation of US policy for Vietnam. President Eisenhower seemed to respect the lesson; President Kennedy diluted the adage by providing South Vietnam with additional aid and advisers. President Johnson, a one-time adherent of "united action" during the Dien Bien Phu crisis, found the "never again" precedent a hindrance only when reminded by dissenting policy advisers or antagonistic members of the media. The potency of "never again" was, in actuality, diminished by a number of more weighty adages: "beware of appeasement," "avoid losing Vietnam," and "stand firm with the adversary" took precedence over "never again."

Lessons and insights derived from past historical experiences are crucial to present and future US policy formulation. Yet, while history may be regarded as cyclical or repetitive in nature, broad generalizations of history or sweeping applications of historical analogies lead to ambiguity of policy rather than clarity. Historical precedents are useful tools for analysis, but their use must be moderated so as not to lead to policy paralysis. As historian-writer Mark Twain stated,

We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it--and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove lid again--and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one.

Lessons derived from the US Vietnam experience should not be reduced to the simplistic level of "No More Vietnams."

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CHAPTER 2 ENDNOTES

1. Other possible precedents influencing US-Vietnam policy making include the training of clients (South Vietnamese army) for the wrong type of war, a mistake made in Korea before the outbreak of war there, and the precedent of negotiating with communist governments (Korea, North Vietnam), and lessons to be drawn from these precedents. However, these precedents are considered less influential in shaping or constraining US involvement in Vietnam than those selected for discussion in this chapter.
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4. William Greider, "Appeasing the Arms Crowd," The Washington Post, July 8, 1979, p. C-1.
5. Lyndon Johnson, The Vantage Point (New York: Popular Library, 1971), p. 47.
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8. President Eisenhower in a personal message to Prime Minister Churchill cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 1, II. B., p. 21.
9. Arthur Schlesinger, The Bitter Heritage (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), pp. 90-91.
10. Johnson Administration - 1966 Summary, in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 7, V. A. II D., p. D-60.
11. Statement by President Johnson at White House News Conference on 28 July 1965, "We Will Stand in Viet-Nam," Department of State Bulletin, 16 August 1965, p. 262 cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 7, V. A. II D., p. D-50.

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12. Schlesinger, The Bitter Heritage, pp. 70-71.
13. Ibid., p. 91.
14. See Chapter 3, p. 29; Schlesinger, The Bitter Heritage, pp. 91-92; and US Army Military History Research Collection, Senior Officers' Debriefing Paper, Interview on January 9, 1976, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, with General Andrew J. Goodpaster by Colonel William D. Johnson and LTC James C. Ferguson, USAWC Class of 1976. Goodpaster transcript section 4, p. 28.
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26. Yost, p. 40.

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27. John King Fairbank, The United States and China (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 39.
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39. See Eleanor Dulles, Berlin: The Wall is Not Forever (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1967) for a more detailed discussion.
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44. Johnson, p. 470.
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CHAPTER 3 WASHINGTON AND VIETNAM: US NATIONAL LEVEL POLICY MAKERS AND THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines US national-level policy making concerning Vietnam during the period 1945 to 1975. It focuses on the executive branch because most of the major policy decisions which shaped US military involvement were made by the president after consultation with his close advisers. Congress did not play a major role until the second term of the Nixon administration when it increasingly acted as a major constraint on the president's ability to implement his policies (and thereby shaped future policies) by placing limits on appropriations, and requiring presidential notification of and consent from Congress for further military activities in Vietnam.

The purpose of this chapter is to gain insights and lessons about the process of decision making and the role of individual US decision makers in the shaping of US policies toward Vietnam. The four tasks of this chapter are to identify the key policy makers, to show how their backgrounds influenced their decisions concerning Vietnam, to describe changes in the process of national level policy making concerning Vietnam, and to analyze how these changes influenced US policies toward Vietnam.

The chapter is divided into six subsections covering each administration from Presidents Truman through Ford. Within each subsection is a brief introduction, followed by a graphic representation identifying the key decision makers in that administration as well as other important policy advisers influencing Vietnam decision making. (Appendix B, which appears at the close of Volume III, provides additional bibliographical information on the key Vietnam decision makers for each of the administrations considered.) Next is an overview of the national-level decision making process concerning Vietnam, which includes both an assessment of the relative influences of the president, White House staff, National Security

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Council, Department of State, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Congress as well as an evaluation of the decision-making style peculiar to each administration. This discussion is followed by a detailed analysis of the making of one or more significant decisions concerning Vietnam, illustrating the interaction of the key personalities and the unfolding of the Vietnam decision-making process used by that particular administration at the time the decision was made. As will be shown, the details of the decision-making process differed for each decision, depending on the time and circumstances. The purpose here is not to demonstrate these details, but rather to illustrate, by case study, how decisions were made by all six administrations, and to highlight the inter-relationships between and changing roles of the key decision-makers and institutions as a particular decision was "made."

The significant themes and topics presented in this chapter include:

- Differences in decision-making styles of each administration;
- Tendencies toward centralized vs. decentralized control of decision making;
- The building of a "consensus" in support of a decision;
- The conflict between the building of presidential confidence on the one hand with the necessity for considering dissenting opinions;
- Relations between the executive and legislative branches;
- Constraints and other influences on decisions;
- The role of an individual's background in shaping his views on Vietnam, especially the role of the president and his perceptions in the shaping of decisions;
- The pervasiveness within all administrations of a belief in the "domino theory" regarding Asian communism and the need not to "lose" Vietnam to communism;
- The paramount importance of loyalty to the president as a precondition for influence as an advisor;
- The emergence of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to a position of great significance in the formulation of Vietnam policy;

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- The changing relative influence of the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in Vietnam decision making; and
- The role of the National Security Council and the White House staff in such decision making.

The chapter concludes with an analytical summary highlighting the relevance of the above and offering insights to be gained from the US Vietnam decision-making process.

B. THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way ... 1/

(President Harry S. Truman, 1947)

1. Introduction

The Truman administration began its tenure in the White House just prior to the resolution of World War II. After defeating the Japanese in the Pacific, the new president faced the tasks of restoring the US to peace-time footing, rebuilding a weakened and decimated Europe, and securing a semblance of international stability, prosperity, and order. To help accomplish these tasks, President Truman promoted the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United Nations.

The international environment was highly complex and dynamic. One of the United States major allies in the war - the Soviet Union - sought to establish its own security by means of power consolidation and expansion in both Eastern Europe and in Asia. The Truman administration gradually came to focus on the USSR as its major enemy and initiated a drive to contain communism both at home and abroad. The Cold War had begun.

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In the post-war environment the native peoples of the world's colonial empires expressed their desire for self-determination and independence. The US sought to support such movements, granting the Philippines independence as an example for other nations with colonies. Yet the US anticolonialist policies operated within certain limits: in a broad sense the US was committed to the concept of self-determination, but if such a policy jeopardized Western European participation in a security arrangement, the concept was relegated to a secondary position.

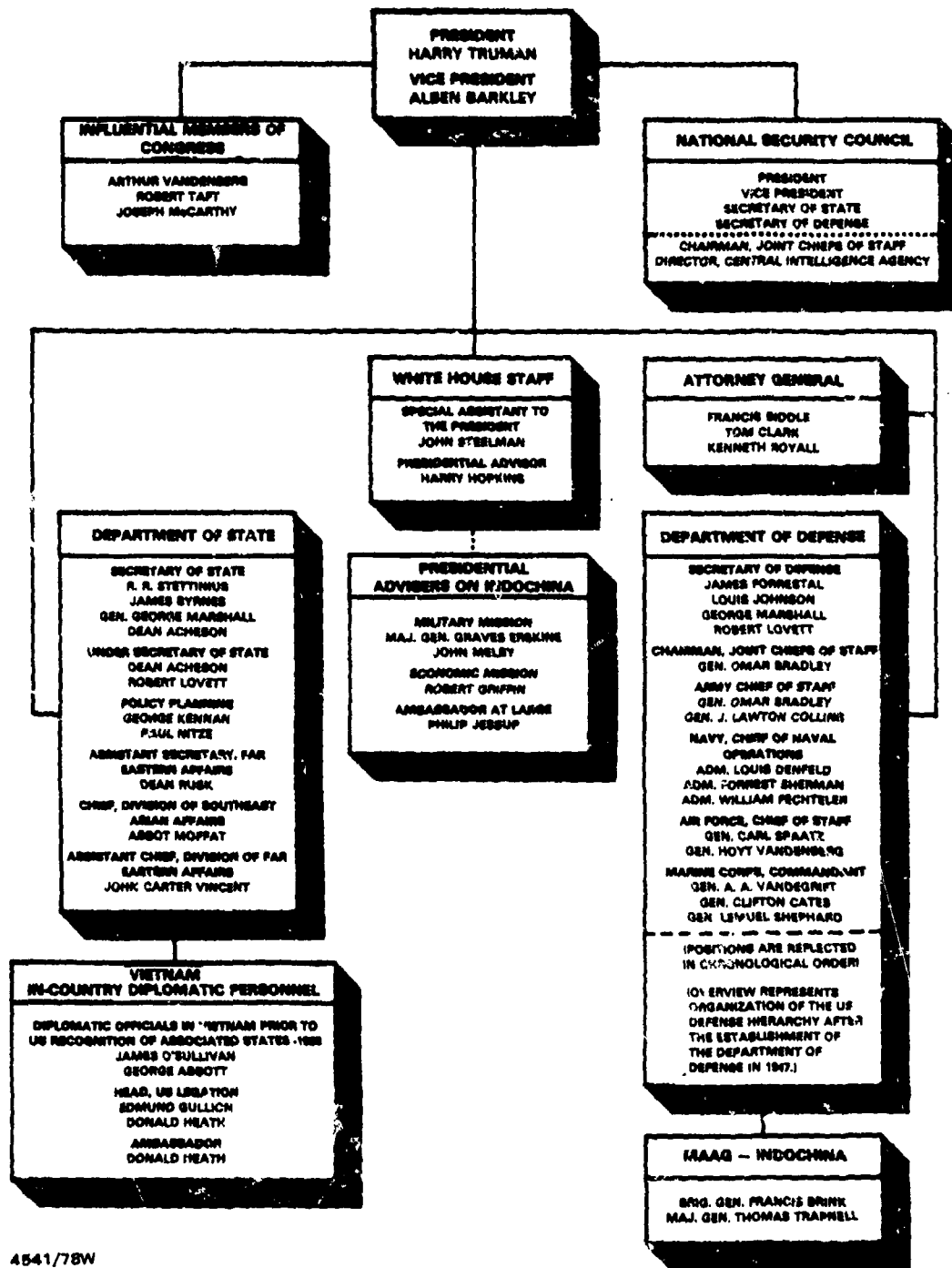
Thus, the Truman administration walked a thin line, attempting to balance its anticolonialist policies with those aimed at securing Western European cooperation. The balance, from the start, leaned heavily towards the latter consideration. US promotion of Vietnamese independence from France must, therefore, be considered within this framework. While urging France to consider such policies, overall security considerations led the US to allow for French re-entry in Indochina, much to the dismay of the Vietnamese nationalists.^{2/}

2. Vietnam Decision-Making Process During the Truman Administration

a. Vietnam Decision-Making Style and the Level of Institutional Influence During the Truman Administration

In contrast to the highly personal, somewhat disorganized approach to wartime decision making taken by President Roosevelt, President Truman relied more fully on formal decision-making organizations. In fact, his administration was responsible for several important innovations in the US national security machinery. The 1947 National Security Act, providing for the creation of the National Security Council, the National Security Resources Board, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and a separate Air Force, ^{4/} was the most important of these innovations. The National Security Act served as a centralizing mechanism, delegating heretofore ambiguous decision-making responsibilities to specific institutions at the national level of US government. (See Figure 3-1 for a graphic representation of the key decision-making institutions and key Vietnam decision makers within the Truman administration.)

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Figure 3-1. Vietnam Policy Making: Key Decision Makers and Other Important Advisers Within the Truman Administration, 1945-1952 3/

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President Truman's first term in office found him jealously guarding his presidential prerogatives, seeking to limit possible encroachments by both Congress and his advisers in decision making.^{5/} Truman prided himself on his abilities as a decision maker.^{6/} His belief in the importance of the role of the president as the Commander in Chief and as the nation's top-ranking decision maker, dominated his outlook.^{7/}

The Truman administration saw a remarkable increase in the size of the White House policy staff, serving to institutionalize the White House advisers as an in-house resource base for the making of national policy.^{8/} This increase, however, was relatively small when compared to those made by later administrations. Due to his desire to make key decisions himself, President Truman infrequently convened the National Security Council (NSC) until the outbreak of the Korean War. But at the outset of that crisis and the attendant increase in international tension, Truman met with the NSC on a weekly basis.^{9/} His decision for more frequent meetings reflected the administration's increased need for top-level coordination in the decision-making process. It did not, however, indicate a reversal in Truman's thinking regarding presidential responsibility. He stressed that the NSC was a place for recommendations to be worked out, but policy and final decisions continued to come down from the President.

Although the State Department's overall role in the Truman administration was not highly influential, it did play the leading role in formulating US policy towards Indochina until 1950.^{10/} One major reason can be offered by way of explanation: the administration's top priority was the reconstruction of Europe; Asia, although important, was relegated to a second-place position. Reports from in-country personnel served as the primary basis for the administration's perception of Vietnamese-French relations. In essence, prior to 1950, Indochina concerned the administration only insofar as tensions there detracted from France's cooperation in European security arrangements. Therefore, while the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs stressed the need for French "liberalism" in the area, the overall posture of the Department leaned heavily towards European concerns. With Mao's victory in China, the State Department's

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Asian specialists came under attack for the "loss" of China to communism. And with the onset of the McCarthy era, many of these specialists found their reputations tarnished and careers destroyed.^{11/} A line of continuity and familiarity with Asian affairs was broken.

The Truman administration was faced with restoring national security-policy formulation to a civilian peace-time footing. The transition, however, disturbed the administration's professional military advisers who had been highly influential in policy formulation during the second World War.^{12/} In addition, the decision to place the military establishment under the authority of a civilian Secretary of Defense caused the military significant dissatisfaction. With the creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and appointment of General Marshall as Secretary of Defense, the military professionals appeared more at ease with their standing within the administration. The JCS were not as influential in policy formulation as senior military officers during Roosevelt's presidency. However, they were generally supportive of the Truman administration's policies, including, as will be seen below, the need to save what they regarded as strategically important Indochina from the advance of communism.^{13/}

The Truman administration, aware of Congress's desire for a greater voice in decision making on foreign affairs after the war, sought to establish a solid, bi-partisan working relationship with the legislative branch.^{14/} The executive branch's frequent consultations with Congress regarding the Marshall plan fortified this relationship. However, with the outbreak of the Korean war, the Congress saw its influence slip in relation to that of the military. President Truman's decision not to consult with Congress prior to initiating military operations in Korea, in Senator Vandenberg's words, set the Congress on an inevitable collision course with the administration.^{15/}

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b. Decision to Accelerate the Provision of Military Aid to France and the Associated States of Indochina and to Dispatch a Military Mission to Indochina

1) Awareness of the Problem

During the years 1945-1949, the Truman administration came to view Indochina as an important battleground upon which to wage the struggle against communism; at the same time, however, the administration was cognizant of French colonial designs on the region. Hence, these two major concerns shaped the administration's attitude towards Indochina. By 1949, as the Chinese Nationalists' probability of defeat increased, so too did the administration's concern regarding Indochina. Communications between the US diplomatic representative in Vietnam, Mr. George Abbott (see Figure 3-1 and Appendix B) and the State Department indicated a growing uneasiness on the part of the US over both Moscow's intentions in the area and Ho Chi Minh's affiliation with the communist party of the Soviet Union. With Mao's victory in China in October 1949, the Truman administration began a reassessment of its policy regarding Asia in general, and Indochina in particular. The Bao Dai "solution," therefore, came to be regarded as the only alternative to a costly colonial war or to French withdrawal and the subsequent establishment of a communist-controlled government in Vietnam.16/

2) Debate and Reassessment in Washington

In response to a request by Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson for a reassessment of US policy toward Asia, the NSC submitted its report of December 23, 1949, entitled "The Position of the US with Respect to Asia." The report, as amended and approved by President Truman as NSC 48/2 a week later, set forth the following US objectives in Asia:17/

- (1) Development of the nations and peoples of Asia on a stable and self-sustaining basis in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter,
- (2) Development of sufficient military power in selected non-communist nations of Asia to maintain internal security and to prevent further encroachment by communism,

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- (3) Gradual reduction and eventual elimination of the preponderant power and influence of the USSR in Asia to such a degree that the Soviet Union will not be capable of threatening from that area the security of the United States or its friends and that the Soviet Union would encounter serious obstacles should it attempt to threaten the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations, and
- (4) Prevention of power relationships in Asia which would enable any other nation or alliance to threaten the security of the United States from that area, or the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense dated January 1950, proposed as a major military objective that "US support in the Pacific be available to delay any Communist invasion in the ... Far East and Southeast Asian areas...."^{18/} Hence, key decision-making bodies within the Truman administration agreed that the major US political and military objective in Southeast Asia was the containment of communism.

One facet of the administration's NSC 48/2 strategy for containing communism in Asia called for the establishment of "stable and self-sustaining" nations. With regard to Vietnam, the path to realizing this objective was obstructed by the colonialist desires of the French. The Truman administration agonized over recognizing the French-supported Bao Dai government because the government was considered a puppet regime by neighboring Asiatic states. However, with Secretary of State Acheson's conviction that Ho Chi Minh was a communist and with Moscow's recognition of Ho Chi Minh's government in January 1950, the Truman administration felt compelled to take a stand. (See Appendix B - Acheson) French intransigence on the issue of granting independence to the Associated States further persuaded President Truman to approve a recommendation from Secretary Acheson that the US recognize the Associated States of Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia).^{19/} Formal recognition was extended on February 7, 1950.

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Additional assessments of US interests in Southeast Asia were undertaken by the Truman administration during the period February - May 1950. Based on the recommendations of NSC 64, which reiterated the administration's containment theory, the Departments of State and Defense were asked to prepare a "program of all practicable measures ... to protect US security interests in Indochina."20/ Prompted by French requests for assistance, 21/ the US Government sent one of its first fact-finding missions to Southeast Asia in mid-March 1950, for the purpose of assessing the economic needs of the countries in the region.22/ Upon its return, the Griffin Mission recommended economic and technical assistance to Vietnam as a "way to promote the Bao Dai government's appearance of independence and its local and international prestige," and to "win" over the "non-communist elements that continue to support Ho."23/

The Joint Chiefs of Staff completed their military assessment of Southeast Asia in early-May 1950. In line with their memorandum of 10 April 1950 to the Secretary of Defense, which stated that the "mainland states of Southeast Asia are at present of critical strategic importance to the US because of the requirement to stockpile strategic materials acquired there," the JCS "stressed" in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, dated May 2, 1950, that a small United States military aid group should be established in Indochina "immediately," that the need for early arrival of US military aid (\$15 million) to Indochina was "urgent," and that there was a requirement to integrate such aid with political and economic programs.24/ Evidently, earlier in a draft position paper of April 25, 1950, the State Department had opposed the establishment of a US MAAG in Indochina because it believed that such action would place the responsibility for the security of Indochina on US shoulders.25/ In challenging the argument of the State Department, the JCS referred to the conclusion in NSC-68, a document largely written by State Department officials, that the US "position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility upon the United States for leadership."26/ In this vein, the JCS argued that "in order to retrieve the losses resulting from previous mistakes on the part of the British and the French, as

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well as to preclude such mistakes in the future,...it [is] necessary that positive and proper leadership among the Western Powers be assumed by the United States in Southeast Asian matters."27/

In May 1950, as an outgrowth of the recommendations of the Griffin Mission and of the JCS, President Truman approved the establishment of an economic mission to the Associated States and \$10 million in military aid to France and Indochina.28/ However, the Truman administration adopted the State Department view that, while Southeast Asia was of strategic importance to the US, the direct responsibilities of the UK and France made it of greater concern to them. Therefore, President Truman did not decide to establish a MAAG in Indochina until the outbreak of the Korean War one month later.29/

3) Catalyst for a Decision

On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces attacked South Korea. According to President Truman, this incident forced the acceleration of US military assistance to France and Indochina.30/ President Truman and his advisers were acting on the assumption that the North Korean attack was possibly only the beginning of a campaign by communism to conquer independent nations in the Pacific, and suspected that it might even be a prelude to or feint for an assault on Western Europe.31/

4) Decision to Accelerate the Provision of Military Aid to France and to the Associated States of Indochina, and to Dispatch a Military Mission to Indochina

On June 27, 1950, President Truman announced the US government's intention to provide military support to the South Korean government. In addition, the president stated:

I have ... directed acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the Forces of France and the Associated States in Indo-China and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with those forces.32/

According to President Truman, the fall of China and North Korea's attack made it "plain beyond all doubt that communism had passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and would now use armed invasions

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and war."^{33/} Within this context, Vietnam's strategic importance grew as a country where communism had to be contained. Another possible loss of an Asian country to communism - be it South Korea or one of the Associated States of Indochina - would indicate the Democratic administration's incapacity for dealing with what the JCS (and Truman administration) perceived as the "Kremlin's design for world domination."^{34/} The Korean experience, while ensuring President Truman's political demise and encouraging a "never again" attitude towards US involvement in Asian land wars, did not dampen the US resolve to contain communism in both Asia and Europe.

C. THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

There is going to be no involvement of America in war unless it is a result of the Constitutional process that is placed upon Congress to declare it. Now let us have that clear.^{35/}

(President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954)

1. Introduction

General Eisenhower was elected president in 1952 on a platform that asserted the necessity for the "enslaved nations of the world," then under communist domination, to have the freedom to choose their own governments.^{36/} For President Eisenhower, as for President Truman, the consequences of Munich were a constant reminder of the disaster that could attend the appeasement of aggressors. Eisenhower often spoke of Munich and compared the communist leaders in the Soviet Union and China to Hitler.^{37/} President Eisenhower also knew that the American public was weary of the fighting in Korea. Already the cry was raised that the United States should never again allow itself to become involved in an Asian land war. Moreover, the Republican Party was committed to balancing the federal budget, and President Eisenhower chose to do this by reducing military spending.

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In 1954 the US government agonized over possible US military intervention on behalf of the French at Dien Bien Phu in Indochina. President Eisenhower and his senior advisers called for numerous high-level assessments of the immediate battlefield situation and of its global ramifications. Ultimately, the president decided against taking unilateral executive action and he brought Congress into the decision making process.

2. Vietnam Decision-Making Process During the Eisenhower Administration

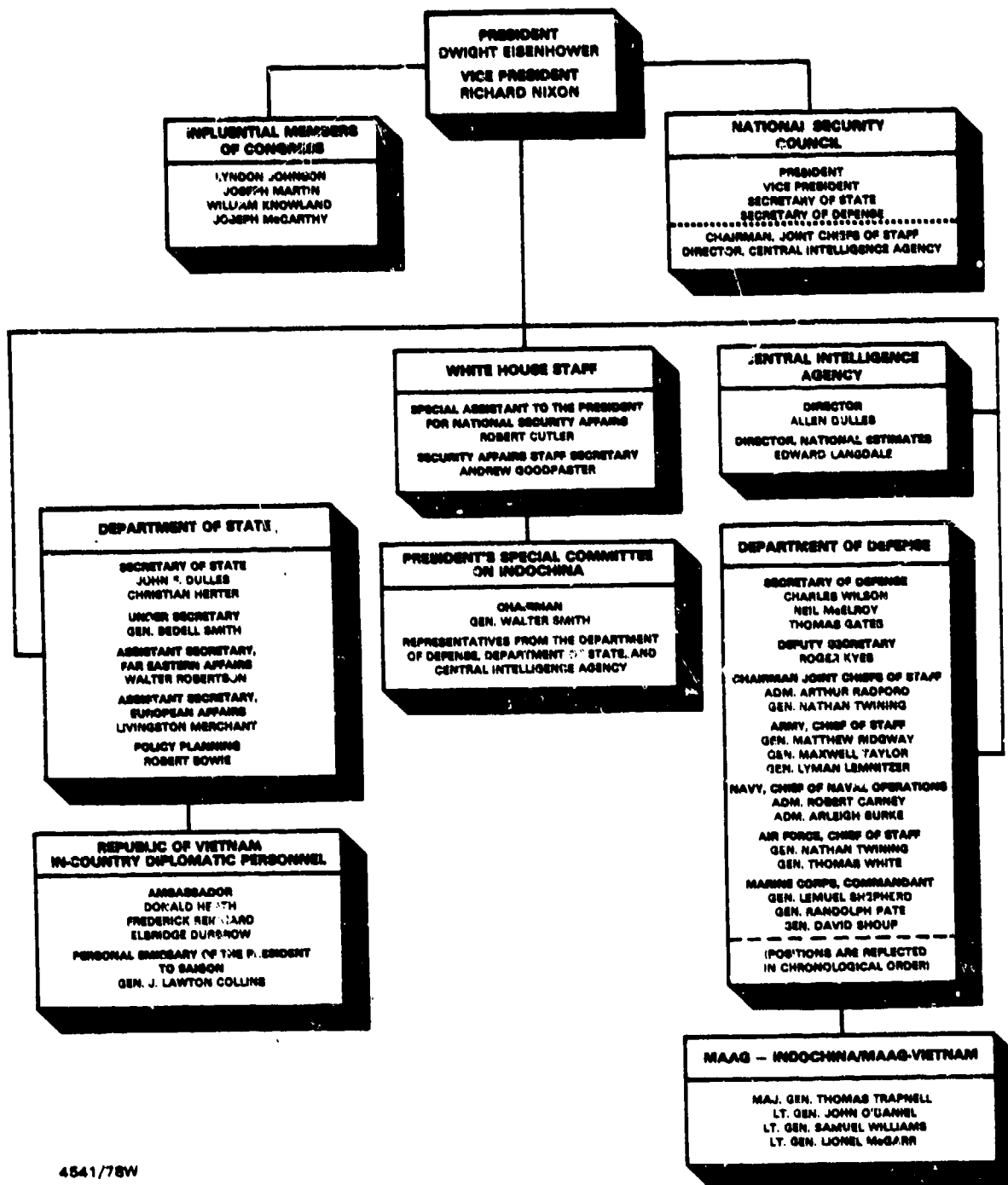
a. Vietnam Decision-Making Style and the Level of Institutional Influence During the Eisenhower Administration

President Eisenhower's military background and desire to arrive at decisions through careful, painstaking staff studies, led him to control the process of national security policy making in a more highly structured manner than any other president in the post-World-War II era. That structure was particularly evident in the National Security Council system. Whereas President Truman had used the council as a supplementary advisory organization, President Eisenhower decided that, except in special cases of urgency, national-security policy formulation was to run from a department, agency, or individual through the NSC.^{38/} (See Figure 3-2 for an overview of the Eisenhower administration's decision making institutions and key Vietnam decision makers. For additional biographical information on the administration's key Vietnam decision makers, see Appendix B.)

President Eisenhower was more flexible in his attitude toward the NSC than many commentators suggest. He did not formally consult the council on every issue, and he did not use the council to decide immediate problems. Moreover, President Eisenhower frequently met with a select group of advisors in what were termed "Special NSC meetings" on important issues rather than call a regular NSC meeting.

With the important exception of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's shuttle diplomacy between Washington, London, and Paris, the Vietnam decision making process under President Eisenhower conformed to the highly structured approach that the President preferred in his NSC system. The White House staff worked through the executive departments and

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Figure 3-2. Vietnam Policy Making: Key Decision Makers and Other Important Advisers within the Eisenhower Administration, 1953-1960. 39/

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agencies to identify and clarify the significant issues that needed attention in the NSC and resolution by the president. This work was largely carried out at meetings of the NSC Planning Board, attended by senior officials who were usually at the assistant-secretary level, and chaired by the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.^{40/} The Special Assistant (Robert Cutler, at the time of Dien Bien Phu) served largely as an administrator, though he did help shape the substantive content which ultimately reached the president. In fact, President Eisenhower wanted his Special Assistant to integrate and compromise any opposing departmental views whenever possible at meetings of the Planning Board and bring only the irreconcilable differences to the NSC.^{41/}

Foreign policy options were generally developed in the State Department with advice from the Central Intelligence Agency and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was not rare during the Dien Bien Phu crisis, however, to find Secretary Dulles taking swift diplomatic action, especially with France and Great Britain, without submitting issues through the State Department or NSC.^{42/} He did seek and gain full prior approval for his actions from the President.^{43/}

Military options in support of foreign policy objectives were largely developed by the Joints Chiefs of Staff, though the CIA and the President's Intelligence Advisory Committee (which included representatives from the State Department and the Armed Services) had important advisory roles. In addition, the president created an ad hoc "Special Committee on Indochina" during the Dien Bien Phu crisis, which included General Bedell Smith, Director of the CIA Allen Dulles, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roger Kyes, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to study feasible options for supporting the French "Navarre Plan."^{44/} (See Figure 3-2 and Appendix B - Eisenhower) Recommendations by this committee were forwarded with the recommendations of the individual departments and agencies to the NSC for review.^{45/}

President Eisenhower wanted the Congress to be a partner in the decision-making process concerning US intervention at Dien Bien Phu. One of his preconditions for US military intervention was the passage of a

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joint resolution by Congress permitting the president to use military power in Indochina.^{46/} Congressional leaders from both parties were consulted at the critical juncture in the process, "probably the decisive moment," according to a recent publication by the Congressional Research Service.^{47/} However, as the publication asserts, "Congress for the most part remained on the periphery of the action, at a distance from the main diplomatic events and military maneuvering."^{48/} Congress was at the periphery largely because it took little interest in Indochina affairs at this time, illustrating a general tendency in Congress to neglect particular foreign-policy problems until they have gained national prominence.^{49/} In turn, the failure of the Dien Bien Phu crisis to gain such prominence resulted in part from a general tendency of the executive branch to downplay the significance of crises in its public statements until a policy has been established by the administration for dealing with them.^{50/}

Public opinion had an indirect influence on Vietnam decision making during the Eisenhower administration in the sense that the Administration was well aware that less than a year after the pain and frustration of the Korean War, the American people were hardly ready to embrace a new war.^{51/} The Eisenhower administration believed that it had a responsibility to "educate" the American and foreign publics and induce them to understand and support American policies. As Dulles bluntly stated, "We can't get too far ahead of public opinion, and we must do everything we can to bring it along with us."^{52/}

b. Case Study: Decision Not to Intervene at Dien Bien Phu Without the Assistance of US Allies

1) Awareness of the Problem

As a former military commander, President Eisenhower was seriously disturbed by the French decision in November 1953, to send ten thousand troops into Dien Bien Phu, whose only means of resupply was by air. On December 30, 1953, CIA Director Allen Dulles reported to the President that "the real danger spot" in Indochina was at Dien Bien Phu, where the Viet Minh forces were attempting to surround the French garrison. By January 1, 1954, reports were received in Washington that the French garrison was surrounded by approximately three Viet Minh divisions -- a

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ratio favoring the Viet Minh by three to one.^{53/} Eisenhower later recollected that, in Washington, there was an awareness of the potential "far-reaching" psychological effects on the French should the garrison at Dien Bien Phu be lost. Such a loss might lead to the withdrawal of the French from Indochina, despite the fact that the location of Dien Bien Phu was of "minor military significance."^{54/} Thus, the essential problem, as President Eisenhower perceived it, was not the fate of Dien Bien Phu, per se. The essential problem was to keep the French fighting in Indochina against the Communist Vietnamese forces, even if Dien Bien Phu were to fall. A withdrawal was considered against the interest of the United States because, if it happened, the United States would have to participate more actively in the Indochina conflict in order to prevent the "loss" of Indochina to the Vietnamese Communist forces. In addition, there was concern, as expressed by the National Security Council on 14 January 1954, that if the United States were to join the fighting, there would be a "substantial risk that the Chinese Communists would intervene."^{55/}

2) Debate in Washington

April 1954 was the critical month of debate and decision in Washington concerning the crisis at Dien Bien Phu. On 30 March 1954, the Viet Minh launched a large-scale attack on the garrison, and the issue of Chinese Communist intervention on behalf of the Viet Minh was raised at that time by General Paul Ely, French Chief of Staff, with Secretary Dulles and Admiral Radford. Dulles, a staunch anticommunist, sent a memorandum to Eisenhower, arguing that if the United States were to use its military forces in Indochina, then "the prestige of the United States would be engaged to a point where we would want to have a success."^{56/} One clear implication was that, before initiating any intervention in Indochina, the US ought to be prepared to fight successfully against Chinese Communist forces, on the assumption that they might become involved. With the Korean War fresh in the minds of the American public, and because the crisis at Dien Bien Phu was not a sudden, unforeseen emergency, President Eisenhower wanted congressional endorsement for any plan of US intervention.^{57/}

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On 3 April 1954, eight congressional leaders, including Senator Lyndon Johnson, were called in by the administration to meet with Secretary Dulles and Admiral Radford about the Indochina situation.58/ Specifically, the administration wanted to know the prospects of obtaining a congressional resolution supporting US military intervention at Dien Bien Phu. The intervention, as proposed by Admiral Radford, Chairman of the JCS and a zealous anticommunist, would consist of an air attack from carriers in the Pacific, possibly involving the use of tactical nuclear weapons, on communist installations around Dien Bien Phu.59/ The congressmen, particularly Senator Johnson, made clear that the US had to have allies before they could support a congressional resolution. The congressional leaders said that support from Congress would be contingent on meeting three conditions:60/

- US intervention must be part of a coalition, including the free nations of Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and the British Commonwealth;
- France must agree to accelerate the independence of the Associated States in Indochina, so that US assistance would not be interpreted as support for French colonialism; and
- France must agree to keep its forces in the war if the US commits its forces.

President Eisenhower accepted these conditions, in part, because he had similar reservations, but also, it appears, out of genuine respect for congressional opinion and its constitutional significance.61/

As a result of the meeting with the congressmen, Secretary Dulles and Under Secretary Smith tried to rally international support for the idea of "United action" in Indochina, that is, a joint effort by the United States and its allies in support of the French. However, concern over Dien Bien Phu was overshadowed in Britain and France by the prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Indochina conflict through the Geneva Conference, scheduled to open on 26 April 1954.62/ Dulles met

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uncompromising resistance from the British to any scheme for united military action in Indochina before the Geneva Conference. Owing to the need to enlist international support, the State Department recommended to the NSC, in early April 1954, the following courses of action:63/

- That there be no US military intervention for the moment, nor the promise of such action to the French;
- That planning for military intervention continue; and
- That discussions continue with potential allies on the possibility of forming a regional defense grouping for Southeast Asia.

These three recommendations were approved by the NSC and the president and formed the basis of US policy up through the fall of Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954.64/

While the State Department sought allies for united action, the Defense Department debated the likely success of possible military actions to save Dien Bien Phu. Admiral Radford advocated an air strike from carriers, and the possible use of tactical nuclear weapons, on communist installations around Dien Bien Phu, as a means for saving the French garrison. The Army argued strongly against Radford's proposal, as offered at the meeting with the congressional leaders, claiming that air and naval action alone would not assure a military victory.65/ In the first week of April 1954, Army Chief of Staff, General Matthew Ridgway issued a report based on extensive field research, which concluded that US ground forces would eventually be required to assure a military victory in Indochina. The report is believed to have been highly influential with President Eisenhower.66/ The contents of the report can be summarized as follows:67/

- A military victory in Indochina cannot be assured by US intervention with air and naval forces alone;
- The use of atomic weapons will not reduce the number of ground forces required to achieve military victory;
- If the French withdraw and the Chinese Communists do not intervene, an estimated seven US divisions or their equivalent will be required to achieve victory;

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- If the French withdraw and the Chinese Communists intervene, twelve US divisions will be required;
- If the French remain and the Chinese Communists intervene, seven divisions will be required; and
- There are important military disadvantages to intervention in Indochina, namely, the US ability to meet its NATO commitment will be seriously affected for a considerable period.

3) Catalyst for a Decision

On the night of 4 April 1954, French Prime Minister Laniel and Foreign Minister Bidault met with the American Ambassador to France, C. Douglas Dillon, to request immediate armed intervention of US carrier aircraft at Dien Bien Phu to "save the situation."68/ The French leaders also reported, according to Dillon, that "Chinese intervention in Indochina [is] already fully established," including technical advisers, communications operators, and personnel to operate antiaircraft guns and one thousand supply trucks. Secretary Dulles, Under Secretary Smith, and Admiral Radford were immediately notified of this request.69/

4) Decision: President Eisenhower Decides that there will be "No Intervention without Allies"

In response to the French request, a meeting of the National Security Council was called on 6 April 1954 to discuss recommendations on "appropriate action regarding Indochina and on the need for US military intervention."70/ The NSC Planning Board had met the previous day and agreed that "on balance, it appears that the US should now reach a decision whether or not to intervene with combat forces, if that is necessary to save Indochina from communist control and, tentatively, the form and condition of such intervention." The Planning Board also neatly clarified for the NSC the key issue involved in this decision: "The real issue," according to the Planning Board,71/

...is that the [National Security] Council must decide whether it is essential to intervene now with little or no time to (1) work out arrangements with the French (including acceptance of conditions, command arrangements, etc.), (2) condition public and Congressional opinion -- intervention may involve our drafting men

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for Indochina where the French have never yet sent a conscript -- and (3) try to prepare a regional type arrangement. Decision to act later may take care of these difficulties but might come too late to save Dien Bien Phu.

At its meeting on 6 April 1954, the NSC "postponed decision" on the Planning Board's recommendation that the US decide whether or not to intervene. The President approved this postponement, and affirmed the main precondition for intervention established by the congressional leaders on 3 April: that the US intervene only as part of a coalition. This coalition, or "regional grouping," as termed by the NSC, was to include the US, France, Great Britain, the Associated States, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines. Thus a major decision was taken by the President, with the participation of members of Congress and the NSC. As Eisenhower later recorded, "There would be no intervention without allies."72/

On April 23, French Foreign Minister Bidault again requested US armed intervention -- to involve massive B-29 bombing. Dulles responded that the proposed intervention "seemed to me out of the question under existing circumstances," that is, the continued refusal by the British Government to participate in a regional grouping before the Geneva Conference.73/ Dulles forwarded the request to President Eisenhower for final decision. President Eisenhower reaffirmed his earlier decision that the United States would not initiate armed intervention in Indochina without allies.74/ This remained the US policy through 7 May 1954, when the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu fell to General Giap.

One of the most striking features of the decision-making process for the Dien Bien Phu decision is that despite the rapid deterioration of the situation, the Eisenhower Administration continued to proceed in a highly-structured manner with carefully planned meetings of the NSC and its Planning Board used to clarify the main issues for the President. This formal, structured approach was an ever-present characteristic of the Eisenhower administration's decision-making style, contrasting significantly with the style of his successor's administration.

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D. THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty. This much we pledge and more.75/

(President John F. Kennedy, 1961)

1. Introduction

John F. Kennedy, elected President in 1960 by a slim margin, promised a new, dynamic approach to American foreign policy. Characterized by boldness and a penchant for action, the Kennedy administration stressed the importance of US assistance to Third World nations.76/ The world's newly developing nations were a "great battlefield for the defense and expansion of freedom;" Vietnam would serve as an example of the US commitment to this cause.

While the Kennedy administration sought to vitalize what it perceived as the tired, bland approach of the preceding administration,77/ it nonetheless continued to formulate US policy on the basis of the containment and domino theories. Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam, served as more than a test case for nation building; it was also the Kennedy administration's proving ground for checking wars of national liberation. In addition, success in Vietnam would help to blot out the administration's foreign policy debacles in Cuba at the Bay of Pigs.78/

2. Vietnam Decision-Making Process During the Kennedy Administration

a. Vietnam Decision-Making Style and the Level of Institutional Influence During the Kennedy Administration

Believing that the Eisenhower administration's decision-making process had been too rigidly structured and thereby had unduly restricted the President's freedom of choice, the Kennedy administration utilized a seminar approach to decision making which allowed for a fluid, open, and flexible process and culled the ideas and suggestions of advisers at all levels in the executive branch.79/ President Kennedy sought to

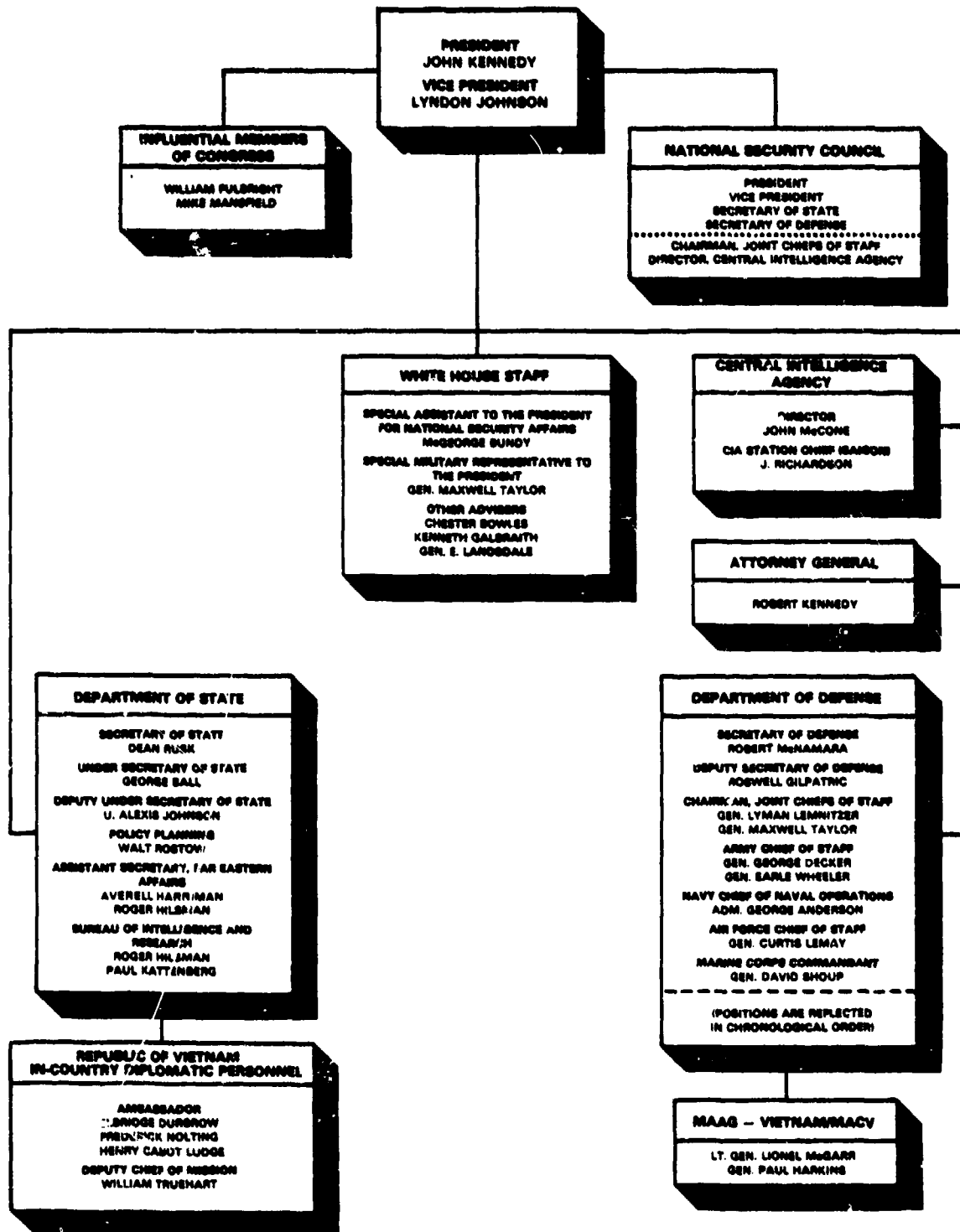
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maintain open channels of communication in the government as well as auxiliary lines to respected individuals outside the administration and the Washington bureaucracy. Figure 3-3 provides a summary of the major decision-making institutions in the Kennedy administration and an overview of its high-level decision makers. Additional biographical information on the administration's key Vietnam decision makers appears in Appendix B.

As a function of this informal approach, official decision-making bodies and committees were often disbanded or ignored.^{81/} The National Security Council met less frequently and, in its place, White House staff meetings and special interagency task forces generated foreign policy options and advice.^{82/} In fact, while President Kennedy was not the first of the post-war presidents to use an ad hoc approach in policy formulation, the extent to which the new President created ad hoc groups to assist him was unprecedented. The most notable of these groups, with respect to Vietnam decision making, was the inter-agency task force on Vietnam, created in the early days of the administration, which included representatives from the CIA, the White House, USIA, and the Departments of State and Defense.^{83/} The most important set of recommendations issued by this group called for a commitment of US combat forces to Vietnam. In addition to the use of ad hoc groups, President Kennedy created the White House situation room as a convenient in-house operations-and-planning center for the administration's use, especially during times of crisis.^{84/}

While Kennedy's creation of a strong White House staff afforded the President a constant influx of policy considerations and frequent interaction with his adviser-intellectuals, it diminished the role and influence of the State Department in the decision-making process. President Kennedy's attitude towards the State Department was marked by a certain ambivalence; upon coming to office he stressed the need to improve the quality of advice coming from the Department; yet, with the passage of time, the President appeared increasingly reluctant to use the Department in the formulation of national security policy on a day-to-day basis.^{85/} Two major factors contributed to the Kennedy administration's attitude. First, the president's own personal, informal approach to decision making

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Figure 3-3. Vietnam Policy Making: Key Decision Makers and Other Important Advisers Within the Kennedy Administration, 1961-1963 80/

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reduced the administration's reliance on a formal, bureaucratic entity for policy formulation. Second, Kennedy saw the Department as lacking in initiative, which prompted him to rely more fully on his White House staff.^{86/} The staff, under the direction of McGeorge Bundy, a believer in presenting the president with dissenting points of view, assembled policy options and organized all incoming information according to the president's preferred format. The Kennedy administration's final decisions and orders were recorded in its National Security Action Memoranda (NSAMs).

The State Department's overall influence on Vietnam-related policies also declined with the ascendancy of Secretary McNamara and the Department of Defense. Several authors have described the State Department's apparent inability to compete with the Pentagon; they contend it resulted both from McNamara's extraordinary strength and dominance in expressing his Department's views, and from Secretary of State Rusk's own ambivalence.^{87/} However, Rusk contends that he and his staff generally agreed with McNamara's military solutions for Vietnam, and, therefore, that there was no serious bureaucratic struggle between McNamara and himself on Vietnam policies.^{88/}

Secretary McNamara's innovations in the Defense Department's budgeting system, his demands for short-order defense assessments, and his reliance on civilian defense analysts contributed to the gulf that grew increasingly wide between the Secretary of Defense and his immediate staff on one hand and the military services and Joint Chiefs of Staff on the other.^{89/}

The president's call for a combined political-military solution for Vietnam was based on the counterinsurgency (CI) strategies proposed by the Special Group for Counterinsurgency, chaired by General Taylor. The president had established the Special Group for Counterinsurgency shortly after the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion.^{90/} His emphasis on a combined solution probably reflected his suspicion of military solutions and desire to restrain the JCS (and CIA) in Vietnam operations. As Kennedy saw it, Vietnam was the test case for the CI response to communist insurgency.^{91/}

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The president, in line with this political-military orientation, urged the JCS to expand its horizons beyond purely military considerations.92/ However, the JCS had difficulty in fulfilling his wishes. In fact, as a statement by General Wheeler in 1962 suggests, the JCS bridled at the Taylor-Kennedy political-military program of counterinsurgency operations. According to Wheeler,

It is fashionable in some quarters to say that the problems in Southeast Asia are primarily political and economic rather than military. I do not agree. The essence of the problem in Vietnam is military.93/

Therefore, it is not surprising that while the administration sought to implement its CI program, the military's interpretation and subsequent application of it emphasized "conventional, military" methods, particularly since the military was professionally trained to respond to conflicts using these methods.94/ Even General Taylor, who headed the Special Group for Counterinsurgency, initially had difficulty in understanding President Kennedy's conception of counterinsurgency operations.95/

The Kennedy administration, especially with regard to its covert operations abroad, sought to avoid congressional disapproval of its foreign policy initiatives by maintaining a certain degree of secrecy.96/ To protect its initiatives and prevent leaks, the administration established a strong White House legislative liaison with selected members of Congress.97/ President Kennedy's attempt to reserve foreign-policy decision making for the executive branch 98/ may have been an outgrowth of his own insecurity and lack of success in dealing with Congress despite his previous congressional experience.99/ He had little success in obtaining passage of a great number of his bills. Indeed, Kennedy remarked that the Congress looked more powerful from the President's position than from inside the legislative chambers.100/ In addition, President Kennedy's understanding of his presidential prerogative, similar to the views later maintained by Presidents Nixon and Ford, lent credence to his rationale for swift unilateral action. As a presidential candidate, Mr. Kennedy was highly critical of President Eisenhower's conception of the presidency. In

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the foreign-policy area, Senator Kennedy said that "it is the President alone who must make the major decisions."101/ He added, should a "brush-fire" war threaten "in some part of the globe," the President "alone can act, without waiting for Congress."102/

The following discussion of the decision-making process and final decision taken by the Kennedy administration to support the overthrow of South Vietnam's President Diem illustrates the actual roles of and interplay between the decision-making institutions discussed above.

b. Decision to Support a Coup Which Would Have a "Good Chance of Succeeding" in Overthrowing the Diem Government, without Directly Involving US Armed Forces

1) Awareness of the Problem

During its tenure, the Diem regime had never succeeded in cultivating broad popular support; in essence, it had isolated itself from the people and had given the predominately Buddhist population cause for resentment due to the regime's blatant favoritism of the country's Catholic minority. By the spring of 1963, two factors contributed to the Diem regime's unpopularity and, hence, its instability. First, the power and dominance of the Nhus and their acerbic attitude towards the Buddhist community had become increasingly apparent.103/ Second, and as an outgrowth of the first, the regime's favoritism of the Catholic community had evolved into outright discrimination against the Buddhists.104/ On May 8, 1963, the Diem regime responded to a demonstration celebrating Buddha's birthday with gunfire, killing several people and injuring many others. This was the beginning of a series of repressive actions taken by the Diem government against the Buddhist community. To the embarrassment of the United States, President Diem remained unmoved by the dissent of the Buddhists or their supporters, refusing to implicate his government's forces in the May 8 killings. With the world watching, the first of several Buddhist monks offered his self-immolation in protest against the regime's repression and discrimination.105/ The US government, increasingly concerned, began to exert considerable pressure on President Diem to comply with the Buddhists' demands and to curtail his government's repressive actions.

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On July 10, 1963, in a Special National Intelligence Estimate, entitled "The Situation in South Vietnam," the CIA, with concurrence from the US Intelligence Board, reported to the NSC that in several countries, including the US, the Buddhist crisis revived international criticism of US policy on the grounds that it supported an "oppressive and unrepresentative regime."106/ In speculating about the likely situation in South Vietnam after a possible departure of the Diem government, the authors of the SNIE said that the counterinsurgency effort "would probably be temporarily disrupted."107/ However, they added,

...there is a reasonably large pool of under-utilized but experienced and trained manpower not only within the military and civilian sectors of the present government but also, to some extent, outside. These elements, given continued support from the US, could provide reasonably effective leadership for the government and the war effort.108/

Thus, the attention of the US government was drawn to possible alternatives to the Diem regime, in the light of growing criticism of US policy toward Vietnam.

2) Debate in Washington

The Kennedy administration began what was to be an intensive and lengthy debate concerning the future of the Diem regime and the likely consequences of a possible coup. The administration was faced with a vast array of conflicting assessments. The US media's reporting indicated that the regime's repressive actions were having a detrimental effect on the country's stability in general, and on the progress of the war in particular; US military personnel in Saigon and the Joint Chiefs of Staff disagreed, arguing that a coup in itself would disrupt the war effort.109/ The US Ambassador in Saigon, Frederick Nolting, soon to be succeeded by Henry Cabot Lodge, urged continued efforts in the on-going pressure campaign to obtain Diem's compliance with US demands.110/ In Nolting's view, a coup would probably lead to a civil war. In short, the administration realized that a coup could indeed result from the turbulence in Saigon, especially if the Nhus remained in power. Yet it was considered

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highly improbable that the Nhus would relinquish power or that Diem could be convinced to remove them.110/ Against the backdrop of Congressional pressure for cutbacks in US aid to South Vietnam (in protest against Diem's repressive actions), the administration granted Ambassador Nolting's request that he be allowed one more attempt to elicit a satisfactory response from President Diem.112/

3) Catalyst for a Decision

On August 21, 1963, Nhu ordered an assault on the country's Buddhist pagodas, culminating in the arrest of hundreds of Buddhist monks.113/ Arriving the next day, US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, who had abruptly replaced Ambassador Nolting, faced a highly confusing situation; the US Embassy's information about the incident was extremely sketchy, partly owing to Nhu's order that its line of communications be cut during the attack.114/ In addition, Diem maintained that it was the Army, and not Nhu, who had ordered the attack. Amid this confusion, several South Vietnamese generals approached US Embassy personnel to discern what the US reaction to a possible military coup against President Diem would be and to clear up the misunderstanding over who had ordered the attack.115/

b. Decision to Support a Coup

The pagoda incident found four of the Kennedy administration's highest level decision makers away from Washington at a time when a decision or change in policy appeared to be an urgent requirement. In the absence of President Kennedy, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, and CIA Director McCone, a fateful cable to Ambassador Lodge, was drafted in the State Department on August 24, 1963. Approval of the absent policy makers or those acting in their place was obtained hurriedly and the cable was sent.116/ The message, which met with the Ambassador Lodge's immediate approval, and which the Ambassador interpreted as a "direct order to prepare for a coup against Diem," 117/ signaled US acquiescence in the plotting of a coup and set out the administration's stipulations for

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supporting the military commanders in their efforts to overthrow the Diem government. Significant excerpts from the cable follow:

U.S. Government cannot tolerate situation in which power lies in Nhu's hands. Diem must be given chance to rid himself of Nhu and his coterie and replace them with best military and political personalities available....

We wish [to] give Diem reasonable opportunity to remove Nhus, but if he remains obdurate, then we are prepared to accept the obvious implication that we can no longer support Diem. You may tell appropriate military commanders we will give them direct support in any interim period of breakdown [of the] central government mechanism...

Concurrently, with above, Ambassador and country team should urgently examine all possible alternative leadership and make detailed plans as to how we might bring about Diem's replacement if this should become necessary.118/

In addition, the State Department instructed Lodge to inform both President Diem and the generals involved in the plotting of the coup, of the US position. Ambassador Lodge, however, proposed that only the generals be informed since he felt the chances of Diem's compliance were quite slim.119/ However, following the telegram's dispatch, a mood of uncertainty and ambivalence permeated the Kennedy White House. The broad array of existing assessments and conflicting points of view lent little clarity or decisiveness to the administration's posture regarding a coup or the question of how to handle the Diem-Nhu regime in general. On the one hand, there were those involved in the drafting of the cable and its recipient, Ambassador Lodge, who advocated US support for a coup; on the other, there were the Defense Department, former US Ambassador to South Vietnam Nolting, and General Harkins, who argued that a coup would debilitate the country and, therefore, have a detrimental effect on the progress of the war.120/

President Kennedy, reflecting his earlier unhappy experience with the Bay of Pigs invasion, told his advisers at an NSC meeting on August 29, 1963, that he wanted assurance that a coup would succeed before

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he would support it.^{121/} In a cable notifying Ambassador Lodge and General Harkins of the President's decision, Secretary of State Rusk said, "The USG will support a coup which has good chance of succeeding but plans no direct involvement of US armed forces." It instructed Harkins to tell the South Vietnamese generals that he was prepared to "establish liaison with the coup planners and to review plans," but not to engage directly in joint coup planning. According to former CIA director, William Colby, from this point on US in-country CIA personnel were in continual contact with the plotting generals.^{122/} Lodge was further authorized to suspend aid to the South Vietnamese government if he thought that it would "enhance the chances of a successful coup."^{123/} This presidential decision of August 29, 1963 and the famous cable of August 24, 1963 were the essential statements of US policy concerning the coup. But for the next two months, the Kennedy administration constantly reassessed the political-military situation in South Vietnam, using fact-finding missions and continuous cable traffic, hoping to improve its perception of the prospects for a successful coup, but refusing to make a decision on further US involvement beyond supporting the continued coup plotting by the generals, while continuing to pressure Diem to make reforms.

In an effort to clarify how detrimental a coup might be and to assess the political-military situation in South Vietnam, the administration sent two high-level fact-finding missions to the country. The first, the Krulak-Mendenhall mission, was a military-civilian team. Upon its return, it offered highly contradictory assessments to the NSC, offering little clarity to the prevailing ambiguities.^{124/} In the mission's report, dated September 10, 1963, General Krulak, taking an optimistic view, stressed that the civil-political turmoil had little effect on the progress of the war. Mr. Mendenhall, a senior Foreign Service Officer, argued that disaffection with the regime threatened the viability of the civil government; he concluded that the war effort could not proceed effectively with the present regime.^{125/} The second, the McNamara-Taylor mission, resulted

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in a compromise assessment of the prevailing civilian and military viewpoints.^{126/} In its report, dated October 2, 1963, the team suggested the following alternative policy options to the president:

- (1) Return to avowed support of the Diem regime and attempt to obtain the necessary improvements through persuasion from a posture of "reconciliation." This would not mean any expression of approval of the repressive actions of the regime, but simply that we would go back in practice to business as usual.
- (2) Follow a policy of selective pressures: "purely correct" relationships at the top official level, continuing to withhold further actions in the commodity import program, and making clear our disapproval of the regime. A further element in this policy is letting the present impression stand that the US would not be averse to a change of Government -- although we would not take any immediate actions to initiate a coup.
- (3) Start immediately to promote a coup by high ranking military officers. This policy might involve more extended suspensions of aid and sharp denunciations of the regime's actions so timed as to fit with coup prospects and planning.^{127/}

The president, after further deliberations with his NSC advisers on October 2, 1963, opted for the second option. The decision was, therefore, an affirmation of US policy to date: The Kennedy administration would continue its pressure on the Diem Government, in the form of economic sanctions, while, simultaneously, supporting the coup plotting. The coup began on November 1, 1963; an official in Saigon was allowed to sit with the plotting generals and report the coup's development to the CIA Saigon station.^{128/} The administration's earlier cable of August 24, 1963, set the coup plotting in motion and, although the US national-level policy makers entertained second thoughts regarding the advisability of a coup, the matter was, in actuality, already beyond the control of Washington. The outcome of the coup has been reported in detail by many historians of the Vietnam era. Twenty-one days later President John Kennedy was dead and a new administration faced the continuing turbulence in South Vietnam.

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E. THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

Our purpose in Vietnam is to join in the defense of freedom of a brave people who are under attack that is controlled and that is directed from outside their country.^{129/}

(President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965)

1. Introduction

In many respects the Johnson administration continued the Vietnam policies of its postwar predecessors. As a product of World War II and the cold war era, the Johnson administration continued to see the world in bipolar terms, a battle between the forces of the communism and the free world. Also like its predecessors, the Johnson administration considered the failure of appeasement at Munich to be a lesson of great importance and relevance to the contemporary fight against communism in Asia. Communist China was perceived as a highly aggressive power which had to be contained, much as the Soviet Union had to be contained in Europe. President Johnson believed that the conflict in Vietnam was principally inspired and fueled by the Chinese and Soviet leaders, to gain a unified monolithic "communist bloc," rather than a nationalist form of Vietnamese Communism under the rule of the North Vietnamese Communist Party.^{130/}

In a deeper sense, President Johnson, like his predecessors, did not appreciate the cultural dissimilarities between the American and Vietnamese societies; he assumed that his programs for a "Great Society" in the United States could be applied in Vietnam, once "democracy" had been established there.^{131/}

2. Vietnam Decision-Making Process During the Johnson Administration

a. Vietnam Decision-Making Style and the Level of Institutional Influence During the Johnson Administration

President Johnson's Vietnam decision-making style was informal, centering on the Tuesday Lunch Group and meetings between the president and small groups of advisers both in and out of the government. Senior civilian advisers with cabinet rank and senior military officers provided advice directly to the president during such meetings, as well as

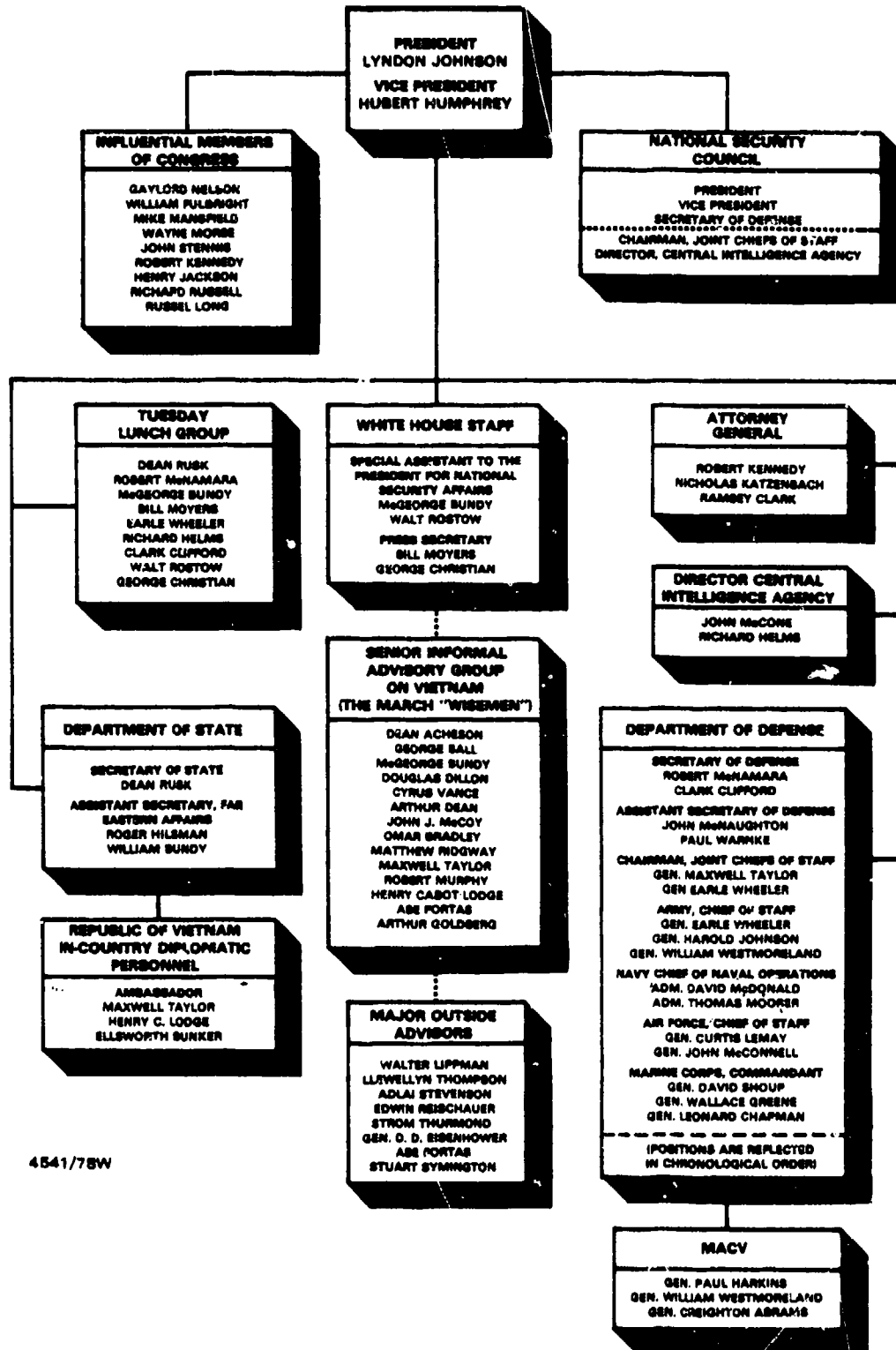
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at the formal meetings of the National Security Council. However, subordinate officials in the various government departments and agencies had very little direct access to the president. They were dependent upon their superiors to forward advice to the president.^{132/} President Johnson's style also reflected his desire to achieve consensus on a particular policy decision, this drive for "consensus building" was particularly evident in the face of an ambiguous situation requiring a policy decision or when confronted by dissent from a participating policy maker challenging the majority view. In the latter cases, the dissenter was usually encouraged to rethink his approach; his exclusion from the decision-making process followed if he persisted in blocking the "consensus building" drive. Administrative efforts to reach consensus very likely contributed further to the executive's ever-growing tendency to a centralized approach to decision making.

The role of the NSC as a decision-making organization on Vietnam policy was marginal.^{133/} Johnson relied far more on the personal views of Secretary of Defense McNamara, of McGeorge Bundy, and of other members of his White House staff. (See Figure 3-4 for a graphic overview of the positions held by these and other of the key Vietnam decision makers in the Johnson administration. Appendix B provides biographical information on the key Johnson administration Vietnam decision makers.) This reliance on close senior advisers grew as Johnson became increasingly suspicious of the NSC as a wellspring for security leaks to the press.^{135/} The Johnson administration's attitude towards the press was never particularly positive and, with the passage of time, the press came to be considered as one of the administration's more powerful and most critical enemies.

The influence of the State Department continued to decline under President Johnson, whereas conversely, the Defense Department, and particularly the Office of the Secretary of Defense, maintained a very prominent position in Vietnam decision making. The Joint Chiefs of Staff apparently felt that McNamara's influence with Johnson frequently exceeded his professional expertise, and were concerned that their advice on military issues such as selection of bombing targets, received less attention than did advice by civilian "whiz kids" in the Defense Department.^{136/}

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Figure 3-4. Vietnam Policy Making: Key Decision Makers and Other Important Advisers within the Johnson Administration, 1963-1968. 134/3-35

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Early in President Johnson's administration, the Congress played a supportive but largely peripheral role in Vietnam decision making. Congress passed the Southeast Asia Resolution in August 1964, with only two dissenting votes, thereby, perhaps unintentionally, yielding unprecedented power to the president to act unilaterally in Vietnam. It is rather ironic that Johnson sought and received congressional support in this instance without a precondition that US allies also participate in heightened military action in Vietnam. During the Eisenhower administration, Senator Johnson emphasized that he would not support US military action during the Dien Bien Phu crisis unless US allies also participated. By 1966, key congressmen, particularly Senator William Fulbright who had been a close friend of the president, vocalized their dissent to Johnson's Vietnam policies in an effort to bring about an end to the war. But congressional opinion continued to play a minor role, even in Johnson's reversal of policy in March 1968. This reversal was not in response to dissent from Congress. Rather, it was in response to the changed opinion of his close personal advisers and of a select advisory group commonly referred to as the "Wise Men."

President Johnson is famous for his "consensus-building" approach to national security policy. It was not that the president sought to reach a consensus in the Congress or even in most of the executive branch when policy was actually being formulated. Rather, such a consensus was usually sought after he had taken a decision. Essentially, the consensus-building approach was a tool to get the Congress and NSC advisers on record as being in agreement with major, sensitive decisions.^{137/} The decisions themselves usually had been taken earlier, based on the advice of a very small group of trusted advisers, usually including the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. This approach was represented in the decision-making process surrounding the Tonkin Gulf crisis of August 1964.

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b. Case Study: Decision to Retaliate Against North Vietnam After the Attacks

1) Awareness of the Problem

After the Diem coup in November 1963, and particularly beginning in February and March 1964, US intelligence assessments indicated substantial deterioration in the military situation in Vietnam.^{138/} These assessments induced President Johnson to send Secretary McNamara and Chairman of the JCS Maxwell Taylor on a major fact-finding mission to Vietnam from March 8 to 13.^{139/} In his formal report to the president, McNamara argued that the US should send additional economic aid and military equipment to South Vietnam and be in a position on thirty-days notice to initiate a program of "Graduated Overt Military Pressure" against North Vietnam.^{140/}

2) Debate In Washington

McNamara's recommendations were softer than those proffered on February 18 and on March 2 by the JCS, which included a proposal for punitive action against North Vietnam to halt support for the insurgency in the South.^{141/} The JCS had specifically recommended that bombing of the North be initiated.^{142/}

President Johnson accepted McNamara's recommendations and instructed the JCS not to initiate bombing but instead to plan how the United States should strike at sources of the insurgency in North Vietnam.^{143/} On June 15, 1964, McGeorge Bundy, the president's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, sent a memorandum to McNamara and Rusk, which dealt with the question of obtaining a congressional resolution supporting Johnson's Vietnam policy.^{144/} Thus, almost two months before the Tonkin Gulf crisis, the Johnson Administration considered the possibility of bombing North Vietnam and obtaining a congressional resolution that would justify such action.

General Maxwell Taylor, who, as Chairman of the JCS and as a member of the fact-finding mission with McNamara in March 1964, had recommended immediate bombing of the North, was sent by President Johnson to serve as US Ambassador to South Vietnam in early July.^{145/}

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3) Catalyst for a Decision

On August 2, 1964, the USS Maddox and C. Turner Joy were reportedly attacked in the Gulf of Tonkin.^{146/} General Maxwell Taylor, the new US Ambassador to South Vietnam, recommended that the US initiate immediate and severe retaliatory bombing against North Vietnam.^{147/} The United States officially protested to the International Control Commission, but President Johnson did not order the reprisals Taylor recommended. However, a second set of attacks allegedly occurred on August 3 and 4, 1964.^{148/} These attacks were the catalyst for a major US decision.

4) Decision: President Johnson Decides to Retaliate Against North Vietnam

On August 4, President Johnson met first with the JCS and then with the National Security Council. Significantly, from the standpoint of Vietnam decision making, President Johnson dismissed the NSC in order to be with his closest advisers, McNamara, Rusk, Bundy, Cyrus Vance, and John McCone.^{149/} This small group of advisers concluded that reprisals were necessary. Johnson agreed and at that time made the decision to retaliate. According to Johnson:

The unanimous view of these advisers was that we could not ignore this second provocation and that the attack required retaliation. I agreed. We decided on air strikes against North Vietnamese PT boats and their bases plus a strike on one oil depot.^{150/}

Later that day, Johnson reconvened the NSC to confirm formally the details of the attack. He then met with congressional leaders and informed them of his decision to initiate reprisals on his own authority, but true to his consensus building approach he requested Congressional support for this action and any subsequent action he considered necessary. These key Congressmen informed him that he would have no difficulty in getting such a resolution through Congress.^{151/} With the presidential election only three months away, Johnson was concerned with presenting an image of moderation in military affairs compared to the image Senator Goldwater projected. The Southeast Asia Resolution, therefore,

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served as public evidence that consensus existed throughout the federal government concerning Johnson's Vietnam policy. From the president's point of view, such a suggestion had the desired effect of sharing the responsibility for the initiation of military reprisals with the Congress. No evidence suggests that Congress or the NSC played a significant role in making the decision to initiate reprisals.

This case study illustrates the administration's decision-making process during President Johnson's first years in office. From the discussion it is evident that the president did rely on the NSC, a formal decision-making organization, as an advisory body during the crisis; the final decision, however, was taken in the company of a small group of presidential advisers outside the confines of a formal, structured meeting. Eventually President Johnson's regular Tuesday lunches assumed the function of an integral, if not the integral, decision-making body within his administration. Johnson's remaining four years in the White House saw his preference for this type of decision making process and style grow, diminishing low-level access to the administration's key decision makers and increasing the executive branch's tendency towards centralized decision making.

F. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

I believe that one of the reasons for the deep division about Vietnam is that many Americans have lost confidence in what the government has told them about our policy. The American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy which involves the overriding issues of war and peace unless they know the truth about that policy. 152/

(President Richard M. Nixon, 1969)

1. Introduction

The installation of the Nixon administration in 1969 marked the beginning of a new and significantly different approach to the making of US foreign policy: the Nixon administration was determined to end the Vietnam

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war - perceived as President Johnson's fiasco - and to restore balance to US foreign policy. Based on a growing appreciation of the diversities in the world communist movement, Nixon and Kissinger sought an approach to foreign diplomacy which would restore the world's confidence in the US, strengthen US alliances with Western powers, and command the respect of the major communist powers.^{153/} In campaign pledges in 1968, Mr. Nixon promised the rapid termination of the Vietnam conflict. When Henry Kissinger joined the Nixon White House staff, a plan for realizing this goal emerged, as will be seen in the decision-making case study for the Nixon administration.

2. Vietnam Decision-Making Process During the Nixon Administration

a. Vietnam Decision-Making Style and the Level of Institutional Influence During the Nixon Administration

In the Nixon administration's early period, the decision-making style tended to be formal and structured, similar in both style and approach to President Eisenhower's mode of operation.^{154/} This formal approach was characterized by frequent NSC meetings, a low-profile position for the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, and a commitment to a well-coordinated, open-channeled approach to national security. However, this formal process quickly diminished and eventually faded almost entirely.^{155/}

Kissinger initiated several organizational innovations in the NSC system which were designed to enhance the NSC's coordination with the White House and other government agencies on national security matters, including interagency task forces, such as the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG). Kissinger's innovations were designed to improve crisis management at the national level. As Kissinger's responsibilities and access to the president increased, the frequency of NSC meetings diminished significantly. Decision making, especially during crises, came to be a White House operation with Special Assistant Kissinger at the forefront of these advisory groups. As an outgrowth of this development, the influence of the State Department on major Vietnam decisions declined still further. (For a graphic overview of the Nixon administration's decision-making

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bodies and its key Vietnam decision makers, see Figure 3-5. Appendix B provides biographical information on each of the key Vietnam decision makers.)

The Department of Defense, under the stewardship of Secretary Laird, attempted to increase the participation of the military in the overall decision-making process. Evidence suggests that this goal was only partially realized. While the military did in fact concur with Nixon and Kissinger on a number of broad issues - maximization of aid to South Vietnam, the bombing of Cambodia, and the mining of Haiphong harbor - it appears the JCS frequently had difficulty in making their voices heard over the more dominant one of Henry Kissinger. Nevertheless, compared to the McNamara era, the military relished its comparative increase in overall decision-making participation within the administration.^{157/}

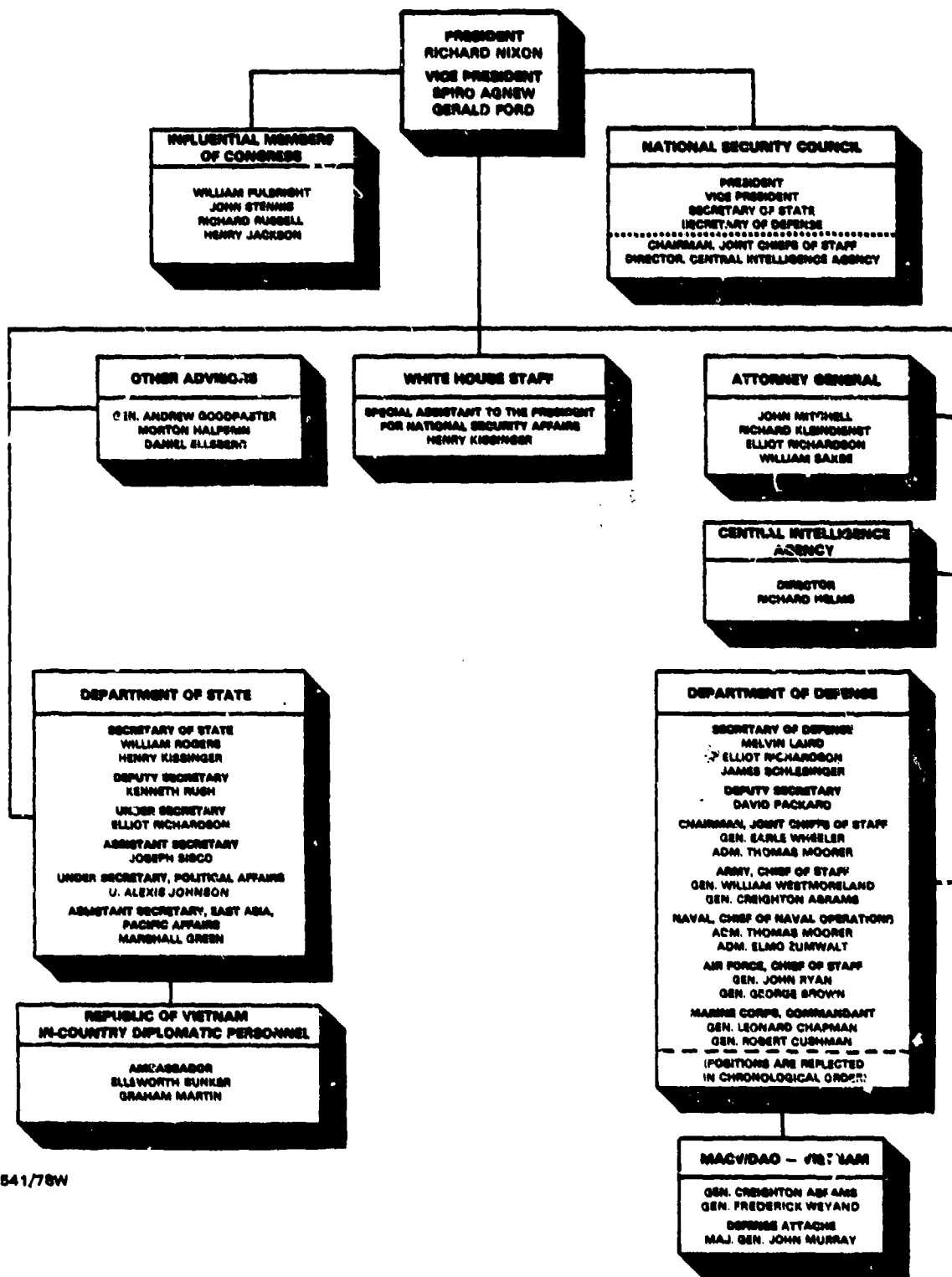
The role of Congress in Vietnam decision making changed markedly during the Nixon administration. In the administration's early years, the Congress did not substantially influence or restrict major executive decisions affecting US involvement in Southeast Asia, including the decisions on negotiations, Vietnamization, and US troop withdrawals set out in National Security Decision Memorandum 9 (NSDM 9), or the decision to bomb the sanctuaries in Cambodia. However, with the passage of time, Congress increasingly asserted itself in the formulation of US foreign policy by restricting presidential powers in military matters, including allocation of defense appropriations and the application of US military force. Most significant among these restrictions were bills cutting off all funds for Cambodia and prohibiting further military action in Indochina without explicit congressional authorization, and provisions in the War Powers Act of 1973 requiring the president to report to Congress any commitment of US combat forces abroad and allowing Congress to terminate US commitment of forces at any time.^{158/}

b. Case Study: Decision for a New Approach to the Vietnam Conflict: National Security Decision Memorandum 9 (NSDM 9)

1) Awareness of the Problem

President Nixon came to office in 1969 at the height of public concern over US involvement in Vietnam. His predecessor, Lyndon

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Figure 3-5. Vietnam Policy Making: Key Decision Makers and Other Important Advisers Within the Nixon Administration, 1969-1974 156/

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Johnson, had acknowledged the need for deescalating US activity in South-east Asia and, just prior to leaving the presidency, had received Hanoi's willingness to commence negotiations. Therefore, President Nixon and his staff, in particular Henry Kissinger, were confronted with the problem of gracefully extricating the United States from an extremely unpopular war.

Although it is doubtful that Nixon himself had a detailed pre-election "plan" for dealing with this problem, such a plan did emerge in the first days of the administration. Henry Kissinger, in an article entitled "The Vietnam Negotiations" published in the January 1969 issue of Foreign Affairs, explained his approach for ending the war.^{159/} He proposed a two-track solution which called for the following negotiating sequence:

- The US would seek a military settlement with Hanoi while, simultaneously,
- Saigon would seek a political solution through negotiations with the National Liberation Front (NLF).

After the completion of the above two steps, an international conference would be convened during which the necessary safeguards and guarantees would be drawn up. Kissinger also provided a contingency plan in the event that this approach shortcircuited and the war continued. This second strategy called for the upgrading and strengthening of South Vietnam's military (later coined "Vietnamization") in order that US forces could be withdrawn gradually.^{160/}

2) Debate in Washington

The Nixon administration, armed with this plan, set the bureaucratic process in motion by calling for an all-governmental review and reassessment of US involvement in Vietnam. In January, a special task force, including Henry Kissinger, Daniel Ellsberg, and Morton Halperin, drew up an options paper for the administration.^{161/} In addition, various government agencies were tasked with answering a series of 28 questions covering a broad spectrum of war-related concerns: negotiations, enemy capabilities, South Vietnam's military and political capabilities, pacification, and US military operations.^{162/} Significantly, Kissinger directed

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that US departments and agencies, including the State Department, CIA, MACV, and the US Embassy in Saigon, develop their responses separately rather than formulating a joint reply. In this way, the prevailing views of each particular agency would surface, thereby revealing diversities of viewpoint. The responses submitted to the administration in late February 1969 did indeed reveal that a broad array of views existed in the bureaucracy.^{163/}

3) Catalyst for a Decision

The major catalyst for the decision taken by the Nixon administration was the public pledge of the new president to end the war: "New leadership will end the war and win the peace in the Pacific."^{164/} Based both on the responses of the various agencies which were compiled in National Security Study Memorandum 1 (NSSM 1), and on Henry Kissinger's two-track solution for terminating the war, President Nixon arrived at his own decision.

4) Decision: President Nixon Adopts a Four-Fold Approach for Terminating the War

President Nixon, with the advise of his special assistant Henry Kissinger, and in reaction to NSSM 1 which indicated that the military pressure applied on Hanoi by the Johnson administration had generally been ineffective, decided that the war could be terminated by increasing bombing to a maximal level in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia.^{165/} In his view, the previous ineffectiveness of the bombing did not indicate that a new approach without the use of bombing was needed, but, rather that an intensified bombing campaign to elicit a "better" DRV negotiating posture would be more effective.^{166/} In addition, President Nixon, with advice from Dr. Kissinger and the NSC staff, decided three important issues. As outlined in National Security Decision Memorandum 9 (NSDM 9), these decisions were as follows:

- The negotiation policy would include insistence on mutual withdrawal by DRV and U.S. forces with adequate inspection procedures;
- The Vietnamization process would be carried out rapidly and effectively; and

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- A specific timetable for US troop withdrawals, regardless of the progress made at the Paris talks, would be worked out.167/

The decision-making process which generated the NSDM 9 document reflected a generally formal and structured approach; input from a variety of agencies was solicited, a special task force was created, and the National Security Council was convened. However, NSDM 9 was essentially a reiteration of the Kissinger Plan and, therefore, cannot be cited as evidence of strong influence on Vietnam decision making by various bureaucratic elements in the Nixon administration. The bombing decision, on the other hand, was developed more clearly on the basis of analysis provided in NSSM 1, thereby suggesting the influence of other bureaucratic elements on Vietnam decision making in the very early period of the Nixon administration.

By mid-1969, the administration's broadly based (though formal) decision-making process became tightly closed. Centralization of Vietnam decision making and the secrecy which sustained this centralized structure was soon carried to an extreme in the decision to bomb the sanctuaries in Cambodia. Secretary of Defense Laird was excluded from this decision-making process.168/ The reasons for this high degree of centralization and secrecy stemmed largely from the Nixon-Kissinger desire to retain maximum flexibility for bold, personally developed initiatives. Hence, what were perceived as fleeting opportunities were seized upon privately, thus avoiding possible sabotage by leaks from NSC staff members, time-consuming scrutiny (and possible opposition) by Congress, and the ponderous workings of the bureaucracy.

c. The Final Years of the Nixon Administration and the Rise of Congress to the Center of Vietnam Decision Making

After the Paris Peace Accords had been signed in January 1973, the locus of Vietnam decision making shifted dramatically toward Congress. Domestic reasons for the shift are highly complex, and will be analyzed in Volume IV of this study.169/ But it is important to acknowledge here that the centralized Vietnam decision-making process of the Nixon Administration devolved into one characterized by active congressional participation.

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Congress's heightened activity in the Vietnam decision-making process became visible in the late spring of 1973. In May 1973, the House recommended that all supporting funds for the bombing of Cambodia be terminated. In July, the House and Senate passed this recommendation, and prohibited US military activity after 15 August 1973, in, over, or off the shores of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam without explicit congressional approval.^{170/}

During the last quarter of 1973, the Nixon administration, constrained by congressional aid cuts for military activities in Cambodia and limitations on overall military activity in Southeast Asia, girded itself for a battle over aid to Vietnam for the next fiscal year. Based on recommendations by Ambassador Graham Martin, the administration requested \$1.45 billion in aid for South Vietnam. Ambassador Martin and the US Defense Attache in Saigon, Major General John E. Murray, made numerous trips to Washington in an effort to persuade Congress to maintain the size of the appropriations. Several congressional committees recommended sizeable cuts in the administration's proposal. Finally, the Senate Armed Services Committee, uncertain of South Vietnam's actual aid requirements, requested that a Pentagon team assess the situation and report its findings to Congress. Erich von Marbod, one of Secretary Schlesinger's top civilian logistics experts, toured South Vietnam and reported that the administration's aid recommendations had overestimated the GVN's requirements. In late July 1974 the Senate and House voted to impose a \$1 billion ceiling on all Vietnam-related military spending for the next eleven months. This was the last congressional aid decision taken during Nixon's tenure as President; however, the next administration would face a continuation of the aid battle with Congress.

A second legislative act deserves consideration when discussing Congress's rise to the center of Vietnam decision making: the War Powers Act. This bill, passed by Congress in November 1973, required the president to notify Congress within 72 hours of any new commitment or increase in existing commitment of US combat troops abroad. In addition, it required the president to terminate any such action within 120 days of

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his notification unless Congress authorized continuation of the commitment; the law also allowed Congress to direct the termination of US commitments at any time.^{171/}

The passage of this act, a logical progression from the July-August 1973 congressional limitations on US aid and commitments to Southeast Asia, illustrates the greatly increased participation of Congress in Vietnam decision making. The last years of Nixon's presidency, in particular from mid-1973 through August 1974, were marked by a breakdown of the administration's characteristically centralized approach to decision making. The exposure of Watergate and the administration's secrecy in the making of foreign policy eroded any congressional acceptance of this centralized approach; Congress visibly increased its participation in the decision-making process through its control of Vietnam appropriations.

Hence, there were three distinct stages of Vietnam decision making during the Nixon Administration. In the first stage -- immediately following President Nixon's inauguration in January 1969 -- the principal decision makers were those in the executive branch, and participation was actively sought from a broad spectrum of government agencies. The decision-making process leading to NSDM 9 fell in this stage. The second stage was characterized by a highly centralized process, in which bureaucratic participation declined sharply as a function of Dr. Kissinger's rise to prominence as the administration's chief spokesman and adviser on foreign affairs. The peak of this stage was reached in September 1973, when Dr. Kissinger was appointed Secretary of State, while continuing to hold the position of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. The third stage followed almost immediately in mid-1973 when Congress, alarmed by abuses of executive power, began its rise to the forefront of Vietnam decision making. This shift in power continued after President Nixon resigned in August 1974.

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G. THE FORD ADMINISTRATION

The President and his emissaries must not be handicapped in advance in their relations with foreign governments as has happened in the past. ...There can be only one Commander in Chief.^{172/}

(President Gerald Ford, 1977)

1. Introduction

Gerald Ford assumed the presidency under trying circumstances. In his two and one-half-year tenure in the White House, he was faced with a broad spectrum of domestic and international problems. The Watergate scandal and President Nixon's subsequent resignation had shattered the US public's faith in high-level government. International attention focused on the Middle East, and Secretary of State Kissinger turned his attentions towards shuttle diplomacy in that area of the world. Vietnam, once a household word, was rapidly fading from the minds of most Americans, and Congress sought to keep US involvement in Southeast Asia to a bare minimum. Several pieces of legislation, in particular the War Powers Act of 1973, indicated that the Congress was intent on restraining presidential maneuverability in foreign affairs. President Ford found that Congress, in direct contrast to the early years of the Johnson administration, demanded and required executive accountability for all military-related activities abroad. This phenomenon - the enlarged role of Congress - stands out as the most significant feature of Vietnam decision making during the Ford administration.

2. Vietnam Decision-Making Process During the Ford Administration

a. Vietnam Decision-Making Style and the Level of Institutional Influence During the Ford Administration

In a normal transition period, a president-elect has time to prepare for his assumption of presidential responsibilities. He studies the previous administration's foreign policy and takes time in the selection of his cabinet members and staff. Like Presidents Truman and Johnson, President Ford did not have this opportunity to gear up and ease into his new position.^{173/} Consequently, he chose to retain most of the key Vietnam

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decision makers of the Nixon administration, ensuring a good deal of continuity in administration policy toward Vietnam. (Figure 3-6 provides a summary of the Ford administration's key Vietnam decision makers. Biographical information for a number of these individuals appears in Appendix B.)

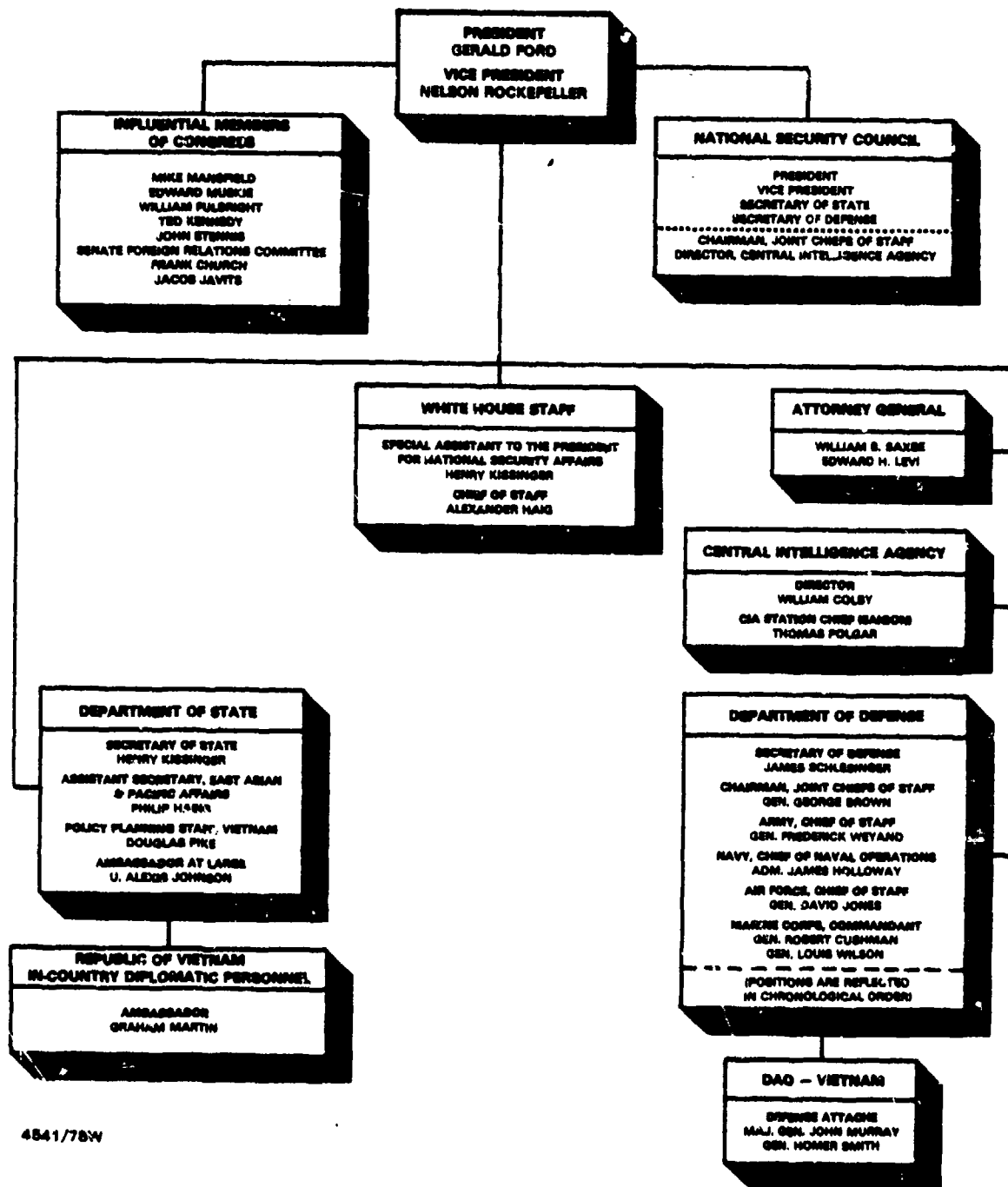
President Ford's decision-making style contrasted significantly with President Nixon's. Ford preferred an informal decentralized mode of operation, seeking the opinions of a broad range of advisers.^{175/} One vehicle used for this exchange of views was the NSC which Ford convened with regularity. He championed interagency debate on Vietnam issues, considering this activity to be beneficial in making sound presidential decisions.^{176/}

Based on lessons he drew from President Nixon's Watergate experiences, President Ford ensured that his White House staff operated within carefully defined boundaries: while the president appreciated the need for a staff with authority, his White House assistants did not have the right to make policy decisions or prevent access of other advisers to the president.^{177/} Ford's eventual decision to remove Dr. Kissinger from the position of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, which Ford considered an administrative position, while retaining him as Secretary of State, a policy-making position, was in keeping with this principle.^{178/}

Under Dr. Kissinger's leadership, the bureaucracy at the Department of State remained relatively uninfluential in Vietnam decision making during Ford's tenure as president. Some officials in the department found their assessments of South Vietnam's aid requirements ignored because they did not coincide with Ford's or Kissinger's conceptions.^{179/}

The administration's military specialists, including those in the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, supported the position held by President Ford and Secretary Kissinger that supplemental military aid to South Vietnam would reverse that country's deteriorating situation.^{180/} The Defense Department produced a number of pessimistic assessments regarding Saigon's viability. The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the US Defense Attache to Saigon, Major General Murray, were

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Figure 3-6. Vietnam Policy Making: Key Decision Makers and Other Important Advisers within the Ford Administration, 1974-April 1975. 174/

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the principal contributors of these pessimistic assessments. The Departments of State and Defense, however, were to some degree caught up in the Kissinger-Schlesinger tensions which eventually caused the latter to be placed on the periphery of the administration's Vietnam decision making.^{181/} Moreover, according to Admiral Sharp, Secretary Kissinger's personalized diplomacy often removed the Joint Chiefs of Staff from an influential position in the decision-making process, leaving them uninformed on policy initiatives.^{182/}

Congress, as has been indicated, participated extensively in the formulation of US policy toward Vietnam. By early 1975, when approval of aid appropriations to South Vietnam was particularly critical, the new congressional majority used its legislative power to end US involvement in the area completely.^{183/} There were two major congressional constraints on the Ford administration's efforts to bolster South Vietnam:

- Congressional refusal to approve substantial amounts of military and economic aid to the Saigon regime, and
- Congressional refusal to approve renewed American military involvement after Hanoi's violation of the 1973 Paris Peace Accords.^{184/}

b. April 1975 Congressional Decision not to Grant Supplemental Military Aid to South Vietnam

This decision emerged from a complex decision-making process which involved officials in the Ford administration, the US Congress, and high-level US military and diplomatic personnel stationed in Saigon. The decision followed a lengthy debate between Congress and the administration over whether a large amount of additional aid to Saigon was necessary to "save" the rapidly deteriorating military and political situation in South Vietnam, and over whether the interests of the United States would be served by this increase in aid.

1) Awareness of the Problem

As Vice President, Mr. Ford had witnessed the Nixon administration's difficulties in securing congressional support for supplemental aid to South Vietnam. Two weeks before President Nixon's resignation, Congress imposed a \$1 billion ceiling on military spending for Vietnam to cover the next eleven months.^{185/} In President Ford's first month in office, Congress refused to allow the \$1 billion ceiling to be reached, appropriating only \$700 million for military spending in Vietnam.^{186/} The new president, aware of his predecessor's commitments to defend the South if Hanoi broke the 1973 Accords, was faced with continual reports that Saigon's stability was deteriorating. This instability stemmed both from the increased activities on the part of the North, and from the South's sagging morale, resulting from the above and from fear that the US would no longer provide support. Hence, the Ford administration, on 8 January 1975, requested Congress to grant the South \$300 million in supplemental military aid. President Ford, in requesting this aid, was aware that congressional support would be difficult to obtain.^{187/}

2) Debate in Washington

President Ford's request for supplemental aid received criticism in Congress. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and House Majority Leader Thomas O'Neill said they would not back the request. Speaker of the House Carl Albert promised his support but conceded that the request would stand little chance of passage in the House.^{188/} Throughout the first quarter of 1975, Congress considered the request, but could not support it in the face of widely varying intelligence assessments regarding South Vietnam's viability. Congressional confusion over the real situation in Vietnam was fueled by conflicting briefings, some of which obscured the South's problems, while others highlighted them.^{189/}

In an attempt to obtain a clearer view of the situation, Congress sent its own fact-finding team to South Vietnam.^{190/} Unwilling to participate only in the ambassador's prepared briefings, the team sought to uncover facts for themselves by speaking with other US personnel in Saigon and with South Vietnamese. The mission did little to

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alleviate the confusion in Congress. While some legislators on the mission concluded that continued US support was essential, most returned home unconvinced of its necessity. Those who supported aid, apparently came to this conclusion as a result of fruitless talks with DRV and PRG officials concerning the return of the prisoners of war and information about those who were missing in action. These congressmen argued that until the question was resolved, continued aid to the South was necessary. Those who remained unconvinced, found fuel for their positions in meetings with US and South Vietnamese officials who dissented with Ambassador Martin's position.191/

From January to mid-April 1975, the Ford administration lobbied hard on Capitol Hill. Senior officials from the Departments of State and Defense testified before Congress, urging the passage of the administration's \$300 million aid request. President Ford, Vice President Rockefeller, Secretary Kissinger, and Ambassador Martin made appeals promoting the aid proposal.

President Ford convened a session of his top-level advisers on March 25, 1975. The meeting took place just after Secretary Kissinger's return from a trip to the Middle East, during which an option for obtaining aid for South Vietnam from Saudi Arabia had been discussed.192/ The advisers included Dr. Kissinger, Ambassador Martin, General Frederick Weyand, and Special Assistant for National Security Affairs Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft. Secretary of Defense Schlesinger was noticeably absent, apparently excluded at the request of Henry Kissinger.193/ At this meeting the following decisions were made:

- To send a fact-finding mission to South Vietnam and Southeast Asia headed by General Weyand. (The team included two staff members from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.)
- To use American naval vessels to aid the evacuation of US personnel and to inform Congress of this action, in accordance with provisions in the War Powers Act.
- To send all arms and supplies already on order to Saigon without delay.

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- To delay any increase in its aid request for South Vietnam until after the return of the Weyand mission (that is, the administration would continue to lobby for \$300 million in supplemental military aid).194/

In mid-March, standing plans for such an evacuation were considered by in-country personnel in the face of an increase in DRV military activities.195/ Concurrent with DRV military successes in many of the country's provinces, there was an increase in the evacuation of US personnel and their belongings, and in the dismantling of posts in these areas. Full-scale evacuation began in the last weeks of April 1975.196/

3) Catalyst For a Decision

On 10 April 1975, based on the Weyand mission's report which indicated that the situation in Southeast Asia was extremely critical, President Ford went before a joint session of Congress to request a grant of \$722 million in emergency military aid to South Vietnam and a reaffirmation of his authority to use the US military for a full-scale evacuation.197/ The legislators' reaction was almost uniformly negative: in essence, they were greatly concerned by the president's request for the use of military forces and bridled at his emergency aid request as "throwing more good money after bad."198/ A few days later, two staff members from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had also participated on the Weyand mission, briefed the committee on their findings.199/ The committee was alarmed by their report which recommended an acceleration of the US evacuation from South Vietnam and argued that the administration's aid request was unlikely to prevent the South's collapse.200/

4) Decision Not to Grant Supplemental Aid to South Vietnam

On April 14, 1975, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in a meeting with President Ford, Secretary Kissinger, and Secretary Schlesinger, insisted on an accelerated evacuation of US personnel from South Vietnam. Aid for evacuation was promised, but military aid for other purposes was bluntly rejected.201/ The president, obviously frustrated by the committee's stance, refused to meet its demands for accelerated evacuation. According to his later account of the meeting, the president said to the congressmen,

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Gentlemen, I respect your views, but I have to carry out the plan that in my opinion is in our nation's best interest. If we try to pull out right now, it'll lead to panic and the chaos will jeopardize the lives of untold Americans. Believe me, we need to buy time, even a few days. Thank you for coming down. We've had a good discussion but the decision is my responsibility and I'll accept the consequences.202/

The speed of events in Indochina overtook the administration, prompting the decision to accelerate evacuation. On April 17, 1975, the day of Cambodia's fall, the Senate Armed Services Committee voted not to support any appropriation of supplemental military aid for South Vietnam.203/ Without waiting for a joint congressional vote on the issue, Secretary Kissinger ceased asking for the supplemental aid and conceded the administration's defeat. In Kissinger's words, "The Vietnam debate is over. The Administration will accept the Congress' verdict without recrimination or vindictiveness."204/

It is clear that Congress served as a major participant in the development of US policy toward Vietnam during the Ford administration's term of office.205/ Regardless of the tactics used by President Ford and other members of the administration to alleviate congressional concern, key congressional committees considered any compromise over US military aid to Indochina unacceptable. In short, Congress acted as a decision maker through its control of military appropriations for Vietnam. The Ford administration was forced to accelerate its evacuation of US personnel because Congress refused to allocate the additional money believed necessary by President Ford to support South Vietnam. On April 29, 1975, the Saigon government collapsed.

H. ANALYTIC SUMMARY AND INSIGHTS

Decision making is, in many respects, so specific to the particular issues and circumstances that generalized insights are somewhat hazardous to make. In assessing national-level decision making, the information upon which analysts must rely is the written documented word. Yet, as a point

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of fact, it should be observed that many presidential decisions are communicated "by voice instead of in writing, by telephone instead of letter and to one instead of many."206/ Theodore Sorenson's statement regarding John Kennedy can be applied to the other five post-WWII presidents concerned with Vietnam:

While those on the inside knew far more than those on the outside, no one -- no single aide, friend or member of his family -- knew all his thoughts or actions on any single subject...His motives were often unknown or unclear to others, for he resisted the obvious and the easy; and he was usually too busy with the next decision to take time to explain the last.207/

Statements such as these serve to illustrate that there are certain elements and constraints in assessing national-level decision makers and the decision-making process. Pressures to arrive at timely decisions also militate against the possibility of obtaining expert advice on all sides of every issue, particularly since the situation in Vietnam, even under crisis conditions, was only one of the problem areas that daily required presidential attention.

Presidents were the key decision makers on Vietnam policy. Each of the six postwar presidents considered himself to be the one ultimately responsible for the determination of Vietnam policy, though each chose to involve the Congress more or less, depending on the circumstances and presidential preferences. Eisenhower would involve the Congress in the formulation of policy provided that there was not a "sudden, unforeseen emergency," presumably so deemed by himself, in which case the Congress would not necessarily be involved. This approach contrasts significantly with that employed by the Nixon administration when Congress began to assert its right to extensive involvement in Vietnam policy making.

All of the presidents had lived through Manchuria, Munich, Poland, Yalta, the "loss" of China, the Korean War, and the McCarthy era. Each drew the lesson that the United States could not afford to be soft on communism, specifically that he could not be the president who permitted the "loss" of Vietnam to communism. Their close advisers reinforced their

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own anticommunist orientation. There is no question that the presidents and their advisers were conditioned by such past experiences when considering how to deal with the conflict in Vietnam.

Like leaders in any organization, presidents are not immune to confusing dissent with disloyalty. The Vietnam experience should point to some of the dangers in such confusion. Premises fail to receive the critical examination they require in formulating a sound policy that keeps pace with changes in a dynamic world. There was a time when monolithic communism may have justified the anticommunist approach of the US in the 1950s. Equally, it seems possible that the US might have tailored its policy toward Vietnam more closely to observable changes in the Sino-Soviet relationship earlier than it did (during the Nixon presidency). Unfortunately, the problem arose that the investment of US political, economic and military prestige, not to mention US casualties, came to override the intrinsic importance of Vietnam to the US.

The American experience in Vietnam points to the danger of having one fundamental principle -- anticommunism -- elevated to the status of doctrine for all regions in the world. By elevating a principle to the level of doctrine, further debate of the subject is minimized, thereby reducing the possibility that legitimate dissenting views will receive sufficient attention at the national policy-making level. What tended to happen in Vietnam was that consensus building on the premise of anticommunism was achieved to give coherence to Vietnam policy at the national level, at the sacrifice of a needed closer examination of the accuracy of that premise.

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CHAPTER 3 ENDNOTES

1. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. 2, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1956), p. 106.
2. For additional information on Ho Chi Minh and the OSS, see Decision #1 in Appendix A of this volume. Books 1, 7, and 8 of US Vietnam Relations 1945 - 1967, Prepared by the Department of Defense, Printed for the Use of the House Committee on Armed Services (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), offer a number of pertinent communications between the US and Ho Chi Minh as well as information relating to early US-Vietnam relations. Hereafter, DOD US/VN Relations.
3. Compiled from sources which appear in the Volume III bibliography. The DOD US/VN Relations series was the major source used in drawing up this particular graphic.
4. Gordon Hoxie, Command Decision and the Presidency (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1977) See Chapter 5, "J. V. Forrestal and the National Security Act of 1947."
5. Hoxie, pp. 76, 94; and Keith C. Clark, and Laurence Legere, eds., The President and the Management of National Security (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), pp. 58-59.
6. Hoxie, p. 55.
7. Ibid., p. 80.
8. Ibid., p. 119.
9. Clark and Legere, p. 59.
10. Leslie H. Gelb and Richard K. Betts, The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1979), pp. 36-56.
11. E. J. Kahn, The China Hands (New York: Viking Press, 1972); Origins Causes, and Lessons of the Vietnam War. Hearings from the Committee on Foreign Relations U.S. Senate, 1972, p. 64 and Richard Freeland, The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism (New York: Schocken Books, 1974).
12. James Roherty, Decisions of Robert S. McNamara (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970), p. 21.
13. See Hoxie, Chapter 5, pp. 133-143, for a detailed discussion of this issue.

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14. Richard K. Betts, Soldiers, Statesmen and Cold War Crises (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 6, 53.
15. Congress, Information and Foreign Affairs, Congressional Research Services (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978) p. 17. Hereafter Cong. Info.
16. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, pp. 150, 190, Cable from Abbott to Department of State and Cable from Acheson to American Consul, Saigon.
17. Ibid., Book 8, p. 266, Report by NSC.
18. Ibid., Book 8; p. 274, JCS report.
19. Ibid., Book 8, p. 276-277, Memo for the President from Acheson; and Russell Fifield, Americans in Southeast Asia (New York: Crowell, 1973), pp. 126-127.
20. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, pp. 283-285. NSC Report on US position on Indochina.
21. Russell Fifield, p. 174.
22. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, pp. 286-287, Cable from Under Secretary Webb to Griffin.
23. Ibid., Book 8, p. 292, Report from Griffin.
24. Ibid., pp. 312-315, JCS Memos.
25. Ibid., p. 319, JCS Memo to Secretary of Defense.
26. Ibid., p. 318.
27. Ibid., pp. 321-332, Acheson to London embassy.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., Book 8, ix, "Extract of Tripartite Ministerial Talks," May 13, 1950.
30. Ibid., Book 8, p. 336, Statement by the President.
31. Ibid., Book 8, p. 336-340.
32. Ibid., Book 8, p. 336.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 318, JCS to Secretary of Defense.

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35. William Effros, Quotations Vietnam: 1945-1970 (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 15.
36. Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 217.
37. Ibid., p. 220.
38. Clarke and Legere, p. 62.
39. Compiled from sources which appear in the Volume III bibliography. The DOD US/VN Relations series was the major source used in drawing up this particular graphic.
40. Clarke and Legere, p. 63.
41. See David Hall, "The 'Custodian-Manager' of the Policymaking Process," in Volume 2 of Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy.
42. See the exchange of telegrams between The Department of State and American Embassies in London and Paris during the period 1-5 April 1954 cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 9, pp. 291-297.
43. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change (New York: Doubleday, 1965) pp. 349-350.
44. Ibid., pp. 338-341.
45. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 9, pp. 333-358. President's Special Committee Report - "Indochina."
46. Eisenhower, p. 340.
47. Cong. Info., p. 35.
48. Ibid., p. 36.
49. Ibid., p. 36, and Melvin Gurtov, Southeast Asia Tomorrow (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 145-146.
50. Ibid. See also Volume IV of this study for a discussion of domestic politics.
51. Townsend Hoopes, The Devil and John Foster Dulles (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1973) p. 205.
52. Andrew H. Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1965), p. 142.

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53. Eisenhower, p. 339.
54. Ibid., p. 340.
55. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 9, p. 266, JCS to Secretary of Defense, on negotiations.
56. Eisenhower, p. 345.
57. Ibid.
58. See Chalmers Roberts, "The Day We Didn't Go to War," The Reporter, Vol. II (September 14, 1954), pp. 31-35.
59. Roberts, p. 31, and Betts, p. 106.
60. Eisenhower, p. 347.
61. Ibid., Congr. Info., p. 35, and Gurtov, pp. 145-146.
62. Eisenhower, p. 345, DOD US/VN Relations, Book 9, pp. 277-296, 388-390.
63. Sen. Mike Gravel, ed., The Pentagon Papers, Vol. I, p. 94.
64. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 9, pp. 461-465, 382-383.
65. Ibid., p. 332, and Betts, pp. 21-22.
66. Ibid., p. 332. See also General Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier (Westport, Conn.: 1956), pp. 274-280.
67. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 9, p. 332, "Army Position on NSC Action No. 1074-A".
68. Ibid., p. 296., Telegram from U.S. Embassy in Paris to Secretary of State.
69. Ibid., p. 297.
70. Ibid., p. 361, Recommendations of Planning Board on NSC Action 1074-A.
71. Ibid., p. 362, Emphasis in the original.
72. Ibid., p. 382, and Eisenhower, p. 351. Later in September 1954, this regional grouping formed the basis of SEATO. But at this point, before the Geneva Conference, the concept of a regional grouping was discussed in reference to requirements for immediate US intervention rather than to possible future defense requirements in Southeast Asia.

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73. Eisenhower, p. 350.
74. Ibid., p. 351.
75. President Kennedy's Inaugural Address, January 1961.
76. Ambrose, p. 271, and Walter LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-1975 (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1967), pp. 214-215.
77. Ambrose, p. 271.
78. LaFeber, pp. 222-229.
79. I. M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 99; Ambassador U.A. Johnson and Dr. Vince Davis, BDM Senior Review Panel, September 7, 1979, in a discussion of the Kennedy administration's decision-making style, referred to the administration's style as a "seminar approach."
80. Compiled from sources which appear in the Volume III bibliography. The DOD US/VN Relations series was the major source used in drawing up this particular graphic.
81. Destler, p. 26.
82. Clark and Legere, p. 77.
83. Theodore C. Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) p. 652.
84. Clark and Legere, pp. 73-74.
85. Destler, pp. 97-98; Clark and Legere, pp. 74-75.
86. John P. Leacacos, Fires in the In-Basket (New York: World Publishing Co., 1968).
87. Sorenson, p. 655; Robert Gallucci, Neither Peace Nor Honor (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 33.
88. Frank Merli and Theodore Wilson, Makers of American Diplomacy (New York: Scribner & Sons, 1974) p. 322; Leacacos, p. 132; BDM interview June 13, 1979 with Dr. Vincent Davis. In a private meeting with Mr. Rusk, Dr. Davis queried him concerning Rusk's apparent deference. Mr. Rusk himself explained that in matters of Vietnam, he and his staff generally concurred with McNamara's approach.
39. Lawrence J. Korb, The Joint Chiefs of Staff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 112-113, 119-120; Betts, p. 35; Destler, p. 229.

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90. Gallucci, p. 15.
91. Ibid., p. 16.
92. Betts, p. 35.
93. Ibid., p. 35.
94. Robert Gallucci, Neither Peace Nor Honor (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 14-17.
95. In an interview with BDM analysts, General Taylor indicated that President Kennedy had an excellent appreciation of the potential role of counterinsurgency operations in "wars of national liberation." In fact, Kennedy was obliged to explain the concept of counterinsurgency to General Taylor so that the latter could understand it and explain the concept to other military professionals.
96. Congr. Info., p. 133.
97. Ibid., p. 42.
98. Ibid., p. 41.
99. Leacacos, p. 133.
100. Congr. Info., p. 42.
101. Ibid., p. 41.
102. Ibid., p. 41, cite taken from John F. Kennedy, A Compilation of Statements and Speeches Made During his Services in the US Senate and House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office 1964).
103. With the passage of time, the ferocity of the Nhus' abuse towards the Buddhists increased. Madam Nhu was particularly insensitive in her remarks: upon the death of the first Buddhist monk by fire, she referred to the incident as a "barbeque." She was also outspokenly anti-American in her comments.
104. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 3, IV B 5, pp. 1-5. "Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem."
105. Ibid., p. 6.
106. Ibid., Book 12, V B 4, p. 533.
107. Ibid., p. 535.

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108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., Book 3, IV B 5, p. 10.
110. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
111. Ibid. President Diem's reluctance in removing the Nhu's stemmed partially from the traditional Vietnamese regard for family unity and loyalty.
112. Senator Frank Church urged the passage of a bill reducing or eliminating US aid to South Vietnam. The administration requested that he postpone introduction of the bill until the administration had settled on a course of action.
113. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 3, IV B 5, p. 10, "No Alternatives to Diem" Policy.
114. Ambassador Nolting reported later that the announcement of his replacement by Ambassador Lodge had come as a surprise to him. "I heard that I had been replaced by Ambassador Lodge in a radio broadcast while I was on vacation. It seems obvious to me that those who wanted to let Diem hang himself didn't want me back in Saigon," in US New & World Report, July 26, 1971, p. 68. Ambassador Nolting provided BDM with a copy of this article. He still considers the US role in that coup to have been our "cardinal mistake."
115. Tran Van Don, Our Endless War (San Faeael: Presideo Press, 1978), pp. 89-90.
116. Lodge vs. Diem: August 20-October 2: The Pagoda Raids and Repercussions, cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 3, IV B 5, p. 15.
117. William Colby, Honorable Men (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), p. 120.
118. DOD US/VN Relations Book 12, V B 4, p. 536. State Department to Lodge.
119. Ibid., Book 3, IV B 5, p. 16., "Lodge vs Diem: August 20 - October 2."
120. Later, General Harkins described Ambassador Lodge as pulling the rug "... right out from under Diem." Although Harkins had been instructed from Washington to confer with General "Big" Minh, he was unable to comply with the instruction because the Vietnamese General refused to see him. US Army Military History Research Collection, Senior Officers Debriefing Program, Report of an interview of General Paul D. Harkins, April 28, 1974, by Major Jacob B. Couch, Jr., p. 54.

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121. State Department to Lodge and Harkins, DOD US/VN Relations, Book 12, V 3 4, p. 538.
122. Colby, p. 211.
123. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 12, V B 4, p. 538.
124. Ibid., IV B 5, p. 24.
125. Ibid., p. 26., President Kennedy, upon hearing their respective reports, could not help but ask, "You two did visit the same country, didn't you?"
126. Ibid., p. 30.
127. Ibid., Book 12, V B 4, p. 571.
128. Colby, p. 215.
129. Effros, p. 33.
130. Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Signet Books, 1976), p. 325, 331; Tom Wicker, JFK & LBJ (Baltimore: Pelican Books, 1970), pp. 200-201.
131. Kearns, pp. 278-279; DOD US/VN Relations, Book 4, IV C, p. 95.
132. Gallucci, p. 97; Hoopes, pp. 59-61; Janis, p. 126.
133. Kearns, pp. 274-5, 339.
134. Compiled from sources which appear in the Volume III bibliography. The DOD US/VN Relations series was the major source used in drawing up this particular graphic.
135. Chester Cooper, The Lost Crusade (Greenwich: Fawcett Publishers, 1970), p. 273.
136. Kearns, pp. 334-335.
137. Gallucci, pp. 89-91; Hoopes, pp. 83-89.
138. Cooper, p. 273.
139. US Progress in South Vietnam, November 1963-April 1965 NSAM 273-NSAM 288, DOD US/VN Relations, Book 3, IV C 1, pp. A-4, A-8.
140. Ibid., Book 3, IV C 2 A, p. 9., "Military Pressures Against NVN."

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141. Ibid., Book 3, IV C 1, A-5. (Chronological history).
142. Ibid., pp. A-4, A-5.
143. Ibid., p. A-6.
144. Ibid., p. A-8.
145. Ibid., pp. A-4, A-8. Secretaries McNamara and Rusk both volunteered to serve as US Ambassador to South Vietnam. General Taylor did not volunteer for the assignment but accepted it when assigned. Taylor interview by BDM on 11 July 1979.
146. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 3, IV C 1, p. A-9.
147. General Maxwell Taylor, Swords and Plowshares (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), pp. 324-325.
148. US Progress in South Vietnam, November 1963-April 1965. Chronology cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 3, IV C 1, p. A-10.
149. Lyndon Johnson, The Vantage Point (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), p. 114.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid., pp. 115-118.
152. Effros, p. 12.
153. Raymond Price, With Nixon (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), p. 108.
154. Hall, p. 112.
155. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
156. Compiled from sources which appear in the Volume III bibliography. The DOD US/VN Relations series was the major source used in drawing up this particular graphic.
157. Betts, p. 9.
158. Frank Snepp, Decent Interval (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 63.
159. Henry Kissinger, "Vietnam Negotiations," Foreign Affairs, January 1969; John Stoessinger, Henry Kissinger: The Anguish of Power (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), p. 51. Dr. Vincent Davis, in an interview at BDM, 1979, indicated that Dr. Kissinger's plan drew heavily on information from the papers of John Vann. After the Republican

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Convention in 1968, at which Rockefeller lost the nomination for the Republican ticket, Kissinger returned to Harvard a disillusioned man. He had strongly supported Rockefeller's nomination and had desired to work as Rockefeller's Special Assistant on National Security Affairs. While preparing for fall classes, he requested to see Vann's papers in which were contained the seeds for Kissinger's later article in the January 1969 issue of Foreign Affairs.

160. Early in 1969, the new Secretary of the Navy, John Chaffee, toured Vietnam. One of the most persistent questions he posed to senior officers concerned the efficacy of withdrawing American forces and the circumstances that would make such a withdrawal possible. Based on a discussion with Secretary Chaffee as reported by Col. J. A. MacDonald, USMC (Ret.), the MACV J-52. Memo for the Record.
161. Tad Szulc, The Illusion of Peace (New York: Viking Press, 1978), pp. 23-24.
162. William Corson, Consequences of Failure (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), p. 185; Daniel Ellsberg, "Alternatives and Issues for US Policy in Vietnam," John P. Vann Papers, 1969.
163. Ibid. Corson notes that the responses to the questions posed regarding Vietnam indicated agreement on some matters as well as very substantial differences of opinion within the U.S. government on many aspects of the Vietnam situation. While there were some divergencies on the facts, the sharpest differences arose in the interpretation of those facts, the relative weight given them, and the implications drawn. There was general agreement on the following points:
 1. The GVN and allied position in Vietnam had been strengthened in many respects.
 2. The GVN had improved its political position, but it was not certain that the GVN and other non-Communist groups would be able to survive a peaceful competition with the NLF for political power in South Vietnam.
 3. The RVNAF alone could not, at the moment, or in the foreseeable future, stand up to the current North Vietnamese-Vietcong forces.
 4. The enemy had suffered some reverses but they had not changed their essential objectives and they had sufficient strength to pursue these objectives. We were not attriting his forces faster than he could recruit or infiltrate.
 5. The enemy was not in Paris primarily out of weakness.

As for the disagreements, their portrayal was simplified when broken down into the two schools of thought which existed within the administration. (Corson's breakdown.)

The first school, Group A, usually included MACV, CINCPAC, JCS, and Embassy Saigon. The second school, Group B, usually included OSD,

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CIA, and (to a lesser extent) State. These schools lined up as follows on some of the broader questions:

1. In explaining reduced enemy military presence and activities, Group A gave greater relative weight to allied military pressure than did Group B.
 2. The improvements in RVNAF were considered much more significant by Group A than Group B.
 3. Group A underlined advancements in the pacification program, while Group B was skeptical both of the evaluation system used to measure progress and of the solidity of recent advances.
 4. In looking at the political scene, Group A accented recent improvements while Group B highlighted remaining obstacles and the relative strength of the NLF.
 5. Group A assigned much greater effectiveness to bombing in Vietnam and Laos than Group B.
164. Nixon, Memoirs (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1978), p. 298.
165. Szulc, p. 31.
166. Ibid.
167. Charles MacDonald, An Outline History of US Policy Toward Vietnam (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1978), p. 74.
168. William Shawcross, Sideshow (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), p. 140; Laird was not at the discussion on the decision to bomb Cambodia; according to William Watts of Kissinger's staff, who was present, Admiral Moorer asked what he should relay back to the Secretary. He was informed that he was attending the meeting as the President's military adviser not as the representative of the Secretary of the Defense; he was to tell Laird nothing.
169. Several important factors influenced the congressional rise to the center of Vietnam decision making. The mood of the US public, especially after the signing of the 1973 Peace Accords, indicated an overall desire to minimize further US military activities in Southeast Asia. Domestic unrest over the administration's Cambodia bombing found reflection in the Congress; aware of the public's displeasure with this policy and with rising inflation, the Congress sought to curtail further Vietnam-related military spending. In addition, Congress may have itself been displeased with the Administration, in particular, with Henry Kissinger. Prior to his rise to the stewardship of the State Department, Kissinger, as Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was not, by law, required to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Testimony before Congressional committees serves as an important vehicle by which Congress obtains information regarding an

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administration's foreign policy. Since Special Assistant Kissinger was, in fact, the Administration's chief foreign affairs advisor and spokesman, his non-accountability to Congress was viewed with suspicion and displeasure.

It is interesting to note that, two months after Nixon signed this bill into law, he promised President Thieu that US support would be forthcoming if the North broke the 1973 Peace Accords. In his November letter, Nixon stated: "You have my absolute assurance that if Hanoi fails to abide by the terms of this agreement, it is my intention to take swift and retaliatory action." And in a subsequent letter of January 1973, Nixon stated: "...you have my assurance of continued assistance in the post-settlement period and that we will respond with full force should the settlement be violated by North Vietnam." See John Osborne, White House Watch: The Ford Years (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Book, 1977), p. 122. The question arises, how could President Nixon, in good faith, promise this type of action, based on Congress's restrictions several months earlier?

171. President Ford: The Man and His Record, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, August 1974.
172. Hoxie, preface, pp. xvii-xviii.
173. Gerald Ford, A Time to Heal (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 125-126.
174. Compiled from sources which appear in the Volume III bibliography. The DOD US/VN Relations series was the major source used in drawing up this particular graphic.
175. Ibid., p. 126.
176. Ibid., pp. 131-132.
177. Ibid.
178. Hoxie, p. 332.
179. See for example, Snapp, p. 148.
180. For examples of their concurrence, see Ford, p. 253, and Snapp, pp. 146-147.
181. Snapp, p. 235.
182. Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, Strategy for Defeat (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978), p. 41.

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183. Gelb, p. 351.
184. Ibid., p. 350.
185. Ford, p. 250; Snepp, p. 112.
186. Ford, p. 250.
187. \$200 million was also requested for Cambodia at this time. Snepp, p. 142.
188. Ford, p. 250.
189. For example, in late winter 1974, Ambassador Martin apparently attempted to minimize South Vietnam's problems, to convince Congress that the situation in the South was not so desperate as to be past saving. However, Senator Sam Nunn, on a visit to Saigon in mid-January 1975, questioned Ambassador Martin and CIA Station chief Thomas Polgar about the South's viability. While Martin stressed that the South, with sufficient aid, could be economically independent within three years, Polgar's estimates were directly contradictory. He argued that unless the USSR and PRC cut back their aid supplies, the South could in no way become viable with or without US aid. Other US officials supplied alternately pessimistic and optimistic assessments. See Ford, p. 254, and Snepp, pp. 117-149.
190. Snepp, p. 159.
191. Ibid., pp. 166-169
192. Ibid., p. 216.
193. Ibid., p. 235.
194. Ibid., p. 308.
195. Snepp, p. 190.
196. Ibid. pp. 347, 365, 375, 389.
197. Ford, p. 254; Snepp, p. 337.
198. Snepp, p. 337.
199. Ibid.
200. Ibid., pp. 359-360

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201. Senator Jacob Javits, for example, asserted, "I will give you large sums for evacuation, but not one nickel for military aid." Ford, p. 255.
202. Ibid.
203. Snapp, p. 364.
204. Ibid.
205. By extension, Congressional suspicion of the administration's urgent request for military aid also reflected the US public's resolve to avoid further involvement in Vietnam. The influence of public opinion on US policy toward Vietnam is discussed in Volume IV of this study.
206. Sorenson, p. 17.
207. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

US FOREIGN POLICY AND VIETNAM, 1945-1975: LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

A. INTRODUCTION

In order to derive lessons from the development of US policy toward Vietnam during the period 1945-1975, the analysis in this volume has been divided into three chapters each of which provides a distinctive analytical perspective: the global environment of US policy making, historical landmarks or precedents which influenced subsequent US foreign policy, and the process of national policy making in the US. Each of these perspectives provide insights into the reasons why the United States adopted particular policies. This chapter will derive lessons of broad significance based on these insights. Subsequent volumes of this study will consider other perspectives, such as the US domestic environment, illuminating other reasons for these policies.

B. LESSONS

First among the lessons of this volume is a reinforcement of the adage, "know your enemy." Fundamentally, before 1962, the US response to the conflict in Vietnam was driven by the logical connections which linked four widely held beliefs:

- (1) Ho Chi Minh and his forces were communists;
- (2) All communist forces were part of a monolithic hierarchy ruled by Moscow (i.e., that communist nationalism was a contradiction in terms, with the exception of Russian communism);
- (3) Moscow was determined to dominate the world; and
- (4) US security was globally indivisible in the sense that a victory by communist forces in any part of the "free world" would result automatically in a step toward Moscow's global domination, would diminish US security, and therefore required US resistance.

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It was not until 1962 that the US government began to act on signs of international communist disunity which had appeared since 1956 (highlighted by the Sino-Soviet split), and Hanoi's struggle in South Vietnam came to be seen as part of a Chinese drive for hegemony in Southeast Asia, a situation considered no less dangerous for US security interests (e.g., in Japan) than one in which Hanoi was Moscow's satellite. It was not until the 1966-1968 period that the US government began to act on perceptions that Hanoi's aims were nationalist and distinguishable from Soviet and Chinese aims in Southeast Asia. Whether and how United States involvement in Vietnam would have been different if key decision makers had earlier understood the true nature of the Hanoi-Moscow-Peking relationship are not issues addressed in this study. (The purpose of this study is not to speculate on "might have been history," but rather to explain what actually happened.) But clearly the attractiveness of alternative courses of action might have increased, which reinforces the importance of learning the basic lesson -- "Know your enemy." A corollary of this lesson is "Know very precisely the nature of the relationships between Third World countries and external communist supporters." These are particularly important lessons today, as the problems of proxy wars and surrogate forces attract the concern of US policy makers.

A second lesson that emerges from Volume III is that what, in the past, have been termed vital interests, can cease being seen as such in a very short span of time, depending on such factors as US perceptions of global threats. US involvement in a particular country, however, cannot be altered as rapidly since it is based on various long-term commitments and on US political, economic, and military "investment" in that country. This is a very important and complex lesson, as US policy makers learned when considering plans for withdrawing US forces from South Vietnam. The rhetoric in this instance was much easier to formulate ("peace with honor") than to implement ("Vietnamization"). Changes in policy statements are easily made; reversals in actual policy implementation are much more difficult to effect in a short period of time. The general lesson about vital

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interests defined above is similarly problematic because it is hard to know precisely how to act upon it. An approach to this problem, helpful in avoiding extreme consequences, but not in entirely eliminating the problem, is suggested in Chapter 1 of this volume: Be very clear at all times about what is actually meant by "vital" interest and about whether a particular interest in another country meets that definition, prior to committing US resources - political, economical, or military--especially to such an extent that US "investment" in the country is likely to preclude an honorable extrication from that country when and if US interests are no longer perceived as vital. The basic thrust of this lesson is to force US policy makers to think through the reasons for and consequences of their actions. A corollary to this approach is to insure that at the national level of the US government careful examinations are continually made of the premises as well as the instrumentalities of US policy.

A third lesson based on the research in Volume III can be derived from the relationship between the US and its allies, the French and the South Vietnamese: US leverage over an ally is a function not only of how much the ally perceives it needs US help, but also of how much the US perceives it needs the ally's help, and of how much the ally recognizes that the US needs its help. This statement speaks to the US problems in persuading the French to continue fighting in Indochina during the period immediately before and after the Geneva Conference of 1954, while at the same time trying to persuade the French to promise the independence of the Associated States of Indochina. Clearly, as a first priority, the US wanted the French to continue fighting the communist forces. Second, the US wanted a French declaration that independence would be granted. The French perceived this ordering of priorities and therefore refused to be pressured into making a declaration by openly reminding the US that France might choose to negotiate with the communists. The lesson also relates to the problems the US had in trying to persuade successive South Vietnamese governments to institute democratic reforms which these governments did not wish to implement.

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When reflecting on US-GVN relations, it is also important to underscore the following lesson: The US should not expect the political processes of other countries to be structured or to function in exactly the way those of the United States do. If the US encourages "reform" of the political processes of another country, it should be prepared to face considerable resistance by the political leadership in that country and to deal with the potentially destabilizing tendencies in that country's political system which might jeopardize or preclude self-determination for that country. Self-determination in the sense of choosing one's own form of government must not be confused with the US conception of "democracy" or "civil liberty." The fact that democracy and civil liberty occur together in the United States is no argument or guarantee that they should occur in all countries, or even that they can occur in other countries with different cultural, moral, and ethical values.

A fourth lesson concerns the relationship between US perceptions of the global environment and restraints imposed by US policy makers on the US conduct of the Vietnam War. In Third World conflicts presenting possibilities of military confrontation between the United States and another great power, especially the Soviet Union or China, US policy makers will impose restraints on US methods of conflict resolution. This lesson may be most applicable and immediately essential in conflicts where clearly identifiable US interests (e.g., tangible interests such as natural, technological, or manpower resources needed by the US) are not at stake. This lesson combines insights relating to the US conduct of "limited war" (sometimes referred to as "gradualism") in Vietnam. For example, it is often wondered why the US chose to fight within narrow territorial boundaries in Indochina, while the North Vietnamese communist forces were unrestrained by such boundaries. A central answer to that question is that the North Vietnamese, from their perspective, were fighting a total war which they believed would result either in the eventual union of North Vietnam with South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, under Lao Dong Party rule, or else in the total destruction of North Vietnam - in short, a "do or die" proposition from their perspective. Such was never the case for the United

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States. US policy makers had no intention of provoking a war with China or the Soviet Union. Conflict avoidance with the PRC and USSR remained their basic approach and explains why several major restraints on the US were imposed. This helps explain why the war from the US side was limited geographically and in terms of the types of weapons used and targets struck. Arguments continue today over whether the US was too restrained in its conduct of the war. But to enter into this issue would, once again, be to engage in "might-have-been history," which is not the task of this study. The point remains that US policy makers did impose restraints and, under similar conditions, are likely to do so again. Problems relating to "limited war" and "gradualism" will be examined further in this study. (See Volume IV domestic factors influencing US involvement in Vietnam, and Volume VI - Conduct of the War.)

A fifth lesson in Volume III derives from the decision-making styles of the six US administrations involved in Vietnam policy making. Although centralization of executive policy making (the reduction in the number of individuals involved in policy making) may lead to an increase in the executive branch's flexibility of approach and speed of response in resolving foreign problems, centralization also tends to isolate these individuals from governmental as well as private expertise. There are several consequences of this isolation: First, the President and his key advisers may be forced to rely on their own preconceptions, predispositions, and prejudices in shaping policy. Second, premises of foreign policy (such as what constitute US "vital" interests at a given moment) are less likely to be vigorously debated than the instrumentalities, that is, the strategies and tactics of implementation. The second problem arises because premises, couched in general terms, are more likely to appear unobjectionable and because of the executive branch's urge to do something to solve the problem. Since the principal function of the executive is to execute policy, no actions can be taken until the premises are firmly established. This urge to "do something" is reflected in an impatience with continual reexaminations of premises. This urge and impatience seem to have been particularly strong in President Johnson. Critics who seek a simple remedy in

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"pluralism" (allowing more individuals or groups to participate in national policy making), expose US foreign policy to potential dangers of a different but no less significant kind. This approach results in fragmentation of responsibility, loss of accountability, and incoherence or inconsistency in policy prescriptions with respect to key issues and their applicability to different countries or regions.

One of the most difficult aspects of the problem concerns the amount of time that national-level policy makers can afford to devote to particular issues. Limits on time force a simplification of arguments, initially developed in detail by the bureaucracy, into presentations more manageable for consumption at higher levels of government. Thus, it should be clear that simplification (and the potential for oversimplification) is in itself an inescapable result of centralized decision making. Although the need for simplification certainly does not eliminate the need for expertise, the subtler ways of treating complex issues are often screened out before they reach the national level. As Chester L. Cooper, a former CIA official and member of the National Security Council Staff, explained:

...a major bureaucratic problem is that by the time lower-level judgments, sometimes provided by the intelligence community and sometimes by political means, reach top decision-makers, many of the qualifications and many of the differences of approach get washed out, partly because the desire and sometimes the necessity, to reduce the problems to a page or two becomes a governing factor -- mainly because busy men feel unable to read the facts. 1/

There are methods for mitigating some of the consequences of centralization. For example, Chapter 2 in this Volume indicated major consequences arising from the indiscriminate use of historical precedents, including most dangerously, the proliferation of emotionally charged adages such as "appeasement at Munich." One of the problems of centralized decision making is that sensitivity to nuances in history may be reduced at the national level; fewer perspectives are brought to bear on the particular, complex issues involved while simplification up the hierarchy eliminates the qualifications, as Chester Cooper explains in the passage above. One

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significant lesson is that personalities, predispositions, and prejudices are more likely to determine US decisions on foreign policy in the absence of informed discussion and debate at the national level of policy making. This is no minor lesson, as we have seen from the Vietnam experience in which such charged words as "Munich," "the Free World," the "loss of China," and the "the Domino theory" came to be accepted as self-evident lessons. This is a very important point. US policy makers were forced to rely on inapplicable historical precedents and misleading analogies because there was so little expertise on Vietnam at the national policy-making level. As Dr. Vincent Davis has explained, "...we had virtually no knowledge of Vietnam, no intellectual capital to draw on, no sense of Vietnam itself, its history, its culture, its economics, its political dynamics."2/ Moreover, the use of "buzz words" had the circular effect of freezing debate, leading to US involvement and escalation in Vietnam. In this connection, it is similarly disturbing to reflect on the possibility that the American experience in Vietnam may lead to the future derivation of seemingly self-evident "lessons." At the moment, the expression "No More Vietnams" signifies different things to different Americans. But a problem of centralized decision making, whether in the executive branch or in Congress, is that particularist, oversimplified interpretations of "No More Vietnams" by a small group of individuals in key policymaking positions may come to dominate the shaping of US foreign policy in the near future.

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CHAPTER 4
ENDNOTES

1. Richard M. Pfeffer, ed., No More Vietnams? The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 108-109.
2. Dr. Vincent Davis, Director, Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, University of Kentucky, Interviews and Notes, BDM, September 6-7, 1979.

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VOLUME III

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SUPPLEMENTAL DATA TO VOLUME III: SIGNIFICANT US
NATIONAL POLICY DECISIONS WHICH INFLUENCED US
MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

The material presented in Appendix A examines seventeen key turning points that mark, in the estimation of the Vietnam study team, the beginnings or ends of important stages in the US military commitment to the Vietnam conflict. These seventeen decisions have the following characteristics in common.

- They are decisions made by the United States. Key events, such as the Tet '68 offensive, are not included because they were not designed by US policy makers. The American response to Tet in March 1968, however, is of interest within the given methodology.
- They are decisions that affected the level of US military involvement. Thus, decisions that affected increases or decreases in the US war effort are considered as turning points.

The seventeen US national policy decisions are as follows:

- (1) The decision to allow the French return to Indochina in 1945, marking the first major US post-WWII action regarding Vietnam's future.
- (2) The 1950 decision to recognize the government of Bao Dai and to accelerate military and economic aid to France and the Associated States, including the installment of MAAG in Saigon.
- (3) The 1954 decision not to assist the French directly through bombing support during the Dien Bien Phu crisis.
- (4) The 1954 decisions to prevent the communists from taking over all of Vietnam by supporting Diem in the South.
- (5) The 1961 decision to increase sharply the scale of US support to South Vietnam.
- (6) The 1963 decision to support the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu.

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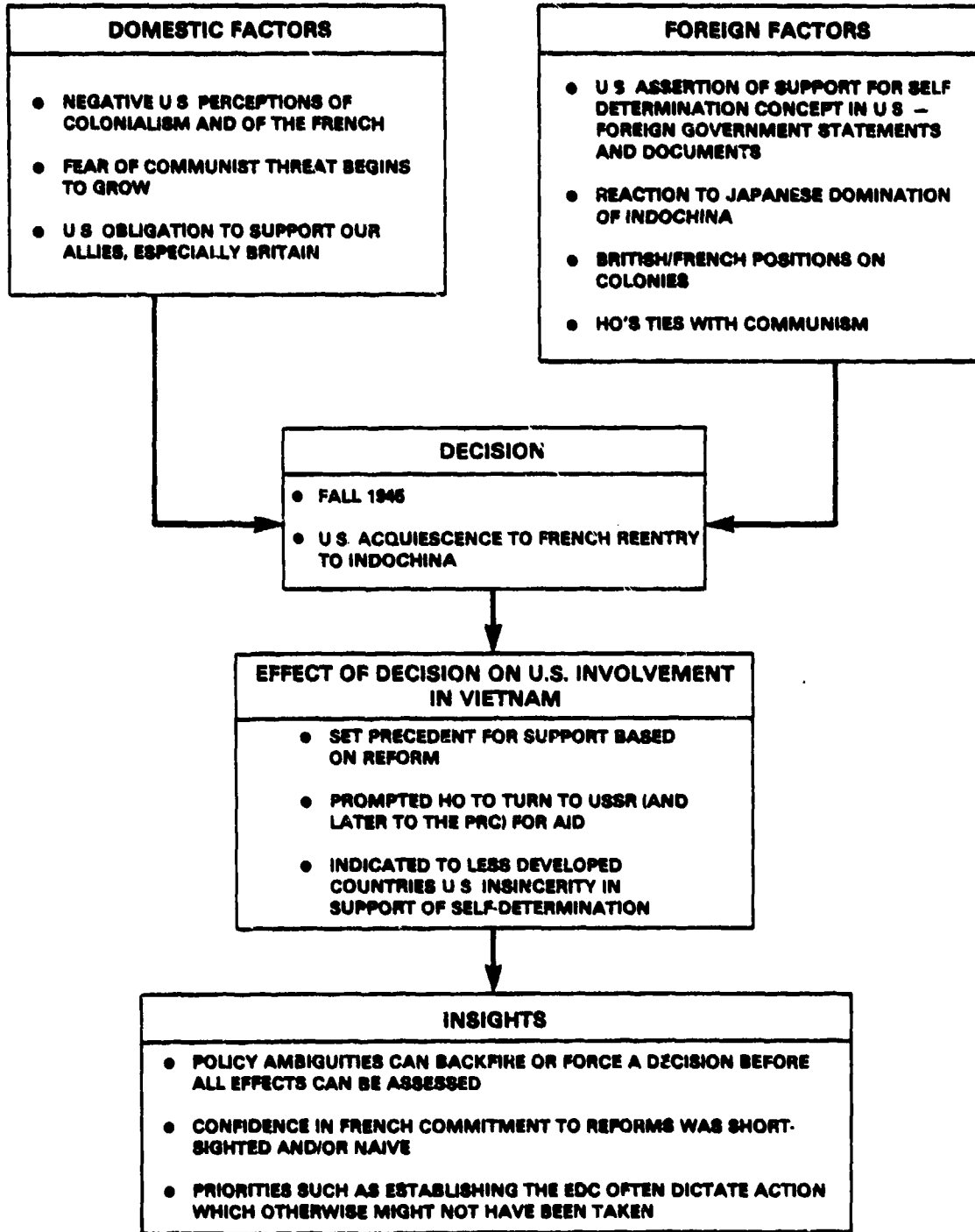
- (7) The 1964 Congressional decision to pass the 1964 Southeast Asia Resolution marking the "high water mark" of Congressional and domestic US support for the war effort and paving the way for further US escalation.
- (8) The 1964-65 decisions to conduct air strikes against targets in North Vietnam to reverse the downward trend of the war.
- (9) The 1965 decision to introduce US ground combat troops into Vietnam, representing a major increase in US commitment to Vietnam.
- (10) The 1965, 1966, and 1967 decisions not to mobilize US Reserves to augment the US military commitment made to Vietnam.
- (11) The 1968 decision to seek a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam conflict, shifting the US goal from military victory to finding an acceptable political solution to the conflict.
- (12) The 1969 Nixon Administration decisions to withdraw US troops, to support the South Vietnamese efforts to pacify the countryside and take over the war effort (Vietnamization), and to negotiate on "honorable and durable" peace.
- (13) 1970 decision to launch combined US/RVNAF incursions against the PAVN/PLAF sanctuary bases in Cambodia.
- (14) The 1972 decision to bomb North Vietnamese military targets (Linebackers I and II) and mine Haiphong harbor and inland waterways.
- (15) The 1973 Paris Peace Accords, representing the formal conclusion of direct US military participation in the Vietnam War.
- (16) The 1974-1975 Congressional decision to cut military appropriations for Vietnam, culminating in a decision not to grant supplemental aid to the South.
- (17) The 1975 US decision not to intervene militarily in spite of the GVN's inability to hold Phuoc Long Province.

The data presented in Appendix A was used extensively in the writing of Volume III. It was utilized as a supporting research tool by the Volume III research team and is intended as a useful compendium of supplementary

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data for the reader. The material herein is also deliberately presented in abbreviated style; endnotes are restricted to general sources, all of which appear in the Volume III Bibliography.

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Figure A-1. Decision I: US Decision To Acquiesce to French Reentry Into Indochina

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I. US DECISION TO ACQUIESCE TO FRENCH RETURN IN INDOCHINA (I.C.)

A. Decision. US Government states that it "has no thought of opposing the reestablishment of French control in Indochina and no official statement by US Government has questioned even by implication French sovereignty over Indochina. However, it is not the policy of this government to assist the French to reestablish their control over Indochina by force and the willingness of the US to see French control reestablished assumes the French claim to have the support of the population of Indochina is borne out by future events."2/

1. When: October 1945

2. Principal Decision Makers: President Truman and Secretary of State Stettinius.

3. Purpose: To clarify the US government's somewhat ambiguous policy stance vis à vis Indochina in light of British and French interest in the area coupled with our allies' confusion concerning our exact policy position on Indochina.

4. Themes: Ardent anticolonialism stance toned down to acceptance of our allies' colonial interests but with qualifications/stipulations.

a. No direct US involvement in aiding French reassertion of influence in I.C.

b. Reassertion of French dominance in I.C. to be based on amount of leeway given to peoples of I.C. for self-determination and self-government coupled with French posture on reform in Indochina.

B. Precedents for the Decision. Two sets of precedents are evident which influenced the formation of this policy decision. As US government policy regarding I.C. was somewhat ambivalent until the October 1945 statement, it seems relevant and necessary to highlight the two existing sets of precedents which at times were contradictory.

1. Set of Precedents 1: Several statements, communiques and official diplomatic exchanges indicating US support of French reassertion of influence in its overseas empire post WW-II. US commitments regarding this policy surfaced in various documents and statements, for example:

a. November 2, 1942 - letter from President's personal representative to General Henri Giraud (letter from Mr. Murphy to Gen. Giraud).

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- b. FDR instruction of November 3, 1944 on US view of France in regaining Indochina.
 - c. May 1945 - Communication between French government (Bidault) and US Sec'y of State Stettinius which indicated US did not question French sovereignty in Indochina.
2. Set of Precedents 2: Presidential position on colonialism stresses the importance of self-determination for peoples of the world's colonies; if colony status to be maintained, the "natives" should be assisted in their development and growth towards self-government and the "colonizers" stance should indicate willingness to better the colonies' positions via reforms etc.
- a. January 24, 1944 - FDR response to memorandum from Sec'y of State Hull on Indochina. Indochina should not go back to France.
 - b. FDR's conversations with Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek on colonies.
 - c. November 1942 - Draft proposal submitted to FDR by Sec'y of State Hull on colonies and self-determination entitled "The Atlantic Charter and National Independence." Draft approved by FDR.
 - d. June 1945 - Dept. of State instructs US ambassador to China on US position concerning colonies and necessity of increased civil liberties and self-government for Indochina.
- C. Options Presented.
- 1. Policy of International Trusteeship for Indochina and other of the world's colonies. Consistently supported by FDR, especially from 1942-1944. Met with little if any support on the part of Britain, France and, it appears, some sections of the US military.
 - 2. Policy on support for resistance forces in Indochina at the close of WWII which could have, if pursued after the war, indicated U.S. support for the "natives" vs. the "colonizers" (Ho Chi Minh). Pressure from France/Britain coupled with the recognition of Ho's communist orientations reduced the viability of this particular option.

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3. Concept of Neutralization. This particular policy option was considered as an alternative to Japanese wartime domination of Indochina. It could conceivably have been considered as a post-war option, although the French/British response would likely have been negative.
4. Policy of non-involvement/non-commitment and non-decision. At the close of WWII, FDR, until his death, stressed US low-key posture on committing itself to a forthright policy stance concerning Indochina as a colony. FDR stressed the importance of dealing with the issue as a post-war matter, perhaps in hopes of buying time for the promotion of his "self-determination" concepts. This option of low-key, non-committal policy regarding Indochina could not have continued; the US, as one of the strongest post-WWII powers, was compelled to take a forthright stand in the face of continual French/British inquiries.

D. Influential Factors

1. Foreign:

- a. US assertion of its support for self-determination concept which appeared in:
 - 1) Atlantic charter
 - 2) League of Nations charter
 - 3) At Yalta, in conversations between FDR and Stalin
- b. US strong reaction to Japanese domination/occupation of Indochina during World War II.
- c. The British and French positions on their colonies.
- d. Ho's ties with communism.

2. Domestic:

- a. US negative domestic perceptions of colonialism and of the French.
- b. Initial, growing concerns of a Communist threat.
- c. Desire to support our allies, especially Britain, (the pressure of which influenced this policy decision) as one of the Big Three post-WWII.

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E. Effect of Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

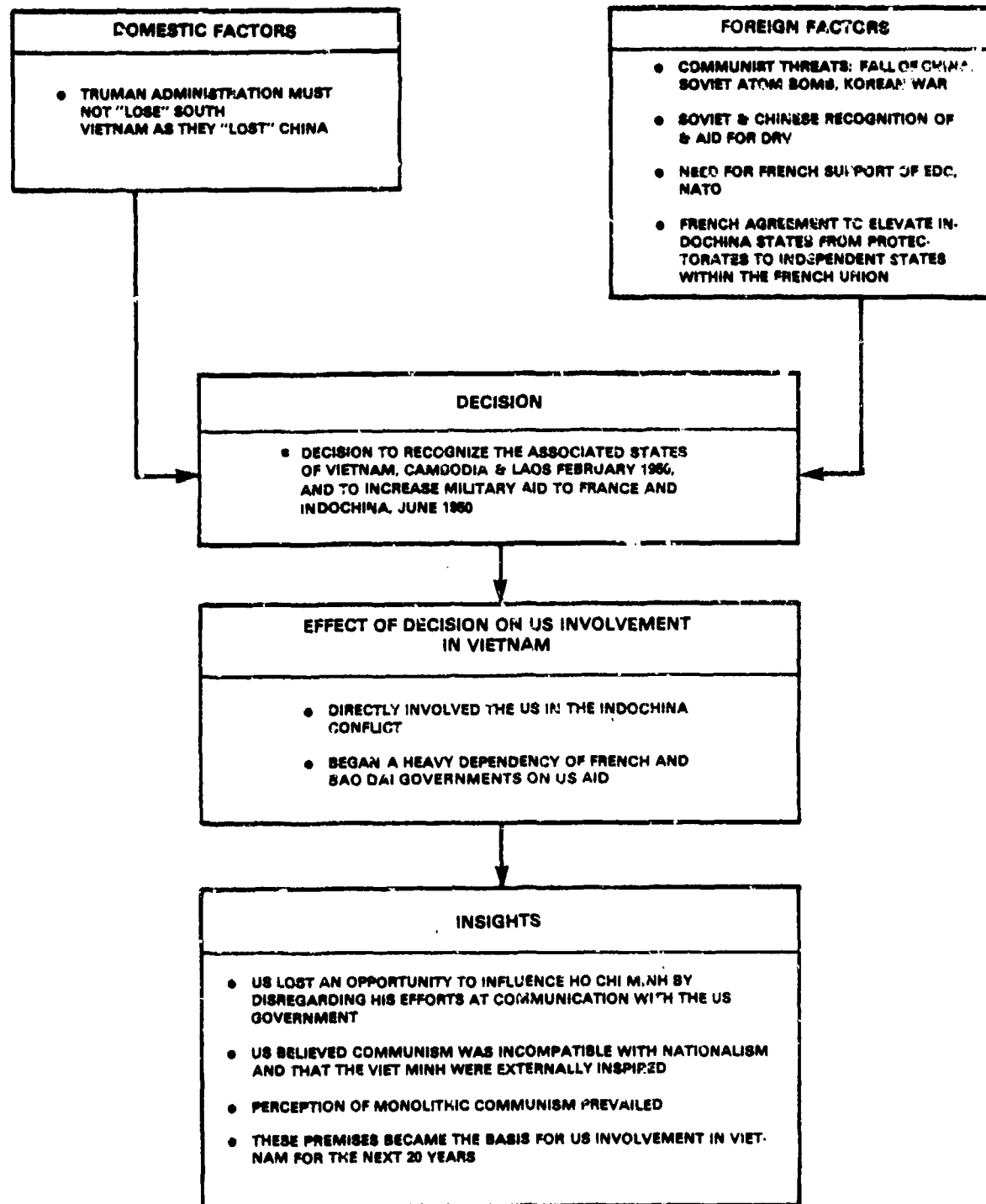
1. Although this policy reflected the US attitude of non-involvement in assisting the French to reassert domination in Indochina, it set a precedent for US "go-ahead" policies of approval/aid contingent on reforms to be made by the appropriate party. (In this case by the French, later by the GVN- Diem).
2. Decision to allow the French to return, and to cease support for Ho's resistance forces affected later events by prompting him to turn to the USSR and the Chinese Communists for aid and assistance. Future implications are obvious.
3. May have indicated to world's colonies and less developed countries, especially in Indochina, that US could not be counted on to support concept of self-determination.

F. Effectiveness of the Decision. Decision taken allowed French to reenter Indochina without our initial assistance. (Although we did provide modest aid to the French in re-entering by not resisting the British turnover of 800 US lend-lease transport vehicles to the French). As a post-war consideration, we chose to back our allies' interests, presumably a natural response. However, in light of FDR's continual advocacy of self-determination and the growing sentiments of nationalism in the post-war world, the decision left the possibility of a French-Vietnamese conflict wide open.

G. Insights.

1. Policy ambiguities, while perhaps a convenient way to stall for or buy time, may serve to force a policy stance before all possible effects of the policy decision can be assessed. FDR's verbal attacks on colonialism caused a great degree of confusion in OSS operations/relations with Ho, for the French and the British, and served to confuse the French as regards US goals in Indochina. The record needed to be set straight in order to avoid ambiguities and misinterpretations by our allies as well as US (OSS) personnel in Indochina.
2. Confidence in the French ability to tackle reforms in Indochina, in view of the rising nationalist sentiments in Indochina and Ho's strong posture, may have been shortsighted and/or naive.
3. The US desire that the French support the European Defense Community overruled the US anticolonialist stance.

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Figure A-2. Decision II: US Decision To Recognize the Associated States of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, February 1950, and To Increase Military Aid to France and Indochina, June 1950

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II. DECISION TO RECOGNIZE THE ASSOCIATED STATES OF VIETNAM, CAMBODIA AND LAOS (FEBRUARY 1950), AND THE RELATED DECISION TO ACCELERATE MILITARY AID TO FRANCE AND THE ASSOCIATED STATES AND DISPATCH A US MILITARY MISSION (MAAG) TO INDOCHINA (JUNE 1950)^{3/}

A. Decision. US decision to recognize the Bao Dai government, and to give military aid to both France and the Bao Dai Government of South Vietnam.

1. When: Formally recognized Bao Dai Government February 7, 1950; "Statement by the President" to give military aid, June 27, 1950.
2. Principal Decision Makers: President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in concert with the NSC and JCS.
3. Purpose: The US recognition of Bao Dai's government was a means to assist the French in their anticommunist fight while trying to avoid support for French colonialist activities in the region. The US viewed the Viet Minh threat as part of a monolithic communist advance against the Free World. The US, suffering from the fall of Nationalist China, wanted to prevent the fall of Vietnam. Provision of military and economic aid was designed to keep the French in Indochina fighting the Viet Minh and to encourage the French to support NATO and EDC.
4. Themes:
 - a. Anticommunism - The US chose to aid the French in their war with the Viet Minh to resist monolithic communist aggression.
 - b. Anticolonialism - Paradoxically, the US remained opposed to French efforts to restore their colonial power in Indochina while, at the same time, supporting the French forces. The US minimized this paradox by stressing French promise of independence for Vietnam and the other Associated States and by viewing the French effort as part of a united free world response to communist aggression.
 - c. Support for emerging nationalism in less developed countries - While supporting the French colonial programs, the US insisted on the rights of self-determination for the Vietnamese.

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B. Precedents for the Decision.

1. US acquiesced to French reentry to Indochina in 1945.
2. In 1949 the US acted to protect the Nationalist regime in Taiwan from communist attack.
3. The US was supporting the Republic of Korea.
4. The US gave military aid to Greece in their fight against communist aggression in 1947.

C. Options Presented.

1. No support - remain outside the Indochina conflict and disapprove of French colonialist objectives.
 - a. Not recognize Bao Dai because of Asian perception of him as a puppet of the French.
 - b. Not establish MAAG in Indochina because it would directly involve the US in the security of Indochina, although with the French playing the dominant role.
2. Support the French and the Bao government but disapprove of colonialist objectives.
3. Direct US military intervention.

D. Influential Factors

1. Foreign:
 - a. The fall of Nationalist China in 1949 made more urgent the US and allied support of non-communist governments.
 - b. North Korean attack on South Korea prompted US military support of Indochina.
 - c. USSR exploded atom bomb in September 1949.
 - d. February 1950 French agreement to elevate Indochinese states from protectorates to independent states within the French Union.
 - e. US perception of its vital interests required a viable Western Europe, which in turn required French viability and membership in a European Defense Community (EDC).

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- f. December 1949 Chinese communist forces at the borders of Vietnam.
- g. January 1950 the PRC and USSR recognized Ho Chi Minh's government (DRV).
- h. The Chinese and Soviet governments promised financial and military support to the DRV.

2. Domestic:

- Truman administration could not afford to "lose" another country to communism as China was "lost."

E. Effect of Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

- 1) The decision directly involved the US in the Indochina conflict.
- 2) It began a heavy dependency of French and Bao Dai governments on US aid.

F. Effectiveness of the Decision.

- 1. The decisions did accomplish the purpose of getting the French to support NATO and EDC, and of temporarily staving off a communist takeover of all of Vietnam.

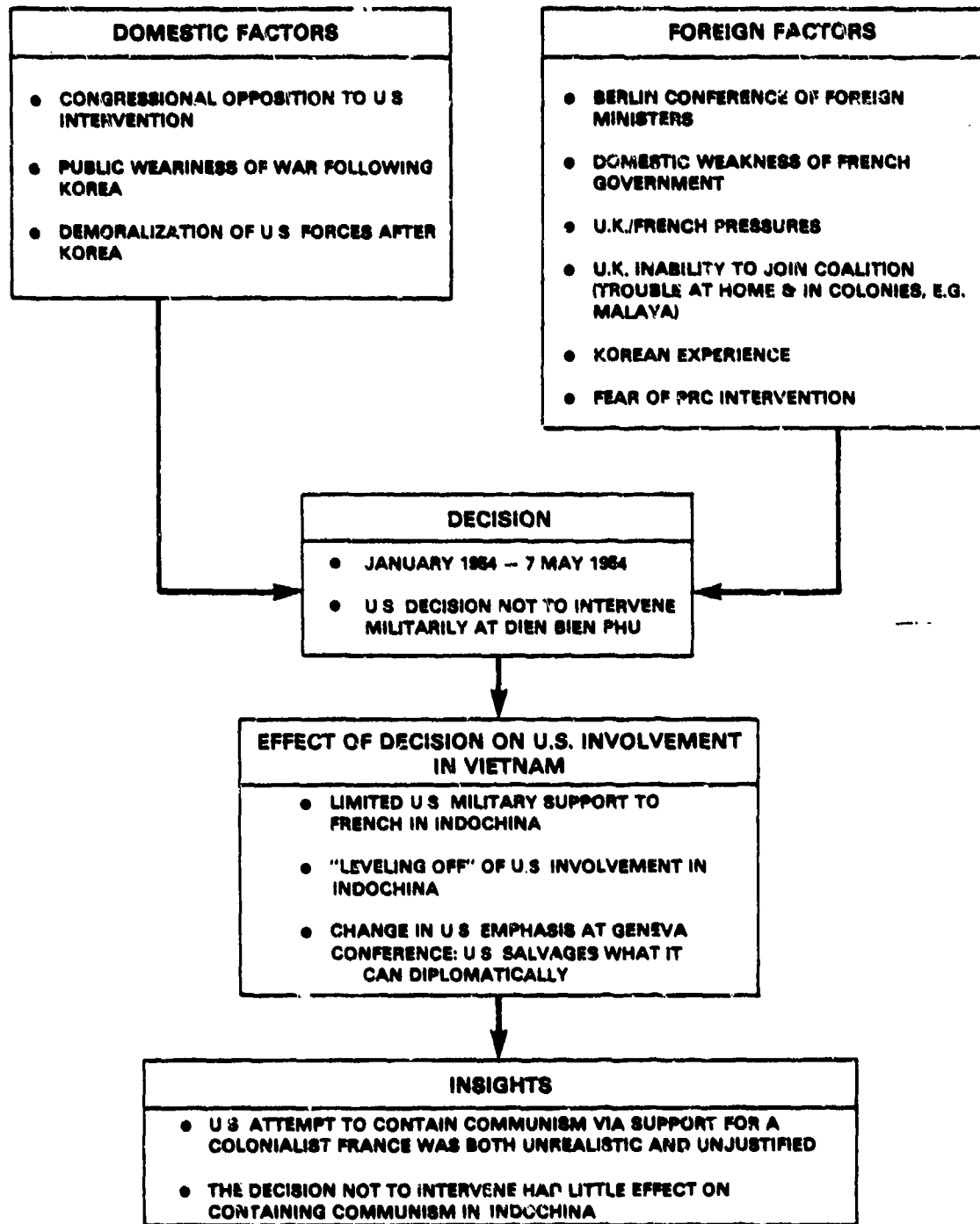
G. Insights

- 1. The US policymakers perceived Ho Chi Minh as part of an international communist pattern of aggression. The US believed that communism was incompatible with Vietnamese nationalism or, that nationalism was a disguise for communism.
- 2. The US policy makers perceived the Viet Minh effort as externally inspired by the forces of monolithic communism. It was assumed that if outside support of the Viet Minh ceased, the insurgency would wither away.
- 3. Since the conflict was seen as part of an international communist plan, the domino theory prevailed: the fall of Indochina would lead to the fall of Southeast Asia.
- 4. The above reasoning became the basis for US involvement in Vietnam for the next 20 years.

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5. By publicly linking Ho Chi Minh to Moscow and disregarding his many efforts to communicate with the US, the US lost an opportunity to influence Vietnam away from Moscow and towards a Tito-like independence.

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Figure A-3. Decision III: US Decision Not To Intervene Militarily at Dien Bien Phu

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III. US DECISION NOT TO INTERVENE MILITARILY AT DIEN BIEN PHU (DBP)4/

- A. Decision. US Government continually reaffirmed its Indochina policy, held for more than three years, that the US would not intervene militarily in Indochina on behalf of the French, unless the French government would "unequivocally pledge independence to the Associated States upon the achievement of military victory," and, even then, only if the US were "one of a concert of powers, which concert must include local Asiatic peoples."5/
1. When: January 1954 - May 7, 1954.
 2. Principal Decision-Makers: President Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, Admiral Radford, General Ridgway.
 3. Purpose:
 - a. To uphold US moral position as leader of the Free World by avoiding association with colonialism and imperialism.
 - b. To prevent the sacrifice of US forces for an unjustified cause.
 - c. To encourage the formation of a joint allied coalition for resisting communism.
 - d. To accelerate independence of the Associated States.
 4. Themes:
 1. Anticolonialism.
 2. Anticommunism.
 3. Internationalization of the conflict.
- B. Precedents for The Decision. Key decisions, which taken together, comprised the US decision not to intervene at DBP.
1. Early 1954: Eisenhower's precondition for US military intervention in Vietnam:
 - a. Urgent French request for US intervention.
 - b. Desire of Vietnamese government for US intervention.

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- c. Favorable climate of Free World opinion.
 - d. Favorable action by Congress.
2. January 1954: Eisenhower told associates that he could not at the moment see the value of putting US ground forces in SEA. The final decision here entailed: 6/
 - a. Trying to convince British and French to form coalition in order to give moral meaning to intervention.
 - b. Trying to convince Vietnamese and world of French sincerity to grant Associated States independence.
 - c. Stepping up US material aid in every practical way.
3. March 1954: Eisenhower "let it be known (to the French) that I would never agree to send our ground troops as mere reinforcements for French units, to be used only as they (the French) saw fit." 7/
4. April 4, 1954: Eisenhower writes to Churchill about the importance of establishing a new, ad hoc grouping or coalition composed of nations which have a vital concern in the checking of communist expansion in Indochina: UK, US, France, Associated States of Indochina, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and the Philippines. Eisenhower did not envisage the need for US or UK ground forces in Indochina. British response was essentially negative.
5. April 4, 1954: According to Dulles who had met with congressional leaders, it would be impossible to get Congressional authorization for the US to act alone. Congressional support was dependent on 3 conditions with which Eisenhower was in full agreement:
 - a. US intervention being part of a coalition to include the other free nations of SEA, Philippines, and British Commonwealth.
 - b. French must accelerate their independence program for the Associated States.
 - c. French must agree not to pull their forces out of the war if we put our forces in.
6. April 12, 1954: Dulles conferred with UK leaders in London. UK appeared to place much faith in negotiations at Geneva. Eisenhower's view of negotiating with communists: communist participation in conferences never implied that they would either make concessions or keep promises.

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7. April 23, 1954: Eisenhower reaffirms Dulles' position of April 4, that there would be no US intervention at Dien Bien Phu without allies.
8. April 22, 1954: Eisenhower was told that Australia and New Zealand would consider intervention but Eisenhower decides that US should not urge collective action with other members of the British Commonwealth without "sturdy Britain as a participant."
9. April 29, 1954: US government considers again the possible use of air strikes in Indochina. According to Eisenhower: "During the course of this meeting I remarked that if the United States were, unilaterally, to permit its forces to be drawn into conflict in Indochina and in a succession of Asian wars, the end result would be to drain off our resources and to weaken our over-all defensive position. If we, without allies, should ever find ourselves fighting at various places all over the region, and if Red Chinese aggressive participation were clearly identified, then we could scarcely avoid, I said, considering the necessity of striking directly at the head instead of the tail of the snake, Red China itself. But in the meantime, the problem was to solve the current dilemma. Even without a mechanism for united action, we could still go on giving the French considerable material aid."8/
10. May 7, 1954: Dien Bien Phu fell.

C. Options.

1. Massive B-29 bombing (US operation from US bases outside Indochina).
2. Support for cease fire at Dien Bien Phu.
3. Support for cease fire throughout all Indochina.
4. Send US ground forces to Dien Bien Phu - according to Eisenhower, "this was always a possibility; the question was under constant study."9/ The logistical problems were too great; this also might require mobilization.
5. Use nuclear weapons against Viet Minh.10/

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D. Influential Factors.

1. Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers - January 25, 1954 through February 18, 1954, between US, UK, France, USSR. UK and France were both seeking agreement to hold a future conference at Geneva on the Far East: Korea and Indochina. Eisenhower (and Dulles) believed "there was danger in the attitude developing among the Western Allies which, to us, seemed to put too much faith in the validity of negotiations with the Soviets and Chinese Communists." But the life of the Laniel government in France was important to US policies: it took a very strong position on the defense of Indochina and in support of the European Defense Community. According to Eisenhower, "We had to be sympathetic to the French desire." US was also concerned to manifest unity of the Western Allies, and recognized that if the US was held responsible for blocking such a conference, the moral obligation to carry on the war in Indochina might be shifted from the French to the US. For these reasons, Dulles proposed that the four powers meet for a conference on the Far East.
2. Domestic weakness of French Government - US fear that the Laniel government would fall unless US came to the aid of the French in Indochina.
3. Unwillingness of UK to join in a coalition with the US for collective action in Indochina, until all possibility of a settlement by negotiations had been tried and failed.
4. Pressure from France and UK to negotiate with the Communists. US wanted to avoid negotiations with Communists from a position of weakness.
5. Geneva Conference was looming in the background. The decision to hold the conference was taken in February 1954. Dien Bien Phu did not fall until May 7, 1954.
6. Korean experience led to reluctance on the part of the US to carry the primary responsibility for defense of Indochina.
7. 30 March 1954 a new issue arose: What would US reaction be to Chinese Communist attack on French in Vietnam with their MIG aircraft. Dulles could not give a definitive answer - would depend upon circumstances. US prestige would be engaged to a point where we would want to have success if we intervened.

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8. Domestic:

- Congressional opposition to adopting a congressional resolution authorizing American entry into the Indochina war. Congressional leaders knew well the difficulties of the Korean war and were disturbed because US had found no allies to support intervention.

E. Effect of the Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam. The decision from January through May 1954 placed significant limits on US military support for the French in Indochina. The US would continue to supply money and materiel but steadfastly refused to intervene militarily until certain clearly specified conditions were met: French pledge to grant independence to Associated States and formation of a coalition (to include Asiatic states) which would assume responsibility for intervention on behalf of the French. They were never met, and Dien Bien Phu was allowed to fall.

In effect this series of US decisions from January to May 1954 resulted in a "leveling off" of US involvement in Indochina. Previously, there had been an escalation in US involvement from no clear policy at all, to a policy of allowing the French to reassert control in Indochina, to a policy of recognizing Bao Dai and supporting the French with money and materiel without intervening militarily in behalf of the French unless the conditions specified above were met. The series of decisions taken from January to May 1954 by the US clearly reaffirmed the last policy and ultimately led to the negotiated settlement reached at Geneva in July 1954.

F. Effectiveness of the Decision.

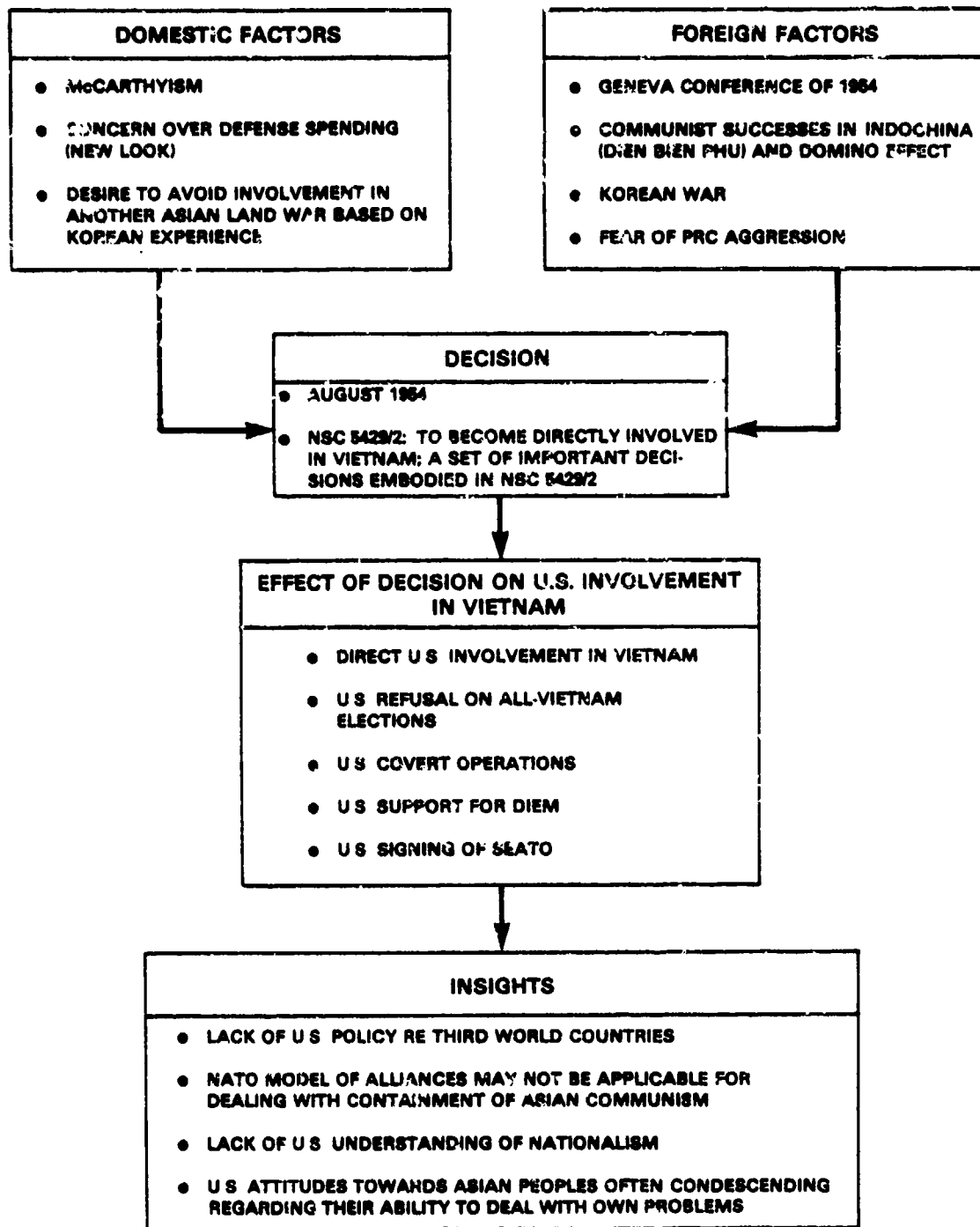
1. Continued US financial and materiel support of the French eroded any good will or moral tone that otherwise might have accrued to the US because of its decision not to intervene at Dien Bien Phu.
2. The decisions were effective in encouraging:
 - a. the formation of a joint allied coalition for resisting communist aggression (SEATO).
 - b. acceleration of independence for the Associated States of Indochina.
3. Continued US support of the French ensured that US prestige was damaged as a result of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

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G. Insights.

1. US non-intervention did little to persuade French to accept willingly the conditions set by Washington for intervention.
2. US attempt to use the French colonialist struggle for its own purposes of containment of communism (by means of indirect support for the French in Indochina) was not successful. US attempts to straddle the fence on the issues of support of French colonialism and support of anticommunist efforts in Vietnam were contradictory and self-defeating.
3. The Dien Bien Phu decision, coupled with continued US aid to the French, did little to stop the spread of communism as soon as it became clear that the French had no intention of granting independence to the Associated States. Where anticolonialist and anticommunist objectives of the United States clash, the US government must consider the possibility that the achievement of anticolonialist objectives is a precondition for the achievement of anticommunist objectives.

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Figure A-4. Decision IV: US Decision To Become Directly Involved in Vietnam

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IV. US DECISION TO BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN VIETNAM 11/

A. Decision. Several key decisions were made by the US between the fall of Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954 and the approval by President Eisenhower of NSC 5429/2 on August 20, 1954. This outline will focus on NSC 5429/2 as the formal expression of these decisions. NSC 5429/2 clarified the new US policy of direct involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Several specific decisions are included in NSC 5429/2. The most important of these for our purposes are:

- The US will "deal directly," wherever advantageous to the US, with the governments of Cambodia, Laos, and free Vietnam.
- The US will work through the French "only insofar as necessary," in order to assist Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam to maintain military forces necessary for internal security and economic conditions conducive to the maintenance and strengthening of non-Communist regimes.
- The US will work to maintain a friendly non-Communist South Vietnam.
- The US will work to prevent a Communist victory through all-Vietnam elections. (Later, US and GVN refused all-Vietnam elections).
- The US will work to prevent North Vietnam from becoming incorporated in the Soviet bloc, using consular relations and non-strategic trade.
- The US will conduct covert operations on a large and effective scale in support of foregoing policies.
- The US will negotiate a Southeast Asia security treaty with the UK, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and, as appropriate, other free South and Southeast Asian countries (SEATO).
- The US will encourage the prompt organization of an economic grouping by the maximum number of free Asian states, including Japan and the Colombo powers (Ceylon, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Burma), and the US.
- The US President should consider requesting congressional authority to take appropriate action, which might include the use of US military forces either locally or against the external source (including Communist China), if requested by a legitimate local government which requires assistance to

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defeat local Communist subversion or rebellion, not constituting armed attack.

1. When: NSC 5429/2 adopted by NSC on 18 August 1954 and approved by Eisenhower on 20 August 1954.
2. Principal Decision Makers: President Eisenhower and the NSC.
3. Purpose:
 - a. To clarify and make formal, in a single document, US policy on the Far East following the Geneva Conference of 1954.
 - b. To contain communism in SEA
 - 1) by halting or preventing subversion
 - 2) by halting or preventing aggression
 - 3) by developing good relations with Free Asia

B. Precedents.

1. Geneva Conference: US is nonsignatory, but declares that it will refrain from threat or the use of force to disturb the agreements; would view any renewal of the aggression with grave concern and as a threat to international peace and security.
2. CIA assessment of the probable outlook in Indochina in the light of the agreements at the Geneva Conference. (NIE 63-5-54). NIE concludes:
 - a. that the communists will continue to pursue their objectives in South Vietnam by political, psychological and paramilitary means.
 - b. that if elections are held in 1956, the Viet Minh will win.
 - c. that the events in Laos and Cambodia depend on the developments in Vietnam. (3 August 1954).
3. President Eisenhower directed that US aid to Indochina be given directly to the South Vietnamese government rather than through the French. Full military implementation of this directive had to await final French military departure. (17 August 1954). (See also the related US decision not to intervene at Dien Bien Phu).

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4. NSC 5429. "Review of US Policy in the Far East," considered by the NSC at its meeting on 12 August 1954.

C. Options. JCS recommended that the US formulate a comprehensive policy in which the Far East is viewed as a strategic entity and which would provide definitive direction for the development of a position of military strength in the Far East. Defense and JCS argued that US policy with regard to the peripheral areas should be established in the light of this determination. JCS recommended that the US "continue to exploit opportunities to further US long-range objectives toward uniting Vietnam under a democratic form of government." According to JCS, "the first and basic need ... is for a statement in a single document of a US foreign policy on a global basis, with the principal objectives listed." One principal objective should be "to split Communist China from the Soviet bloc."^{13/}

D. Influential Factors.

1. Foreign:

- a. Geneva Conference of 1954.
- b. According to NSC 5429/2, communist successes in Indochina (Dien Bien Phu) culminating in Geneva Agreement 1954 led to:
 - 1) Fear of Communist military and non-military pressures mounted against areas adjacent to RVN and more remote non-communist areas. (Domino effect).
 - 2) Loss of US prestige in Asia resulting from US backing of France and Bao Dai governments. Doubts in Asia resulted concerning US leadership and ability to check further communist expansion in Asia. US prestige was inescapably associated with subsequent developments in SEA.
 - 3) Communists are in a good position to exploit the political strategy of imputing to US motives of extremism, belligerency and opposition to coexistence, seeking thereby to alienate the US from its allies; communists can accentuate "peace propaganda" in Asia to allay fears of expansionism and establish closer relations with nations of free Asia.

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- 4) In order to achieve their ends, the communists have an increased capacity for exploiting political and economic weakness in free Asia without having to resort to armed attack.
- 5) Loss of Southeast Asia would imperil US retention of Japan as a key element in the offshore island chain.
- 6) Concern over possible Chinese aggression in SEA.
- 7) Dien Bien Phu/Geneva Conference 1954.
- 8) Korean War (Chinese intervention.
- 9) Indonesia (see NSC 171/1).
- 10) Concern about falling dominoes in Asia (Philippines, Malaya, Burma).12/

2. Domestic Factors:

- a. McCarthyism (contain communism).
- b. Concern over defense spending (New Look).
- c. "Never again" land war in Asia (US tired of fighting in Korea a protracted, indecisive, and costly war.

F. Effect of Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

1. Direct US involvement in Vietnam (Severing of the French connection).
2. US refusal to agree to holding all-Vietnam elections, once it was clear that Ho would win.
3. Increase in covert operations.
4. US support for Diem (maintain a "friendly" non-communist RVN).
5. US signing of SEATO.

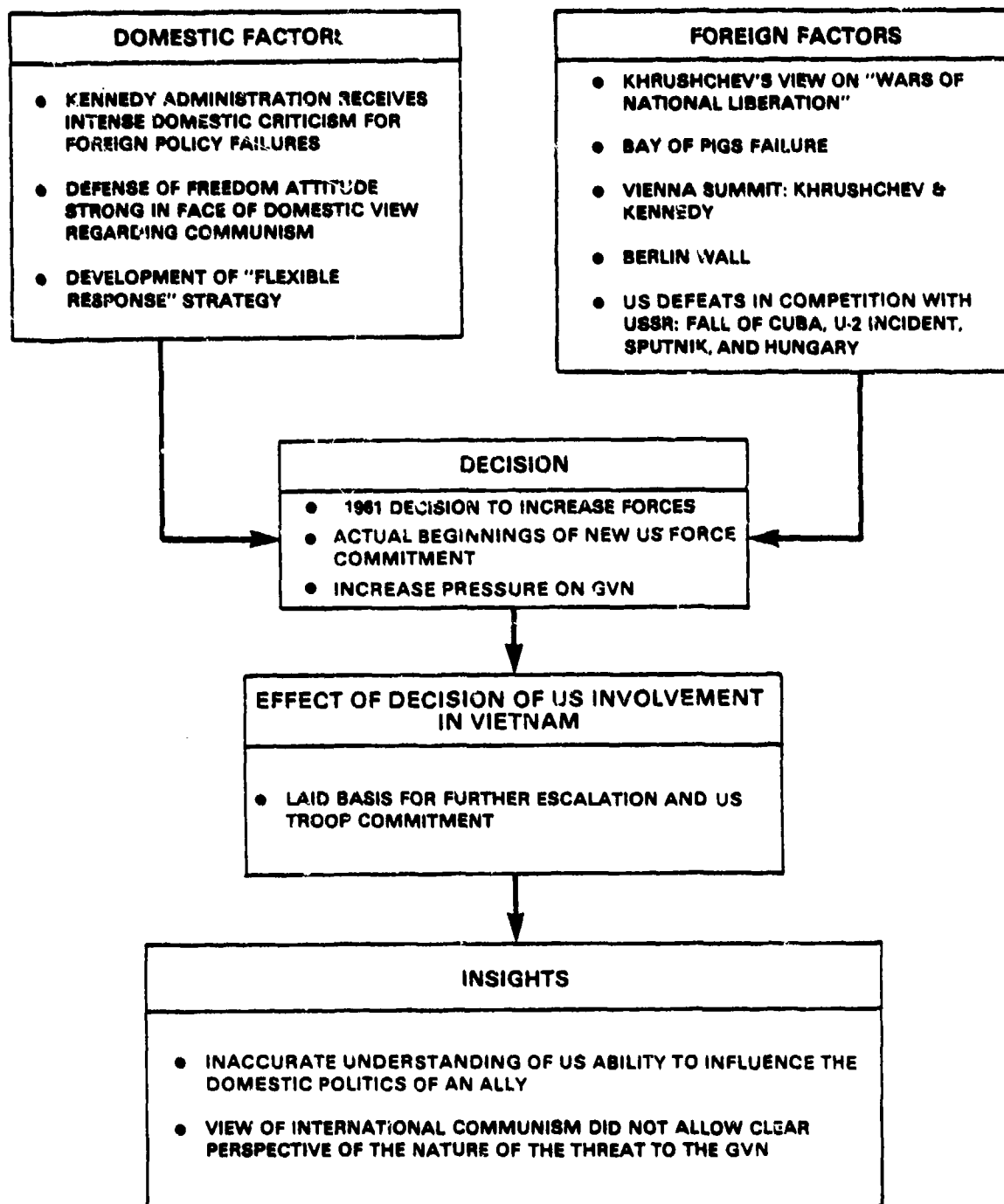
F. Effectiveness of Decision. NSC 5429.2 was effective in clarifying the change in US policy on Vietnam: to offer aid directly to South Vietnam rather than through the French.

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G. Insights.

1. No policy had yet been formulated by the US for dealing effectively with countries of the Third World.
2. Assumption made that formal alliances such as SEATO, using NATO as the model, would be useful in dealing with Asian communism.
3. US still did not understand the importance of nationalism in Indochina and the need to address problems that had arisen from years of colonialism in SEA before trying to marshal support against communism.
4. US had a condescending attitude toward the Asian peoples and their ability to deal with their own problems.

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Figure A-5. Decision V: US Decision To Increase Sharply US-RVN Joint Efforts

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V. 1961 DECISION TO INCREASE SHARPLY US - GVN JOINT EFFORTS TO AVOID A FURTHER DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION IN RVN 14/

A. Decision. Decision to increase the scope of US participation in Vietnam was articulated in National Security Action Memorandum 111, 22 November 1961.

- The decision included both increased military assistance and "aid in developing domestic programs" for the GVN.
 - The decision articulated in NSAM 111 had been made earlier when US personnel were committed to Vietnam. 15/
1. When: NSAM 111, November 22, 1961 had been preceded by force commitments in May and November.
 2. Principal Decision-Makers: President Kennedy, especially with advice and support of General Taylor, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, and cleared with the NSC.
 3. Purpose: In 1959, the North Vietnamese had decided to intensify their struggle in the South by moving from political efforts to combined political and military activities. Beginning in 1960 with the overrunning of a regimental headquarters near Tay Ninh City (January), the DRV escalation began seriously to weaken the RVN. The United States sought to arrest this trend by intensified military commitments that were to be accompanied by GVN reforms and programs for improving the credibility of the GVN among the people of the South.
 4. Themes:
 - a. The United States was determined to resist a perceived march of international communism and to reverse the trend of important communist successes.
 - b. From 1961 onward, The United States policymakers consistently underestimated the ability of the Vietnamese Communists to match our escalation.
 - c. The pattern of action - reaction was being established whereby relatively small increments of US men and materiel were expected to reverse negative trends evident in the struggle in Vietnam.
 - d. The United States coupled its military assistance to the GVN with political requirements for reorganization and reformation of the South Vietnamese government.

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B. Precedents for the Decision.

1. The establishment of MAAG in Indochina in 1950, provided the original precedent for US military commitment in Indochina.
2. In 1954, the MAAGV continued the original commitment to train and equip the South Vietnamese.
3. After 1955, the MAAGV aid was no longer channelled through the French. Instead, it was received directly by the GVN.
4. In 1956, "Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission" (TERM) personnel began performing training functions that were "inseparable from the tasks of recovering and maintaining."
5. In 1960 (5/20) TERM personnel were assigned to MAAGV, moving beyond the manpower restrictions of the Geneva Agreement.
6. In October 1960 an integrated Counterinsurgency Program (CIP) was called for.

C. Options Presented. The Taylor report frames the basic issue 16/ concerning whether the US should:

1. Commit itself to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Vietnam to communism, and support this commitment by immediate military actions and preparations for possible later actions.
2. Maintain US commitment at existing level.
3. Reduce US commitment to RVN.

D. Influential Factors.

1. Foreign:

- a. Bay of Pigs fiasco had tarnished the image of the US as leader of the Free World.
- b. The United States had experienced a series of defeats in its competition with the USSR. These defeats included: Soviet 1956 invasion of Hungary, the fall of Cuba to Castro, the Sputnik launching, and the U-2 incident.
- c. Construction of the Berlin Wall was perceived as a triumph for the USSR in war of wills with the US.

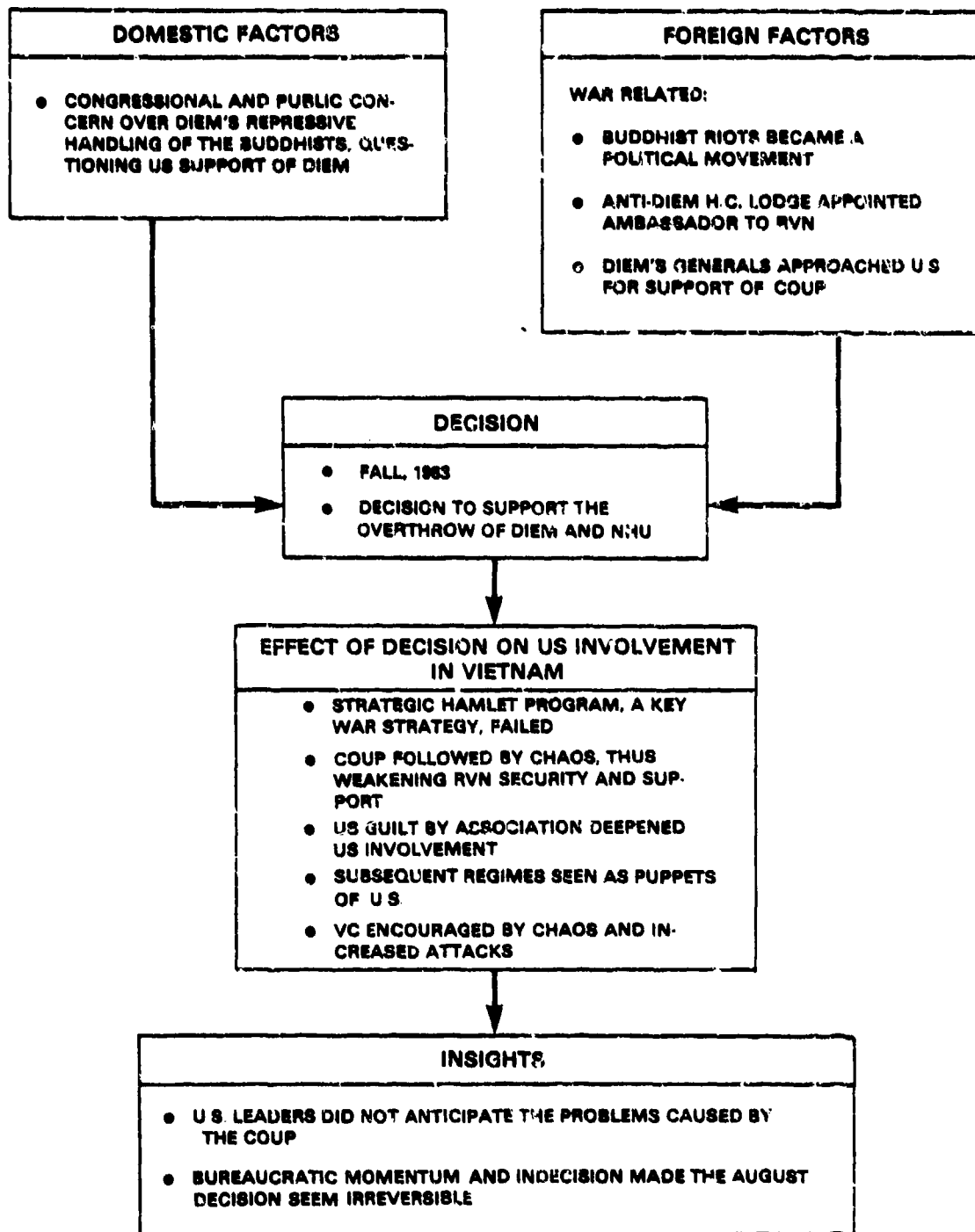
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- d. Khrushchev promised to make South Vietnam a testing ground for his program of wars of national liberation.
2. Domestic:
 - a. Faced with a series of foreign policy failures, especially the Bay of Pigs, the Kennedy Administration could not afford another defeat and maintain its domestic political credibility.
 - b. The Vietnam conflict seemed an appropriate place to test the Administration's inaugural commitment "to pay any price, to bear any burden, in the defense of freedom."
 3. War Related:
 - a. Phuoc Vinh (Provincial capital 40 miles from Saigon) was overrun (autumn 1961).
 - b. Communist forces in South were growing stronger after Hanoi's 1959 decision to escalate.
- E. Effect of Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam. The United States moved from a limited commitment of maintaining a non-Communist South Vietnam to a large-scale effort. This decision point marked a significant step up in the US escalation as the nation moved to meet and exceed the North Vietnamese commitment made in 1959.
- F. Effectiveness of the Decision. Those who made the decision in 1961 to increase significantly US commitment to the war believed that the military forces and the political reform of the GVN would be sufficient to produce the intended positive results. The US was ill-prepared for a failure of those results to materialize. When they did not, the only recourse was to increase the military commitment to a higher level.
- G. Insights.
1. The 1961 US response to the post 1959 North Vietnamese attacks represented a significant increase in US commitment to the RVN, but it was not sufficiently strong to affect permanently the progress of the war.
 2. The US assumed that the root of the GVN's problem was corruption and inefficiency. It was believed that reforms directed by the Americans would correct these problems.

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3. While US authorities believed that political and governmental reforms were necessary to win the struggle with the North Vietnamese, there seemed to be no way the US could force those reforms without pulling out and thereby forfeiting the country to the communists. Hence the US lost most of its leverage on the GVN.
4. The United States viewed the Vietnam situation as an extension of international communist aggression. As a consequence, it associated the increased pressure from the Vietnamese Communists with Khrushchev's pronouncements rather than internal Vietnamese factors. Thus, the US was ill-prepared to weigh the positive successes of Diem's government and the threat those successes posed to the communists who had expected him to fail.
5. The United States was confident that our experience of strengthening friendly governments (such as Greece and Korea) could be repeated in Asia.

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Figure A-6. Decision VI: US Decision To Support the Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu

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VI. DECISION TO SUPPORT THE OVERTHROW OF NGO DINH DIEM AND NGO DINH NHU 17/

A. Decision. To support South Vietnamese generals' overthrow of South Vietnam's President Diem and his brother Nhu.

1. When: August 24, 1963, State Department sent a cable to Ambassador Lodge in Saigon urging Diem's removal of his brother Nhu and stating that if Diem refused to comply with US demands, the US could no longer support Diem and would promote his overthrow. On August 29, President Kennedy agreed to support a coup without direct US support if it was likely to succeed. During October 2 NSC meeting, President Kennedy favored option 2, below.
2. Principal Decision Makers: It was a struggle between mainly the military and CIA on the one hand, who were most concerned about military progress and therefore against the coup (McNamara, Harkins, Taylor, Lansdale, McCone, Colby, Richardson), and State Department personnel on the other hand, who were concerned with political support for GVN (Harriman, Hilsman, Ball, Ambassador Lodge, Truehart, Bundy, Robert Kennedy and Vice President Johnson).
3. Purpose:
 - a. To pressure Diem to reform and unseat his unpopular brother Nhu;
 - b. To disassociate US from the repressive South Vietnam regime;
 - c. If necessary, to promote a change of government "if it appeared capable of increasing effectiveness of military effort, ensuring popular support to win the war, and improving working relations with US". 18/
4. Theme. The coup marked a watershed between the commitments of 1961 and massive military intervention in 1965. By supporting the Vietnamese generals' coup, the US felt even more responsible for the fate of South Vietnam.

B. Precedents.

1. In 1965 General Lawton Collins recommended a change in government. (Gelb, p. 36)
2. In 1961 Galbraith visited Saigon, told Washington that we must get rid of Diem, that a military government would be better than this "mandarin."

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3. In June 1963, Deputy Chief of Mission William Truehart warned Diem that the US might have to disassociate itself from him if he were not more forthcoming with reform. 19/

C. Influential Factors.

1. Buddhist riots in Hue became a political movement, drawing world attention to the Diem regime's repression with the burning bonzes.
2. Diem's repressive policies towards the Buddhists and Madame Nhu's inflammatory remarks brought severe US domestic criticism of Diem, raising the question of US support for such a regime.
3. Kennedy replaced pro-Diem Ambassador Nolting with anti-Diem Henry Cabot Lodge, partly to demonstrate US disapproval of Diem's policies.
4. Diem's generals approached CIA in bid for support of a coup.

D. Options.

1. Maintain the status quo and continue to pressure Diem for reforms.
2. Follow a "purely correct" relationship, withholding selective aid programs such as for the Special Forces, and show US disapproval for Diem's policies. Acquiesce to but do not initiate, a y coup.
3. Suspend aid, denounce the regime, and promote a coup.

E. Effect of the Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

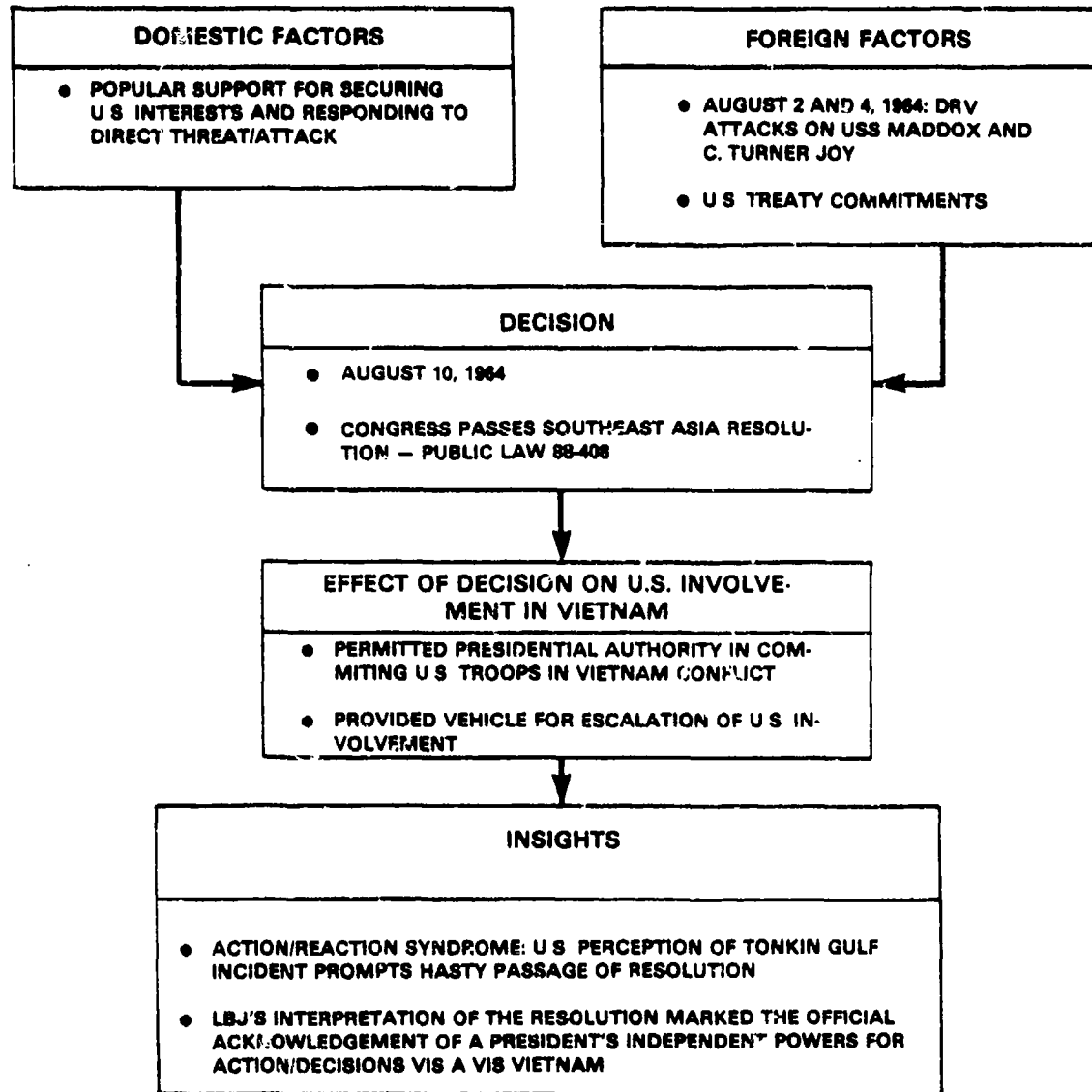
1. The Strategic Hamlet program, identified with the Diem regime, failed.
2. The coup was followed by two years of countercoups and instability, jeopardizing the country's security and GVN's popular support.
3. US guilt by association led to deeper involvement, based on a need to help them out of their difficulties.
4. Subsequent regimes were perceived to be puppets of the US.
5. The VC, encouraged by the chaos in RVN, increased their attacks.

F. Effectiveness of the Decisions.

1. The overthrow of Diem was followed by eight more changes in the government over the next two years. It was therefore decided by many, including Lyndon Johnson, that supporting the coup had been the United States' worst mistake during the Vietnam war.
2. The US association with the coup further confirmed world suspicions of the machinations of the American CIA. 20/

G. Insights/Lessons.

1. The US leaders who participated in this decision did not anticipate the adverse political and military consequences of this action. They did not find and prepare someone who could successfully replace Diem.
2. American complicity in Diem's overthrow tended to tie the US morally to the support of succeeding South Vietnamese governments.
3. Bureaucratic momentum behind the US decision in August was used later to make that decision appear irreversible, especially once the US gave the RVNAF generals the go ahead.
4. One cannot foresee the type or extent of violence that may attend a coup. US leaders did not want Diem killed. The overthrow risked civil war and dangerously weakened RVN's defense against the communists.
5. US encouragement of the coup showed a fundamental ignorance of Vietnamese politics and society. Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson described the Washington attitude at that time as one of getting rid of the South Vietnamese leadership if it did not meet US standards. 21/



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Figure A-7. Decision VII: Southeast Asia Resolution (Tonkin Gulf Resolution)

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VII. SOUTHEAST ASIA RESOLUTION - PUBLIC LAW 88-408 (TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION)22/

- A. Decision. "The Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.

Sec. 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. ... to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol states of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom."23/

1. When: Approved August 10, 1964
2. Principal Decision Makers: Lyndon B. Johnson and special advisors Rusk, McNamara, Vance, McCone, and Bundy.
3. Purpose: To show a unified front to Southeast Asia and to provide legal authority for Johnson's future military, political, economic decisions.

- B. Precedents. The historical precedents for this decision show a gradual shift in the balance of power from the Congress to the President. The key issue here is authority for war.

1. 1945 United Nations Participation Act: Congressional delegation of authority to the President to engage in hostilities if acting pursuant to article 43 of the U.N. collective peace force agreement approved by Congress.
2. Formosa Resolution - 1955: Authorizing the President to employ Armed Forces of US to protect Formosa, the Pescadores, and related territories.
3. Middle East Resolution - 1957: amended 1961. President is authorized to assist nation(s) in Middle East in development of economic and military strength. US can use armed forces to assist any nation requesting such assistance.24/
4. War Related: August 5, US attacked DRV torpedo boat bases and oil storage area.

- C. Options. The Southeast Asia Resolution was passed in Congress with little opposition and discussion of alternative actions. One senator who was wary of the new resolution, Senator Wayne Morse, called it a "pre-dated resolution of war." He believed

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the passage of this resolution, which provided the President "war-making powers in the absence of a declaration of war," to be "a historic mistake."^{25/}

D. Influential Factors.

1. Foreign:

a. The US had established treaty ties and assistance agreements with South Vietnam and it was widely believed in 1964 that the US did indeed have vital interests in the security of the region.

1. December 23, 1950: Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement

2. February 19, 1955: SEATO

b. The PRC and USSR were active in the SEA region and the US wanted to counter this.

1. PRC and USSR agreements with Cambodia: May 9-17, 1956.

2. Sihanouk demands that the US change its policy or he will request aid from the USSR. (July, 1960)

2. Domestic: There was popular support for securing US interests abroad, especially in face of an attack.

3. War-Related: The August 2, 3 and 4, 1964 attacks on the USS Maddox and C. Turner Joy directly influenced this decision.

E. Effect of the Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

1. Southeast Asia Resolution represents the vehicle of authority by which escalation of the conflict was accomplished.

2. The May 1970 Cooper-Church Amendment represents both the turning point of public tolerance for the war and Congress's recognition of need to curb the powers of the presidency.

F. Effectiveness of the Decision.

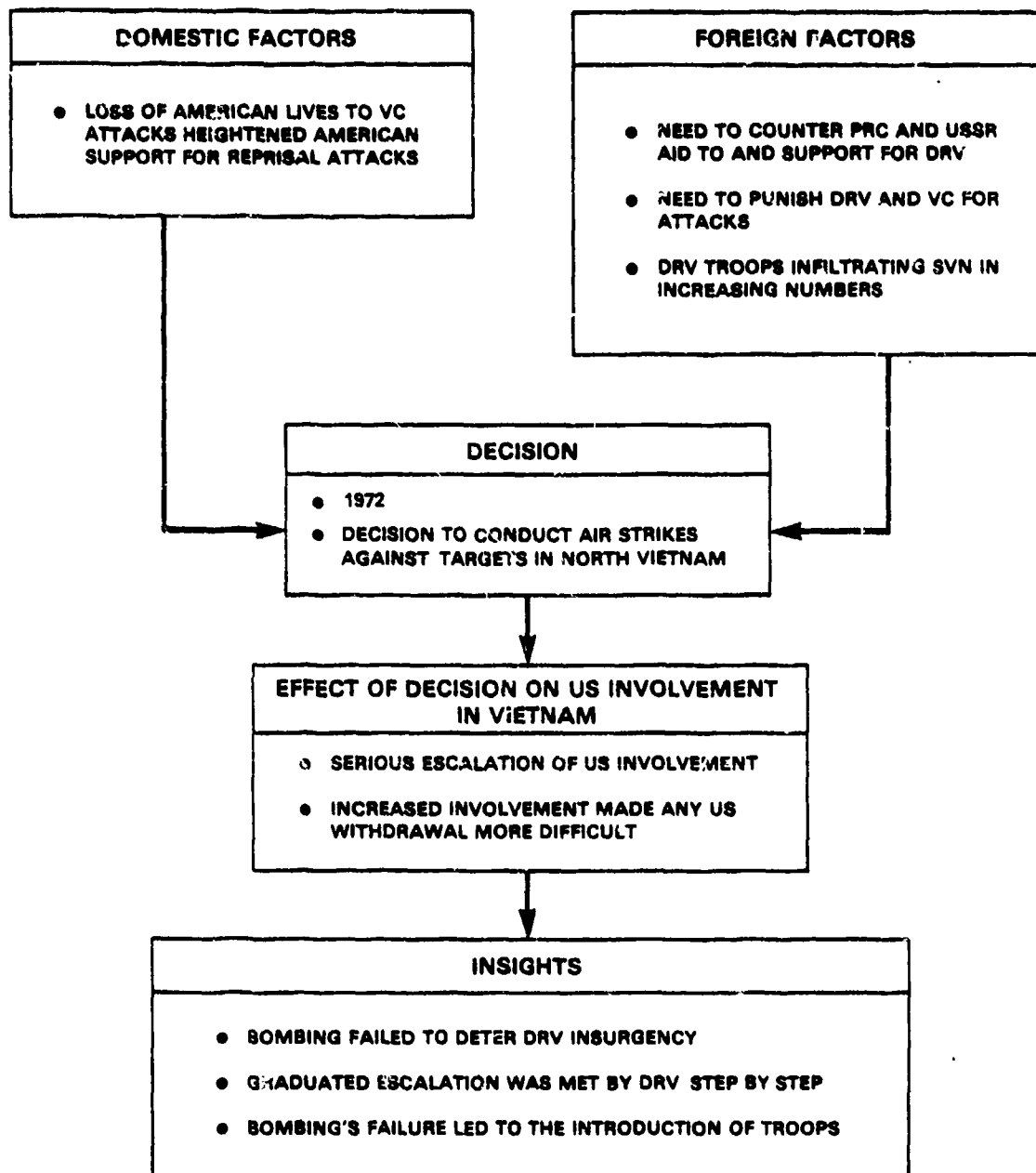
1. Use of this type of resolution for similar conflicts is both legal and reasonable (vs. declaration of war).^{26/} Nevertheless, it is this law which creates the issue of authority for war, as well as generating possible court decisions.

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2. The resolution served as the basis for all involvement in Vietnam, from August 10, 1964, until its repeal during the Cambodian incident.

G. Insights.

1. A common perception of the Southeast Asia Resolution is that it was hastily passed as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incident, without Congress having a chance to understand the real implications of this grant of power to the President. However, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee William Fulbright did clearly explain the implications to the Senate, so these charges of deception (which arose 3 years later) are probably unjustified.
2. A watershed in history as the Resolution was interpreted by Johnson as providing independent powers to the President in terms of involvement in Vietnam.



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Figure A-8. Decision VIII: US Decision To Conduct Air Strikes Against Targets in North Vietnam

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VIII. DECISION TO CONDUCT AIR STRIKES AGAINST TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM 27/

A. Decision. To bomb North Vietnam.

1. When: March 1964 contingency plans were made. June 1964 JCS selected targets. December 1964 forces were put on stand-by for action. February 7, 1965 air strikes were carried out in retaliation for VC attacks on Pleiku.
2. Principal Decision Makers: President Johnson, JCS, NSC, and special advisors McNamara, Rusk, Bundy, Vance, and McCone.
3. Purpose: The war was going very badly. "Early in January 1965, Taylor sent in a report concluding that "we are presently on a losing track and must risk a change... to take no positive action now is to accept defeat in the fairly near future. That was the view of every responsible military adviser in Vietnam and in Washington."28/ The US response was provoked by the February 6 VC attack. The air campaign called Rolling Thunder was based on:
 - a. The theory that an air campaign was low cost and low risk.
 - b. The hope that the bombing campaign would lessen VC violence.
 - c. The desire to punish DRV.
 - d. The need to raise the morale of GVN & RVNAF.
 - e. The limited expectation that communist logistic support would be impeded.

B. Precedents

1. Southeast Asia Resolution of August 19, 1964.
2. US air strike reprisals for Gulf of Tonkin attacks of August 1964.
3. JCSM 746-64 of August suggesting provoking DRV into action to justify US bombing in the North.
4. September 7, 1964, JCS furnished a list of 94 targets for air strikes.
5. Air interdiction operations in 1964 against Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laotian Panhandle.

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C. Options.

1. Withhold air support.
2. Air support in South Vietnam only.
3. Air interdiction in Laos only.
4. Bomb/interdict targets in DRV.

D. Influential Factors.

1. Foreign:

- a. In late 1964, DRV began sending regular troops to the South in increasing numbers.
- b. Need to counter PRC and USSR aid to and support for DRV.
- c. Communist attacks beginning with Tonkin Gulf incidents, including VC attacks against Americans in Pleiku, Saigon, and Qui Nhon.
- d. South Vietnamese military and political leaders agreed to bombing policy and sent air sorties into Laos.

2. Domestic: Loss of American lives to VC attacks, especially in Qui Nhon February 1965, heightened American support for reprisal attacks.

3. War-Related:

- a. The State Department's 1965 White Paper documented DRV infiltration: 71% of the communists in RVN were North-erners.
- b. The RVNAF was determined as not capable of defeating the PAVN or the PLAF.

E. Effect of the Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam

1. Bombing the North was a serious escalation of US involvement. It deepened US commitment to RVN and investment in the war, called public and world attention to the war, and could have provoked Chinese or Soviet intervention. It also brought some world sympathy to the North Vietnamese as victims of American fire power.

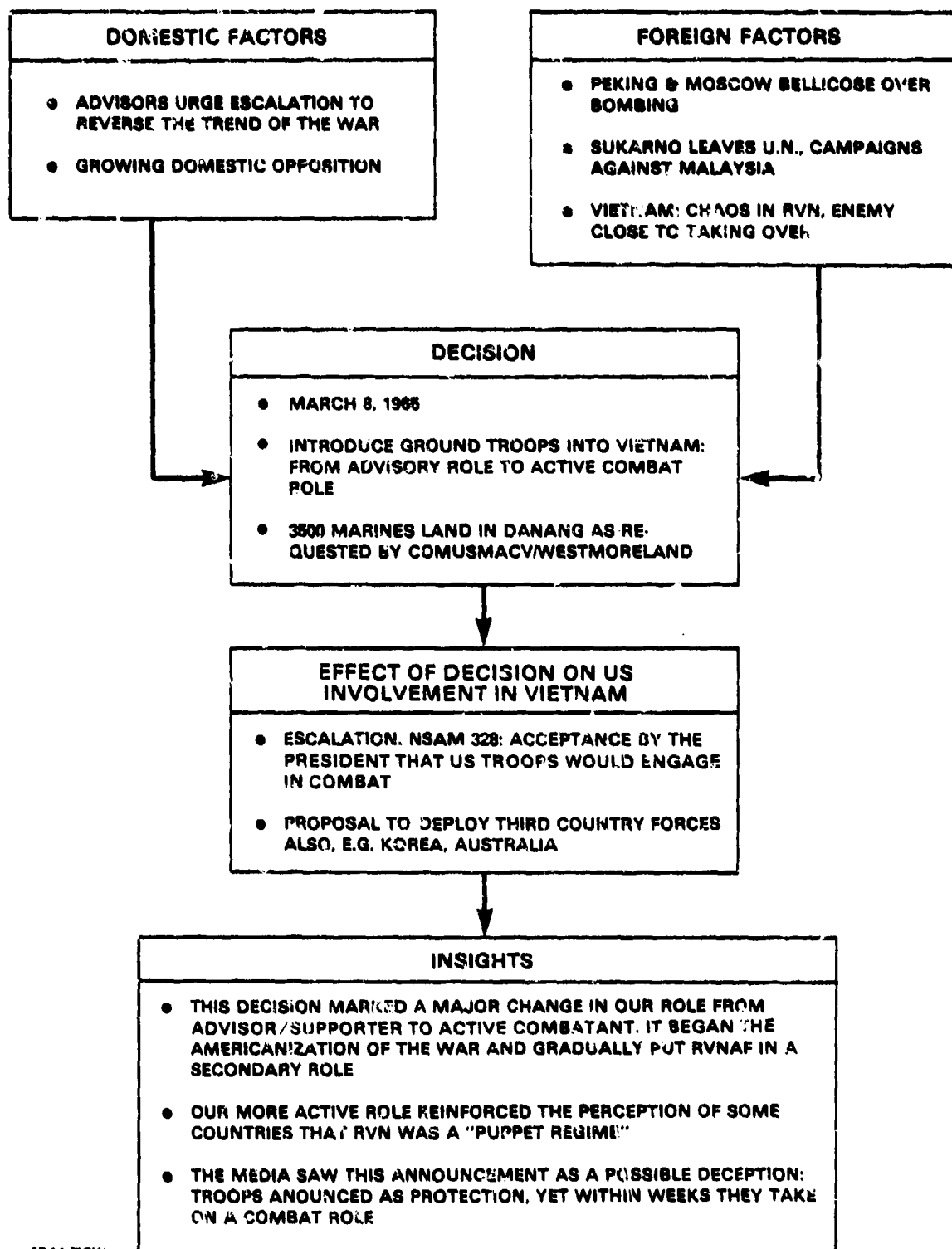
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2. Bombing the North signaled a change in the ground rules of the war: no longer was North Vietnam immune to reprisals for its aggression in the South.
3. This increased involvement made US withdrawal more difficult and changed the war into a "white man's war" with less RVNAF responsibility for the burden of fighting it.
4. The bombings' ineffectiveness paved the way for a commitment of US combat troops.

F. Effectiveness of the Decision. The bombing of North Vietnam failed to halt support of the insurgency from the North, and did little to deter the VC attacks in South Vietnam. Although the bombing raised the morale of RVN temporarily, it did not significantly punish the DRV nor did it appreciably interdict the flow of men and supplies being sent from the North to the South. The bombing was more effective in 1972 because of the use of "smart bombs." See Decision XIV.

G. Insights. The authority for this action was based on the Southeast Asia Resolution, which gave the president authority to repel attacks and to assist any protocol state of SEATO in its defense. The bombing was done in a graduated approach, leaving open the option of further escalation or de-escalation depending on Hanoi's reactions. Unfortunately the bombing campaigns (FLAMING DART I & II) failed to restrain the support from the North. Hanoi adjusted to the graduated pressure in bombing and was not deterred; the US failed to convince Hanoi of its resolve in this contest. More important, the US failed to realize how much will and determination the DRV had to win this war.

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Figure A-9. Decision IX: US Decision To Introduce Ground Troops Into Vietnam

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IX. THE INTRODUCTION OF GROUND TROOPS INTO VIETNAM 29/

A. Decision. To send 3,500 Marines (Marine Expeditionary Brigade) to Da Nang.

In February, after a dramatic increase in activity initiated by the Viet Cong, the United States responded by increasing its own level of commitment to the Republic of Vietnam. For the first time, US jet aircraft were authorized to support the RVNAF in ground operations in the South without restriction. In immediate retaliation for guerrilla raids on US installations in the South, US aircraft also began bombing targets in the southern reaches of North Vietnam. In early March, the latter program evolved into Rolling Thunder, the sustained bombing of the North. Also, during March, two US Marine battalions were landed at Da Nang on the coast of Central Vietnam. The air base at Da Nang was a major base of the Rolling Thunder bombing, and the mission of the Marines was to strengthen its defenses. Those troops represented the first US ground combat commitment to the Asian mainland since Korea. 30/

Up to this point we had agreed with Generals MacArthur and Ridgway that we should never again get involved in Asian land warfare.

1. When: March 8, 1965.
2. Principal Decision Makers: COMUSMACV General Westmoreland requested this troop commitment on February 21, 1965. The decision was approved February 26, 1965, by President Johnson.
3. Purpose:
 - a. "To occupy and defend critical terrain features in order to secure the airfield and, as directed, communications facilities, US supporting installations against attack. The US Marine Forces will not, repeat will not, engage in day-to-day actions against the Viet Cong." 31/
 - b. To reverse the downward trend of the war.
4. Theme: The introduction of regular combat troops was a dramatic change in the nature of the American involvement and redefined American commitments.

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- B. Precedents. In February, the US began an incremental bombing campaign, Rolling Thunder, in order to bolster RVNAF and slow the infiltration from the North. Both the bombing and ground troops were preceded by VC violations of the Geneva accords.
- C. Options. The bombing campaign did not halt the VC violence or bring a response from Hanoi. This left the following options open for consideration:
1. Withdrawal without achieving US objectives.
 2. Continuation of the war in the same manner as before and thus, watch South Vietnam crumble.
 3. Escalation of the bombing. This option was rejected in fear of PRC intervention.
 4. Commitment of ground forces. The main objection to this option was that once ground troops were in, it would be almost impossible to reverse the policy to the former non-combatant one. The main question regarded the number of troops to commit. The suggestions outlined ranged from two battalions to several divisions. However, if too many were committed, this would indicate to RVNAF that we had no faith in them.
- D. Influential Factors
1. Foreign:
 - a. Peking and Moscow raised severe objections to the bombing campaign.
 - b. President Sukarno pulled out of the United Nations in January 1965, campaigned against Malaysia.
 2. Domestic:
 - The US felt it needed to show its strength and determination.
 3. War-Related:
 - a. US aircraft deployments to RVN early in 1965 to initiate Rolling Thunder increased the need to protect Da Nang air base and supporting installations against PLAF (VC) attack. MACV had estimated that there were about twelve enemy battalions totalling 6,000 men within striking distance of the airbase.

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- b. In early February 1965, a US Marine Corps light anti-aircraft missile (LAAM) battalion was assigned to the base. General John Throckmorton, DEPCOMUSMACV, recommended that a full Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) be deployed to protect the base. General Westmoreland requested two Marine battalions from the JCS. Ambassador Taylor and Admiral Sharp concurred, although Taylor had misgivings that such a deployment would lead to escalating troop commitments.
 - c. US advisors, including Ambassador Maxwell Taylor, were urging escalation, especially bombing.
 - d. The State Department's 1965 White Paper documented DRV infiltration: 71% of the Communists in RVN were Northerners.33/
 - e. The RVNAF was seen as not capable of defeating the DRV and NLF.
 - f. The use of ground troops was considered as possibly temporary; President Johnson felt he could pull them out if the combat troops failed to make a difference.
 - g. There was a hope that the bombing would bring results and that the US would not have to send any more troops.34/
 - h. The need to bolster GVN morale was felt.
- E. Effect of decision on our involvement in Vietnam.
- 1. Led to further escalation of the war:
 - a. Led to authorization for combat, June 26.
 - b. By the end of 1965, the US had committed 180,000 troops to RVN.
 - c. The JCS proposed deployment of one Korean and two American divisions against the VC.35/
 - d. NSAM 328 was a pivotal document, marking "the acceptance by the President of the United States of the concept that US troops would engage in offensive ground operations against Asian insurgents."36/

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2. Led to much criticism from communist countries, some of which was picked up by groups in the US.

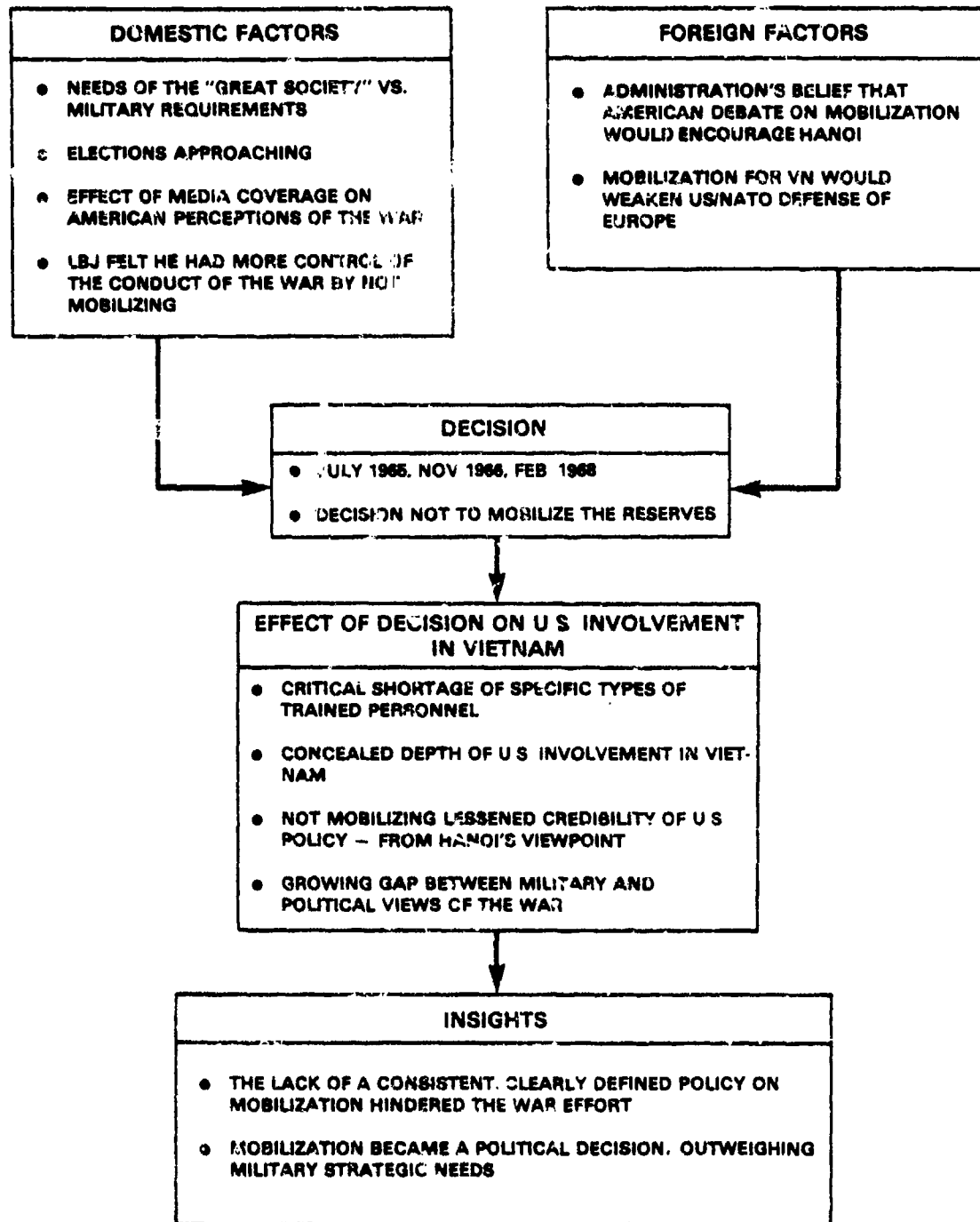
F. Effectiveness of the decision.

1. It achieved the purpose of base protection and later active combat, bolstering South Vietnam.
2. The decision was justified in May due to VC offensives, the fact that ARVN was near collapse, and the high rate of ARVN desertions; hence, US troops were very much needed.

G. Insights.

1. The deployment of Marines to Da Nang marked a crucial change in our role in Vietnam from advisor/supporter to active combatant. In fact, we Americanized the war from then until 1969, and RVNAF gradually took on a secondary role. It was a big step in the escalation of the war because once the men and the support were installed, it would be very difficult to reverse the decision and send them back home. As it turned out, they were very much needed.
2. On June 30, 1965, William Bundy warned that unless the performance of the South Vietnamese improved substantially, our intervention in force "would appear to be turning the conflict into a white man's war with the US in the shoes of the French."^{37/} By our taking over the combat role in the war, the GVN was more justifiably called a "puppet regime" by the DRV.
3. The landing of the Marines was another case of the media's perception of a possible deception of the American public, which reinforced the credibility gap and later the lack of support of the war. There was a good deal of debate concerning whether to send troops, how many, and how they would be used. The Chairman of the JCS and the Chief of Staff of the Army were determined to see the deployment of troops for "unlimited combat operations." Because of the concern that the PRC might enter the war, CINCPAC contingency plans were drawn up. Yet the announcement concerning the landing of US Marines stressed that they were to be used only for protection of US installations. And Secretary of State Dean Rusk, appearing on "Face the Nation" the day before the marines landed, said that the Marines would not engage in offensive operations against the VC. Twelve days later, JCMS 204-65 proposed that US troops be deployed to GVN for active operations against the VC. The President decided on April 1, 1965 to allow the involvement of US ground combat units in the war against the insurgents.^{38/}

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Figure A-10. Decision X: US Decision(s) Not To Mobilize the Reserves

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X. DECISIONS NOT TO MOBILIZE THE RESERVE COMPONENTS 39/

A. Decision. Not to mobilize Reserve Components but rather to continue to depend on the draft for military manpower.

1. When: President Johnson decided not to mobilize during his administration (beginning in July, 1965).
2. Principal Decision Makers: The decision not to mobilize the Reserves was made by President Johnson, supported by McGeorge Bundy and other civilian advisers. The JCS and Generals Westmoreland, Johnson, Taylor and Admiral Sharp advocated mobilization.
3. Purposes:
 - a. Minimize the public perception of the depth of American involvement in Vietnam, and therefore continue the guns and butter policy.
 - b. Avoid using the Reserve components to avoid Congressional dissatisfaction like that which followed the 1961 (Berlin) mobilization.
4. Theme: Although the JCS argued that the US could not meet Vietnam force requirements and simultaneously fulfill other US global commitments like NATO, and that the US could not achieve its war objectives at low cost and quickly unless the reserves were mobilized, President Johnson nevertheless refused to mobilize because it would expose the depth of US involvement and jeopardize his Great Society programs.

B. Precedents.

- Berlin 1961. Reserve component personnel were mobilized but were not deployed; the domestic distress which it caused seemed unjustified and brought Congressional criticism.

C. Options

1. The President could declare a national emergency and call up a maximum of one million men. Rejected because the Vietnam War was not considered an emergency and US physical security was not threatened. President Johnson wanted to keep the war a "low-key" involvement in the public eye.

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2. The president could ask Congress for a joint resolution authorizing the call up of Reserves. Rejected because it would mean a major congressional debate which would jeopardize Johnson's domestic programs, the guns and butter policy, and such a debate would encourage Hanoi. 40/
3. JCS urged mobilization despite above objections in order to:
 - a. Unify the country in support of the war effort.
 - b. Conduct the war more vigorously and thus end the war.
 - c. Signal to the enemy US resolve.
 - d. Provide necessary combat and service support which the Reserves could provide.
 - e. Avoid weakening the worldwide US military posture, including NATO.
 - f. Obtain the good quality, well-trained junior officer leadership that was in the Reserve component.

D. Influential Factors

1. Foreign:

- a. Recognition that an American debate on mobilization showing internal dissent would encourage Hanoi.
- b. Mobilization for Vietnam would have serious impact on NATO allies whose primary concern was Western Europe.

2. Domestic:

1. Fear that mobilization would erode public support for the administration.
2. Increased public desire to disengage from the war after Tet 1968.
3. LBJ felt that he had more control of the conduct of the war by not asking Congress to authorize a call-up of the Reserves. 41/

E. Effect of the Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

1. The forces committed in Vietnam suffered a serious imbalance when the required Reserve component combat support and combat service support units were not activated.

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2. Reserve Component equipment was transferred to newly organized active units, thus debilitating many Reserve units.
3. The depth of US involvement in Vietnam was concealed from the American public until about 1967, later resulting in widespread disillusionment.
4. Manpower requirements could not be met effectively by selective service resulting in wasteful personnel policies and practices such as early-outs, etc.
5. Training and equipping draftees was more time consuming and expensive than using reserves.
6. The Reserve Components became a haven for legal draft avoidance.
7. Not mobilizing lessened the credibility of US Vietnam policy in the eyes of Hanoi.

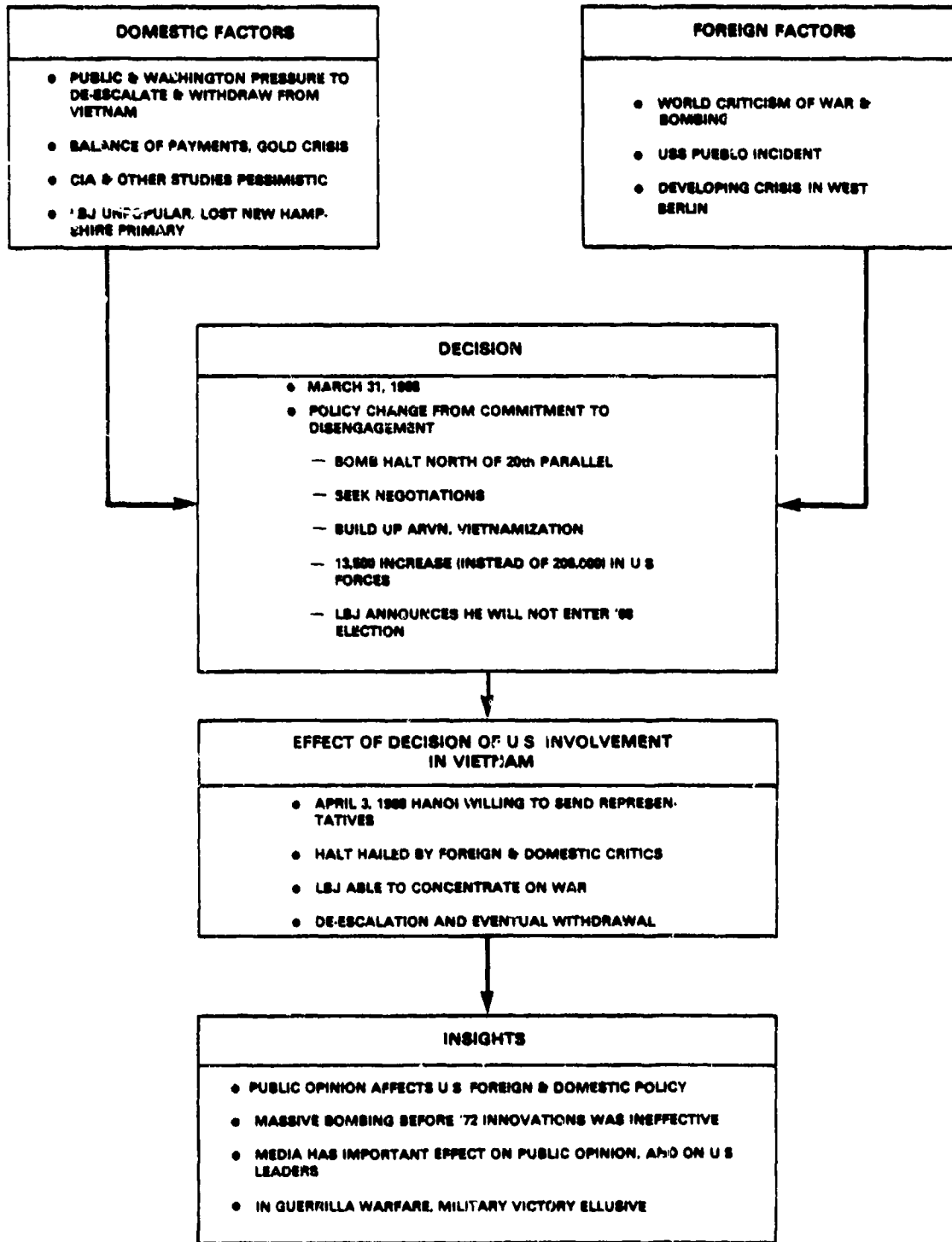
F. Effectiveness of the Decision.

1. The guns and butter policy continued, to the long-term detriment of US economic health.
2. Not mobilizing dictated the policy of gradualism.

G. Insights.

1. Without reserve mobilization, active forces could only be introduced into RVN incrementally, contributing to a policy of gradualism.
2. Political imperatives outweighed military rationale in the 1965 non-mobilization decision to the surprise and dismay of the JCS, but that issue did not cause any senior military officials to resign.
3. The administration's manpower policies extant in 1963 contributed to making the Reserve Components a haven for legal draft avoidance during hostilities.
4. The token call-up of Reserves in 1968 was "too little too late" to be of any significance vis à vis the war's outcome or Hanoi's perception of US will and determination.

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Figure A-11. Decision XI: US Policy Decision To Change From Commitment to Disengagement

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XI. POLICY CHANGE FROM COMMITMENT TO DISENGAGEMENT 42/

A. Decision. LBJ's March 31, 1968 speech in which he announces:

- Bomb halt north of 20th parallel.
- Seeking negotiations with Hanoi. Will send Ambassadors Harriman and Thompson as our representatives.
- Will build up South Vietnam economically and militarily (Vietnamization). ARVN is beginning to mobilize.
- Will increase troop strength by only 13,500 (instead of 206,000 that was requested).
- Will not run for reelection in order to unify the country and concentrate on the war and domestic problems.

This point in the history of the Vietnam war was the crest of the wave in escalation and led irreversibly to disengagement. Like Dien Bien Phu, Tet broke US illusions and hopes of progress in the war, and it helped break President Johnson, who so fervently had wanted to succeed in Vietnam. Although Tet was a US/RVN military victory (realized only later), the immediate result was political and psychological defeat there and in the US. The combination of domestic dissent, economic problems, and deep pessimism concerning the war led to the decision to seek negotiations more seriously and buy time, and eventually to disengage. Hence, our policy changed from escalation and commitment to de-escalation, seeking negotiations, and Vietnamization.

1. When: LBJ decided in February-March 1968
2. Principal Decision Makers: LBJ and Rusk reached these decisions after exhaustive studies were submitted by the CIA, Defense, State, NSC, JCS, and Treasury Department. On March 18, 1968 he also consulted the 30 "wise men" who were friends and confidants outside the government. They included: George Ball, Dean Acheson, General Matthew Ridgway, General Maxwell Taylor, Cyrus Vance, McGeorge Bundy, Douglas Dillon, and General Omar Bradley. The briefings they heard were pessimistic.
3. Purpose: To bring a change in the stalemate of the war by political solutions:
 1. To reduce casualties
 2. To recover POWs

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4. Theme: This was a turning point in the war from an escalation. action-reaction strategy. It was realized that no matter how many troops we sent and no matter how much we bombed, the enemy would always win in the end through persistence, determination, will and patience. "They will win politically, psychologically and eventually militarily. Time is on their side. The guerrilla wins if he doesn't lose; the conventional army loses if it doesn't win... Henceforth, no matter how effective our actions, the prevalent strategy could no longer achieve its objective within a period or with force levels politically acceptable to the American people."43/

B. Precedents for the Decisions.

1. Tet Offensive. Military victory, political defeat there and in the US.
 - a. Vietnam: VC gained control of much of the population through fear and coercion. "We had military successes that could not be translated into permanent political advantage."44/
 - b. US: Media's reporting on Tet caused increased antiwar sentiments and activities, increasing determination to get out of the war.
2. Precedents for the bombing halt and serious attempts to negotiate with Hanoi:
 - a. Manila Pledge: We will withdraw as they withdraw.
 - b. San Antonio formula (Sept. 29, 1967): "The US is willing to stop the aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions." (LBJ).
 - c. Bombing pauses to promote diplomatic pressure on Hanoi towards peace talks.
 - d. Efforts to have 3rd countries such as Britain and USSR promote ce talks.

C. Options presented.

1. The desired goals included:
 - a. Making it as costly as possible for DRV to continue the war.

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- b. Defeat of the VC and DRV forces in GVN.
- c. Extension of GVN control over all of South Vietnam.

2. The options which were considered included:

- a. Escalation of bombing. This option was rejected because it would risk a wider war, thereby rousing the PRC and USSR.
- b. Increases in troop strength by 200,000 - 500,000 more US forces. This option was rejected because of:
 - 1) It would mean politically costly mobilization of our Reserve forces.
 - 2) Hanoi's ability to keep up the current ratio, matching our increases; hence, increases promise no victory.
 - 3) The presence of 700,000 or more US military in Vietnam would mean total Americanization of the war.
 - 4) GVN determination and will to win the war would lessen, and the GVN would be less likely to reform.
 - 5) It would worsen the domestic crisis at home.
 - 6) It would cost us too much, considering our financial problems.
- c. Remain as we are. Rejected because no progress was within sight.
- d. Demographic strategy of population security. Meant a small increase in US troops, and protection for the heavily populated areas. Province capitals would be garrisoned by ARVN. This option was rejected because it would mean increased fighting in the cities, and would give the enemy the ability to mass near the population centers.
- e. Withdraw. This option was not seriously considered at this time.

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D. Influential Factors.

1. Foreign:

- a. USS Pueblo incident (Jan 23)
- b. West Berlin crisis developing
- c. World criticism of war and bombing

2. Domestic:

- a. Gold crisis; US in largest deficit since 1950; domestic programs require funding.
- b. Growing pessimism and dissent at home and in Washington. 30 "wisemen" meeting and Asian scholar's caucus in Philadelphia of 375 scholars: 81% agreed that US had already lost the war in terms of stated American objectives.45/
- c. CIA study, 10-month outlook: even if we sent 200,000 more, the study predicted that no positive results could be achieved.46/
- d. LBJ becomes increasingly unpopular. The Gallup poll in March indicated that only 36% of the population approved his conduct in office and only 26% approved his conduct of the war. New Hampshire primary results indicate: 57% McCarthy, 35% Johnson; Kennedy entered the race.47/
- e. The request for 206,000 troops was leaked to the New York Times on March 10 and set off a new debate in Congress and the press, most of it highly critical. This was a boon to peace candidates McCarthy and Kennedy and resulted in one-third of the House of Representatives sponsoring a resolution which called for an immediate congressional review of US policy in Southeast Asia.48/

3. War-Related Factors: Decision for a bombing halt.

- a. To cut down pilot casualties.
- b. The partial bombing halt may bring Hanoi to negotiating table, or lessen VC violence. The halt shifts the responsibility for peace from the US to Hanoi. "I think there will be tremendous world pressure on Hanoi now to respond favorably in kind."49/

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c. The bombing in the north was estimated by some to be only 5-10% effective.

d. To lessen the criticism of US bombing.

E. Effect of Decisions on US involvement in Vietnam.

1. Hanoi responded to negotiations proposal on April 3; they will send representatives to discuss US withdrawal and termination of the war.

2. Led to de-escalation and Vietnamization: strengthen ARVN so that they might take on a more active role in conduct of the war, thereby allowing for the start of US withdrawal.

F. Effectiveness of the Decisions.

1. World and American approval of the decisions.

2. LBJ, now out of the campaign race, was able to spend his energies on the war and domestic programs as he had wished.

3. However, American dissent continued throughout 1968; hence, these decisions did not serve to unify America (although other factors were also involved here.)

4. Purpose was achieved as regards de-escalation and eventual withdrawal.

G. Insights.

1. "Military power without political cohesiveness and support is an empty shell." 50/

2. Public dissent does affect US foreign and domestic policy.

3. Massive bombing without the "smart bombs" of 1972 was ineffective and harmed our image.

4. The media has a very important influence on the public and Washington, e.g., Tet resulting in political victory for Hanoi; the NY Times and Washington Post, tending to be critical of the war, were read by our leaders and influential people.

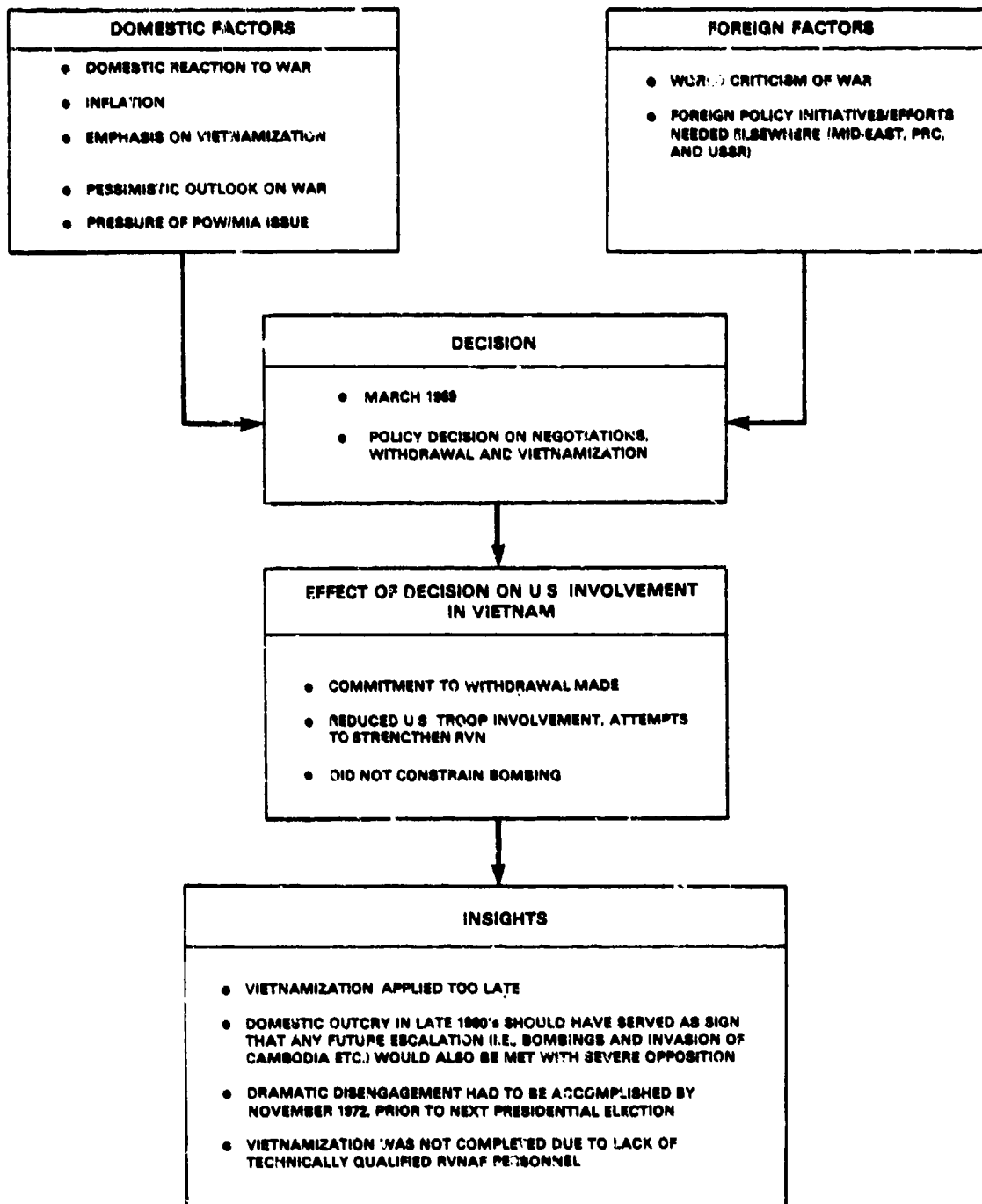


Figure A-12. Decision XII: US Policy Decision on Negotiations, Withdrawal, and Vietnamization

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XII. POLICY DECISION ON NEGOTIATIONS, WITHDRAWAL AND VIETNAMIZATION 51/

- A. Decision. Three point policy decision taken by the Nixon Administration in the first months of Nixon's term in office on withdrawal, Vietnamization and negotiations.
- Negotiation policy would involve insistence on mutual withdrawal of DRV and US troops with adequate inspection procedures.
 - A major step-up to be taken in preparing RVNAF to stand alone, i.e., Vietnamization.
 - Development of a specific timetable for a progressive withdrawal of US troops no matter what progress is made at Paris Peace talks.
1. When: March 27-28, 1969 (made official with NSDM 9-April 1, 1969).
 2. Principal Decision-Makers: Nixon, Kissinger, and the NSC.
 3. Purpose: Based on Nixon's campaign promise, to initiate a de-escalation of US troop involvement in Vietnam by creating a more capable, self-sufficient RVNAF and to allow for "peace with honor" by calling for a mutual withdrawal of US and DRV forces.
 4. Themes: US to maintain its credibility by building up its ally's competence while simultaneously placating the anti-war people's sentiments expressed during the latter part of the sixties. The Vietnamization theme can be viewed as partial implementation of the Nixon Doctrine (albeit unproclaimed at this point) in that both emphasized aid rather than direct involvement as integral components. (i.e., of both the Vietnamization policy and Nixon Doctrine).
- B. Precedents. Several important precedents for each of the three points outlined in the March 1969 decision can be identified:
1. Point on negotiations: Nixon qualified the US position on negotiations with the DRV, but the option of utilizing negotiations as a viable method for ending the conflict had been considered by LBJ virtually throughout his entire full-term in office. In 1968, after LBJ partially halted the bombing campaigns against the DRV, Hanoi surprisingly indicated its willingness to discuss negotiations. The negotiation process began in the same year.

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2. Point on Vietnamization: This point was actually a continuation of a policy option adopted by LBJ in 1967 as well as a reflection of earlier statements made by JFK that the RVN should be/is fighting its own war. However, overall emphasis/dedication to the Vietnamization process was far from adequate up to the time Nixon entered office; hence a restatement and reaffirmation of Vietnamization as an essential policy for US government to pursue vis à vis Vietnam. Several statements made during the Johnson administration serve as illustrations of precedents for the reaffirmation of the Vietnamization policy point:
 - a. March 1968 - Clifford Task Force proposes urgent effort to upgrade RVNAF.
 - b. ISA (Office of International Security Affairs) and DOD memoranda in March 1968 which included statements emphasizing the need to strengthen/modernize RVNAF.
 - c. LBJ statements specifying the need for RVNAF to be strengthened in order that they assume more of the burden of fighting. It should also be stressed that the urgency of Vietnamization was strongly felt in 1968 due to the initiation of the negotiating process and the bombing halt. The JCS felt especially pressed to upgrade RVNAF before a possible cease-fire/force freeze could be implemented as part of the negotiation process (obviously, at this time, JCS considered it plausible that the negotiation process could move along at an accelerated pace).
3. Point on Withdrawal: While the Nixon/NSC point called for a specific timetable for a progressive US troop withdrawal, LBJ did set the precedent for this policy point by calling for force limitations.

C. Options Presented.

1. The major and obvious option presented prior to the Nixon/NSC policy decision was to increase US involvement, post-Tet, by sending an increased number of US troops to Vietnam. In 1968 there were two possible plans of action, both of which were considered ways of providing the "extra push" needed to maintain the tactical gains of 1968 and to achieve greater future successes, eventually speeding up the end of US involvement.
 - a. Minimum essential force of 80,500 troop increase

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- b. Optimal force of 201,250 additional men.
- 2. Another option, presented by General Westmoreland, was to speed up the negotiation process etc. by employing small tactical nuclear weapons. This option, formulated and rejected during the Johnson administration, may have been considered during the Nixon years.
- 3. Based solely on the wording of the Nixon/NSC policy point on withdrawal (i.e. - "withdrawal no matter what progress is made at the Paris Peace Talks"), it seems probable that an option considered (but rejected) regarding withdrawal could have made US troop withdrawal contingent on progress made at the talks. Verification of this as a policy option is necessary. Plausible reasons for its rejection:
 - a. The slow pace at the Paris talks
 - b. Nixon's campaign promises
 - c. Public reaction.

D. Influential Factors

- 1. Foreign:
 - a. World criticism of US involvement in Vietnam, especially post-Tet, was extremely vocal and harsh.
 - b. Foreign policy time and effort was required in other areas, i.e., the Mid-East, and in attempts at rapprochement with the USSR.
- 2. Domestic: Domestic reaction to the war greatly influenced the formulation of this policy. The following domestic factors served as influences:
 - a. Media coverage of Tet (and public reaction to Tet), the My Lai incident and the war in general.
 - b. Spiraling inflation.
 - c. Laird's emphasis on "Vietnamization" as a #1 priority.
 - c. Pessimistic appraisals of US position in Vietnam.
 - e. Rise in casualties, especially in 1967.
 - f. Overall course of events vis à vis the war during the Johnson administration, the two "wisemen" meetings.

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- g. "Dove" mood permeates Congress; limits and constraints.
- h. Pressure on POW/MIA issue.

E. Effect of Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam

- 1. Served as a commitment to carry out progressive withdrawal of US troops according to a specific timetable.

DATES OF NIXON ANNOUNCEMENTS ON # OF US TROOPS TO BE WITHDRAWN 1969-1971

- | | | |
|----|---------------|--------------------------|
| a) | June 8, 1969 | 25,000 (Midway Island) |
| b) | Sept 16, 1969 | 35,000 |
| c) | Dec 15, 1969 | 50,000 (by Apr 1970) |
| d) | Apr 10, 1970 | 150,000 (by Spring 1971) |

- 2. Reduced US troop commitment; attempted to strengthen RVNAF

F. Effectiveness of Decision.

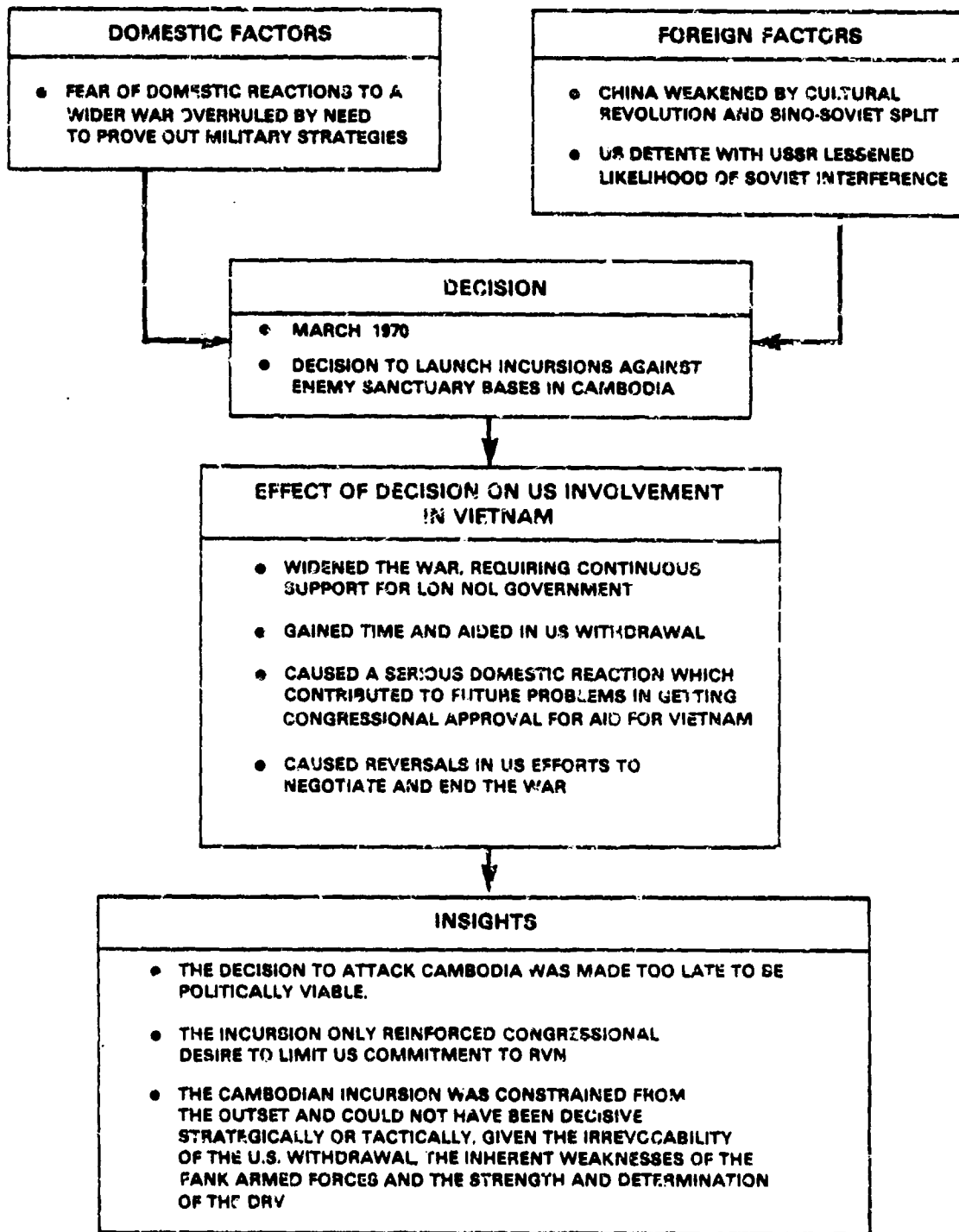
- 1. The initiation of the withdrawal process was the most significant and successful (i.e., it was accomplished) point of this policy decision, eventually reducing US troop involvement to a minimum.
- 2. Vietnamization, although conceptually sound, was not particularly effective for various reasons:
 - a. Its initiation as a serious program came too late.
 - b. With congressional cuts (at a later date) in military spending for RVNAF, re-equipment and strengthening of RVNAF forces became increasingly difficult.
 - c. South Vietnamese perceptions of Vietnamization were often negative. Although RVNAF officers attempted to "Vietnamize" (i.e., in order to please US personnel by "making a go of it"), the South Vietnamese often felt they had all along been "fighting their own war."
 - d. Vietnamization could not offset the DRV's strategic advantages of sanctuaries, bases and Ho Chi Minh trail, and of cohesion and discipline.
- 3. The negotiation procedure point served only to highlight US expectations/intentions vis à vis the talks and withdrawal. In reality, the progress of negotiations depended upon the overall interplay of the parties involved, day-to-day strategy and respective concessions/compromises made by the parties involved.

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G. Insights.

1. Although both Kennedy and LBJ gave credence to the importance of strengthening RVNAF in order that they be capable of "fighting their own war"/"take on more of the burden of fighting," in actuality, this overall process of Vietnamization came too late and, as regards JFK and LBJ, lacked commitment/sincerity in actual implementation. (i.e., a convenient slogan but little concerted effort).
2. While a scheduled timetable for progressive withdrawal served to help soothe the pervasive anti-war sentiments, the strength of these anti-war attitudes/sentiments from 1968 on should have been an indication to the Nixon administration that future escalations (with or without troops - i.e., the war against DRV & sanctuaries) would be just as unpopular as they were under LBJ

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Figure A-13. Decision XIII: US Decision To Launch Incursions Against Enemy Sanctuary Bases in Cambodia

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XIII. DECISION TO LAUNCH A COMBINED US/RVNAF INCURSION INTO THE PAVN/PLAF
SANCTUARY BASES IN CAMBODIA 52/

- A. Decision. Following the "secret" bombing war in Cambodia in 1969, the US administration decided it necessary to send US/RVNAF ground forces temporarily into the Parrot's Beak and Fish Hook areas
1. When: March 1970.
 2. Principal Decision-Makers: President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger, with support by JCS and COMUSMACV.
 3. Purpose:
 - a. To destroy major enemy stockpiles and base areas that supported enemy operations in more than half of RVN.
 - b. To stave off communist domination of Cambodia.
 - c. To save the new Lon Nol government.
 - d. To help defend South Vietnam.
 - e. To protect American withdrawal by gaining time.
 - f. To spare Saigon the shock of seeing its neighbor fall.
 - g. To deny Hanoi an easy gain and an excuse to spurn negotiations.
- B. Precedents.
1. Sihanouk had tolerated some 50,000 DRV troops in Cambodia.
 2. Johnson had refused to permit ground attacks on supply routes in Laos and Cambodia to avoid a "wider war" and possible Soviet/Chinese intervention.
 3. Sihanouk in 1969 secretly and tacitly acquiesced in American B-52 bombing of communist base areas in Cambodia.
 4. Sihanouk was deposed in March 1970 by Lon Nol.
 5. Lon Nol tried to push out the communist troops without success and therefore requested US support.

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- C. Options. General Creighton Abrams suggested three options:
1. Have South Vietnamese troops harrass the enemy across the border.
 2. Help the South Vietnamese army conduct larger attacks over a period of months to disrupt enemy bases.
 3. Use US forces with South Vietnamese forces in swift full-scale assaults on bases.
- D. Influential Factors.
1. Foreign:
 - a. China was less able to interfere because she was crippled by the Cultural Revolution and suffered interrupted diplomatic ties with developing nations, and because of the Sino-Soviet split.
 - b. US detente with the Soviets lessened likelihood of Soviet interference.
 - c. Earlier Indonesia overthrew the communists and became more a stable anticommunist neighbor (more stability in Southeast Asia than before).
 2. Domestic:
 - Some fear of domestic reaction to the incursion, but this was outweighed by the need to save Lon Nol and to get a stronger hand in negotiations by weakening the sanctuary bases.
- E. Effect of the Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam 53/
1. It widened the war, thereafter requiring continuous air and logistic support for Lon Nol's forces and government.
 2. It facilitated US withdrawal by interrupting communist logistics efforts and thereby gaining time for Vietnamization.
 3. The 1969 secret bombing and the major incursion in 1970 which seemingly reversed de-escalation, and withdrawal caused a powerful domestic reaction.
 4. It caused reversals in efforts to negotiate and end the war: The Soviets backed off from the Indochina conference idea; Sihanouk joined a new united military front for liberation

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of Indochina; Lon Nol, his government still falling, requested \$500 million more in military aid.

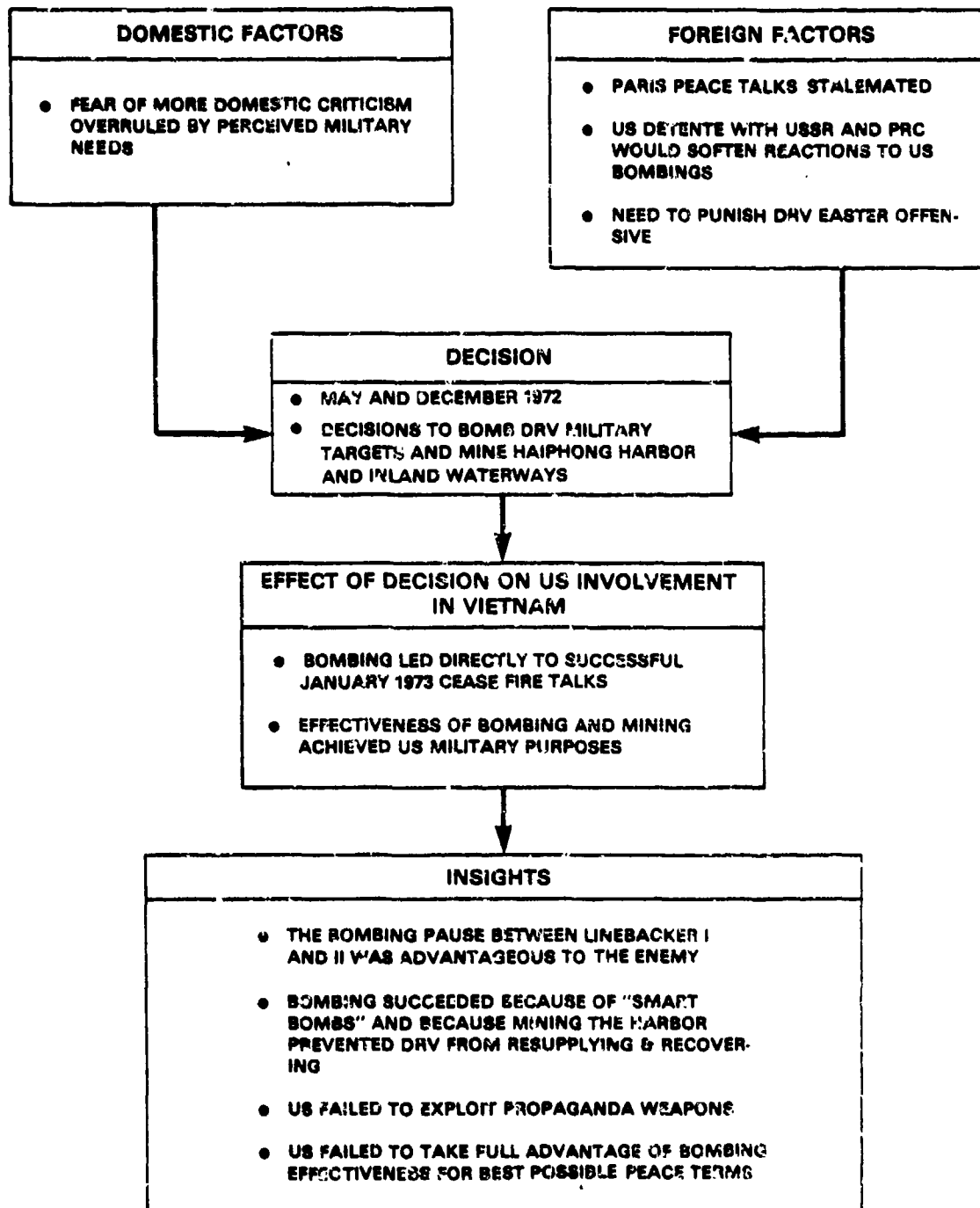
F. Effectiveness of the Decision.

1. Because of the domestic reaction to the Cambodian actions, the US was later constrained from helping RVNAF in its operations (Lamson 719) in Laos, which suffered heavy casualties.
2. US negotiating hand was weakened as Hanoi took advantage of the American antiwar movement.

G. Insights:

1. The decision to make an attack into Cambodia was made too late to be viable politically, and it impelled restrictive legislation which impacted on the conduct of that war and any future conflicts.
2. The military implementation of the Cambodian incursion decision was self-constrained from the outset and could not have been decisive strategically or tactically, given the irrevocability of the US withdrawal, the inherent weaknesses of the FANK (Cambodian armed forces) and the strength and determination of the DRV.

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Figure A-14. Decision XIV: US Decisions To Bomb DRV Military Targets and Mine Haiphong Harbor

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XIV. DECISION TO BOMB NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY TARGETS AND TO MINE HAIPHONG HARBOR AND INLAND WATERWAYS (LINEBACKER I AND II) 54/

A. Decision. The decision included the following components:

- Mine all entrances to North Vietnamese ports.
- Interdict delivery of supplies on internal waters of North Vietnam.
- Cut off LOCs as much as possible.
- Initiate air and naval strikes against military targets in DRV.
- Interdict shipping in the open ocean to stop coastal ships from supplying DRV.
- Bomb communist depots and supply lines in DRV.
- Cut key bridges in DRV.

1. When: President Nixon announced this decision (Linebacker I and mining the Haiphong harbor) on television May 8, 1972. Linebacker II was announced December 18.

2. Principal Decision-Makers: President Nixon made the decision based on the recommendations of JCS and Kissinger, but with dissent from Secretary of Defense Laird.

3. Purposes:

- a. Coerce DRV/VC to agree to immediate cease fire under international supervision throughout all of Indochina.
- b. Coerce the Communists into returning all American POWs.
- c. Counteract the 1972 Easter offensive and reverse DRV gains.
- d. Drive DRV forces back to their sanctuaries.
- e. Close off DRV's importing of war material & supplies from PRC and USSR.
- f. Offer a "carrot" that if (a) and (b) conditions are met, US would withdraw 60,000 men within the next four months.

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g. Buy time before pulling out entirely.

4. Theme: The need to break the Paris peace talks stalemate, bring home the POWs, and withdraw necessitated the use of force. President Nixon halted the bombing October 23 on the promise of progress; the pause only meant DRV recovery and further hostilities, so President Nixon resumed the bombing December 18, 1972. This led to the January 1973 ceasefire talks.

B. Precedents.

1. 1965-1968 bombing of DRV as discussed in Decision #8.
2. During the 1965-68 Rolling Thunder operations, President Johnson rejected the JCS proposal to close Haiphong and knock out part of the Red River dike system. Although 80% of the imports for DRV came through Haiphong, he would not authorize mining and blockading out of fear of Chinese/Soviet intervention and fear of heavy civilian casualties. 55/

C. Options.

1. Withdraw as soon as possible while proceeding with Vietnamization, as proposed by Secretary of Defense Laird.
2. Do nothing new out of fear of more criticism at home and out of fear of widening the war.
3. Bomb civilian centers as well as military targets to further demoralize the enemy. This was rejected because of anticipated public reaction and damage to US prestige.

D. Influential Factors.

1. Foreign:

- a. Paris peace talks at a stalemate. DRV was demanding that Thieu resign and the US withdraw.
- b. US detente with USSR and rapprochement with PRC would likely soften these two countries' reactions to US bombing in DRV.
- c. DRV/VC spring 1972 Easter offensive and invasion required punishment and reversal of their gains.

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2. Domestic:

- War critics already concerned about bombing in Cambodia and Laos; bombing in NVN would increase the furor.

E. Effect of the Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

1. The bombing led directly to the successful January 1973, ceasefire talks.
2. It stopped the DRV invasion, inflicted heavy casualties, and forced the withdrawal of substantial PAVN forces.
3. It virtually eliminated shipment of goods through Haiphong and other ports.
4. It seriously crippled railroad traffic from China to DRV.
5. It cut all imports to DRV from Communist allies to 1/3 or 1/2 of what it had been in May 1972.^{56/}
6. Hanoi responded in Paris to Linebacker I by dropping its insistence on a coalition government and the resignation of Thieu; these concessions were withdrawn after the bombing halt. President Nixon therefore resumed with Linebacker II in December 1972.
7. After Linebacker II, DRV's electricity supply was crippled and its air defenses were shattered.

F. Effectiveness of the Decision.

1. Positive:

- Progress with the Paris peace talks; US POWs returned home; and RVN's military situation appeared stable. General William Momyer said, "It was apparent that air power was the decisive factor leading to the peace agreement of 15 January 1973."^{57/}

2. Negative:

- a. Severe criticism in the US which raised the constraints against further bombing.
- b. Senate Democrats adopted a resolution disapproving of the escalation of the war. It was offered by Senator W. Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, approved 29 to 14. Furthermore,

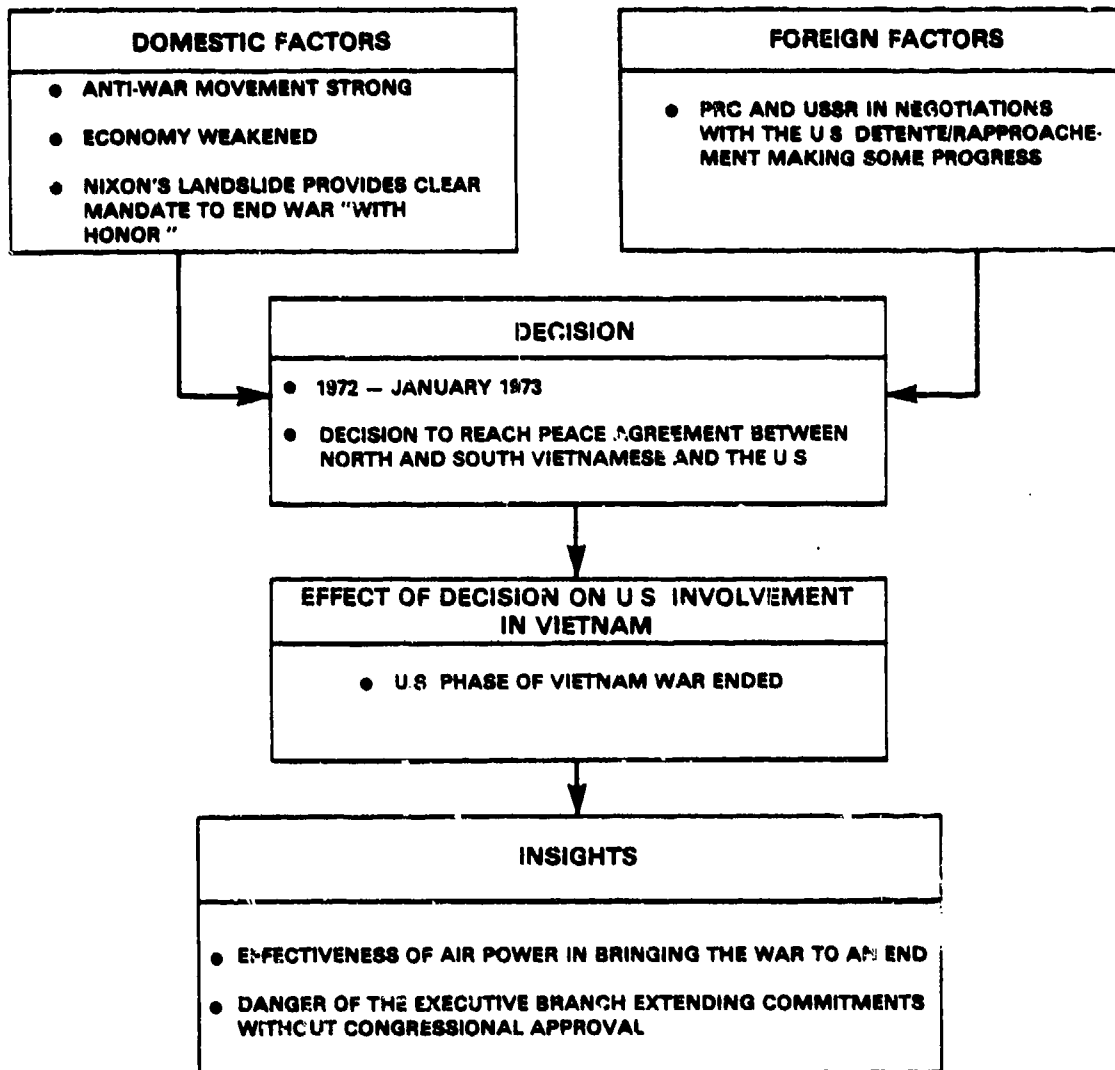
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the Senate Democrats endorsed a proposal that all funds for Vietnam War be cut off four months after DRV returned American prisoners.58/

G. Insights.

1. The bombing pause between Linebacker I and II provided the enemy time to recover some of its losses and damage, and reversed some of the progress already made in Paris (DRV withdrew some important concessions).
2. The 1972 bombing succeeded in achieving US purposes because (1) Haiphong was mined and therefore war material and supplies could not easily be replaced and (2) the new "smart" bombs which were accurate and efficient, were used.
3. The US did not effectively counter DRV propaganda which sharply criticized US bombing and brought sympathy to the DRV. The DRV reported, for example, that 1,600 civilians were killed as a result of US bombing, but the US failed to counter this with the fact that DRV forces had killed 25,000 South Vietnamese civilians in the 1972 Easter offensive.
4. The US failed to take full advantage of the effectiveness of the bombing. The terms of the peace settlement could have been more advantageous to the US and GVN had the US threatened further bombing on the scale of Linebacker II. But the American public and congressional clamor constrained the US from employing such threats or taking such actions.

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Figure A-15. Decision XV: Paris Cease-Fire Accords

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XV. PARIS CEASE-FIRE ACCORDS 59/

- A. Decision. Decision to reach peace agreement between the North and South Vietnamese and the US (The Paris Peace talks were stalled when Nixon came to office. Henry Kissinger sought to develop a strategy for moving the talks off dead center.)
1. When: The cease-fire was signed in January 1973, but the negotiations had been intense from the summer of 1972.
 2. Principal Decision Makers: Nixon and Kissinger were the principal decision makers who formulated the plan for peace and obtained both South and North Vietnamese participation.
 3. Purpose: The stated purpose of the cease-fire agreements was to bring an end to the Vietnam War and to provide a context for US withdrawal from the conflict.
 4. Themes:
 - a. South Vietnam had to be prepared to defend itself through both the Vietnamization and pacification programs.
 - b. The United States role in the war had to be reduced.
 - d. The North Vietnamese had to be persuaded to join in peace negotiations short of their stated objectives of toppling the GVN.
 - e. The South Vietnamese had to be persuaded to accept a cease-fire that fell short of their earlier objective of forcing the communist forces out of the South.
- B. Precedents for the Decision. President Johnson had initiated peace talks with the North Vietnamese in 1968. By 1972 it was evident that those talks would not produce a cease-fire.
- C. Options.
1. Kissinger's program for achieving peace included both threats of intensified warfare against the North Vietnamese and offerings of financial assistance if they could be persuaded to establish and maintain peace. LBJ suggested aid to DRV in 1965 speech at Johns Hopkins.
 2. The South Vietnamese sought to strengthen their position by refusing to accept the establishment of an in-place ceasefire.

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3. Kissinger was able to create a carefully balanced peace agreement for the following reasons:
 - a. The North Vietnamese were persuaded to negotiate through the effectiveness of two 1972 bombing campaigns, Linebacker I and Linebacker II. The cost of continuing its war became prohibitive.
 - b. The North Vietnamese had failed in their 1972 "Easter Offensive."
 - c. Although the GVN continued to have misgivings over US intentions and reliability, the South Vietnamese were somewhat reassured by Nixon that if the North broke the agreements, the US would retaliate in strength.

D. Influential Factors

1. Foreign:

- By 1972 US diplomatic initiatives with both the PRC and USSR had undercut the basis for a long-term Northern struggle against RVN.

2. Domestic:

- a. The antiwar movement was exerting pressure on the Nixon Administration.
- b. The US economy was weakened by inflation.
- c. Nixon's 1972 landslide victory gave him a strong mandate for achieving peace.

E. Effect of Decision. The decision to sign the Paris cease-fire accords effectively ended US participation in the Vietnam War.

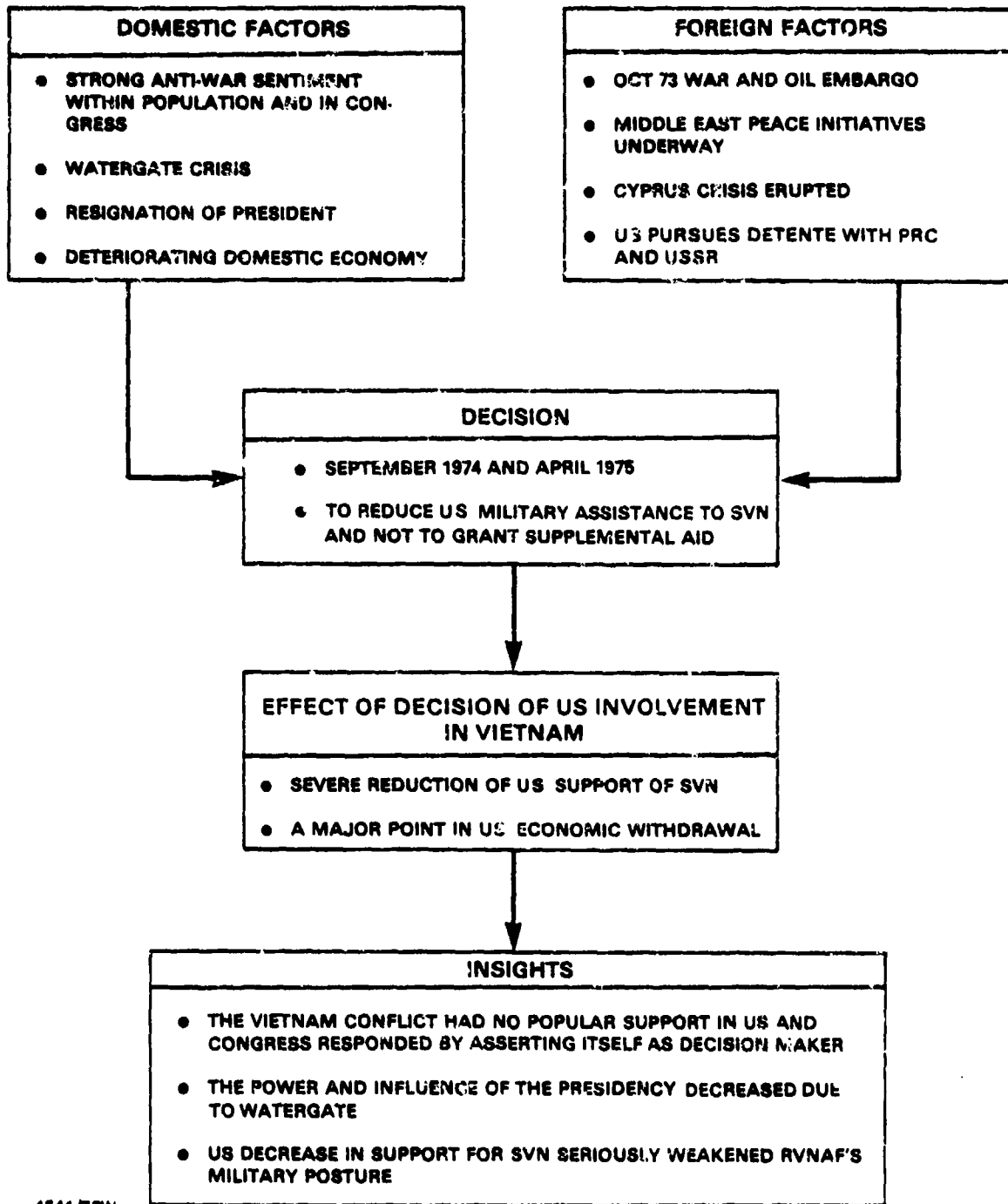
F. Effectiveness of the Decision. The success of the peace accords depended upon either the good will of all the parties who were signatories or upon the United States to enforce the provisions of the accords. The North Vietnamese used the peace provided by the accords to prepare for their final attack on RVN. The United States government, weakened by domestic dissent and Watergate, was unable or unwilling to enforce the provisions of the accords in spite of promises to the GVN. During the 1973 Middle East war, the US resupplied Israel from POMCUS and PWRMS stocks in Europe thereby eroding the supply base that might otherwise have been used to support RVNAF.

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G. Insights.

1. The Nixon Administration made commitments to the RVN that required support from the Congress. When that support was called for, Congress refused.
2. US objectives in RVN changed over time--from wanting to ensure a free, viable, independent South Vietnam to wanting US POWs returned and US forces extricated from RVN while at the same time ensuring a period during which the RVN might achieve the capability to stand alone.
3. The DRV accurately assessed the situation in late 1972 and early 1973:
 - a. The US was anxious to end the war and sign the ceasefire before the inauguration.
 - b. The reduced US demands enabled the DRV to retain its troops in RVN and in the border sanctuaries, thereby retaining a geostrategic advantage over RVN/RVNAF.
 - c. The punishment suffered by the DRV in Linebacker I and II was severe, but they were able to stop their losses by agreeing to the ceasefire at a time when their other objectives became achievable.
 - d. The ceasefire made it possible to reopen the strategic lines of communication overland from China and through Haiphong port, thereby facilitating replenishment of supply and materiel losses during the Linebacker campaigns.
4. Agreeing to the ceasefire records assured the DRV that US forces would leave RVN and leave the field to them.

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Figure A-16. Decision XVI: US Congressional Decision To Cut US Military Assistance to RVN to \$700 Million

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XVI. CONGRESSIONAL VOTE TO CUT MILITARY SPENDING IN SOUTH VIETNAM 60/

A. Decision. The House and the Senate vote to reduce military aid to RVN to \$700 million (Sept. 1974) and not to grant supplemental aid (April 1975).

1. When: September 1974 and April 1975.
2. Principal Decision Makers: Congress as decision maker. Key proponents: Fulbright, Mansfield, Muskie, over opposition of Ford, Kissinger.
3. Purpose: The decisions were intended to reduce dramatically US involvement in a conflict for which military solutions no longer appeared viable. The US involvement in Vietnam was becoming less and less popular for political and economic reasons and Congress wanted to take a greater part in decision making.
4. Theme: The executive's "Peace with Honor" had become "Get Out Now" in Congress (due to the growing antiwar sentiment in Congress). These actions mark the beginning of an isolationist/non-involvement trend, reducing US military involvement overseas in favor of taking care of the home front.
 - a. The actions also signal congressional re-emergence as a powerful decision maker in foreign affairs, an area formerly dominated by the executive branch.
 - b. Economic and military withdrawal constitute a new theme, contrary to our pledges to Thieu at the time of the Paris Peace Agreements.

B. Precedents.

1. 30 June 1973 - Congress voted to cut off all funds for US military activity in Indochina region after August 15, 1973.
2. 7 November 1973 - Enactment of the War Powers Resolution provided Congress greater oversight authority vis a vis US military involvement abroad. While not a direct precedent to the September 1974 congressional move to drastically cut funds, the action is consonant with the trends and themes discussed above.
3. 3 April 1974 - Senate Armed Services Committee voted not to increase aid to Vietnam beyond current levels; the trend had

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been \$2.27 billion for fiscal 1973, \$1.010 billion for fiscal 1974 and \$700 million for fiscal 1975.

4. 5 August 1974 - Senate/House Conference agreed to impose \$1 billion ceiling on all military aid for the next 11 months. Nixon signs into law.

C. Options. This Congressional decision came at a time when the country was in turmoil due to Nixon's resignation a month earlier. Thus, while members of the executive branch favored providing increased aid to RVN, they could gain little support for their views.

D. Influential Factors

1. Foreign:

- a. Oct 1973 Middle East war and oil embargo.
- b. The Middle East situation was taking up much of Kissinger's time and attention. Earlier in 1974, he had, through "shuttle diplomacy," achieved military disengagement accords between Israel and Syria, and Israel and Egypt.
- c. The Cyprus crisis had erupted.
- d. The US was pursuing detente with the USSR and PRC.

2. Domestic:

- a. Direct Factor - strong antiwar sentiment among the US people and within Congress (antiwar protests) and feelings reflecting a "why can't they fight their own war?" stance.
- b. Indirect Factor - Because the Watergate hearings were beginning and John Dean's testimony was incriminating President Nixon, the power of the presidency was reduced.
- c. Direct - Worsening US economic situation and public weariness with US involvement in Vietnam encouraged Congress to move toward withdrawal of US economic aid to RVN.
- d. Indirect Factor - Nixon resigns.

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E. Effect of Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam.

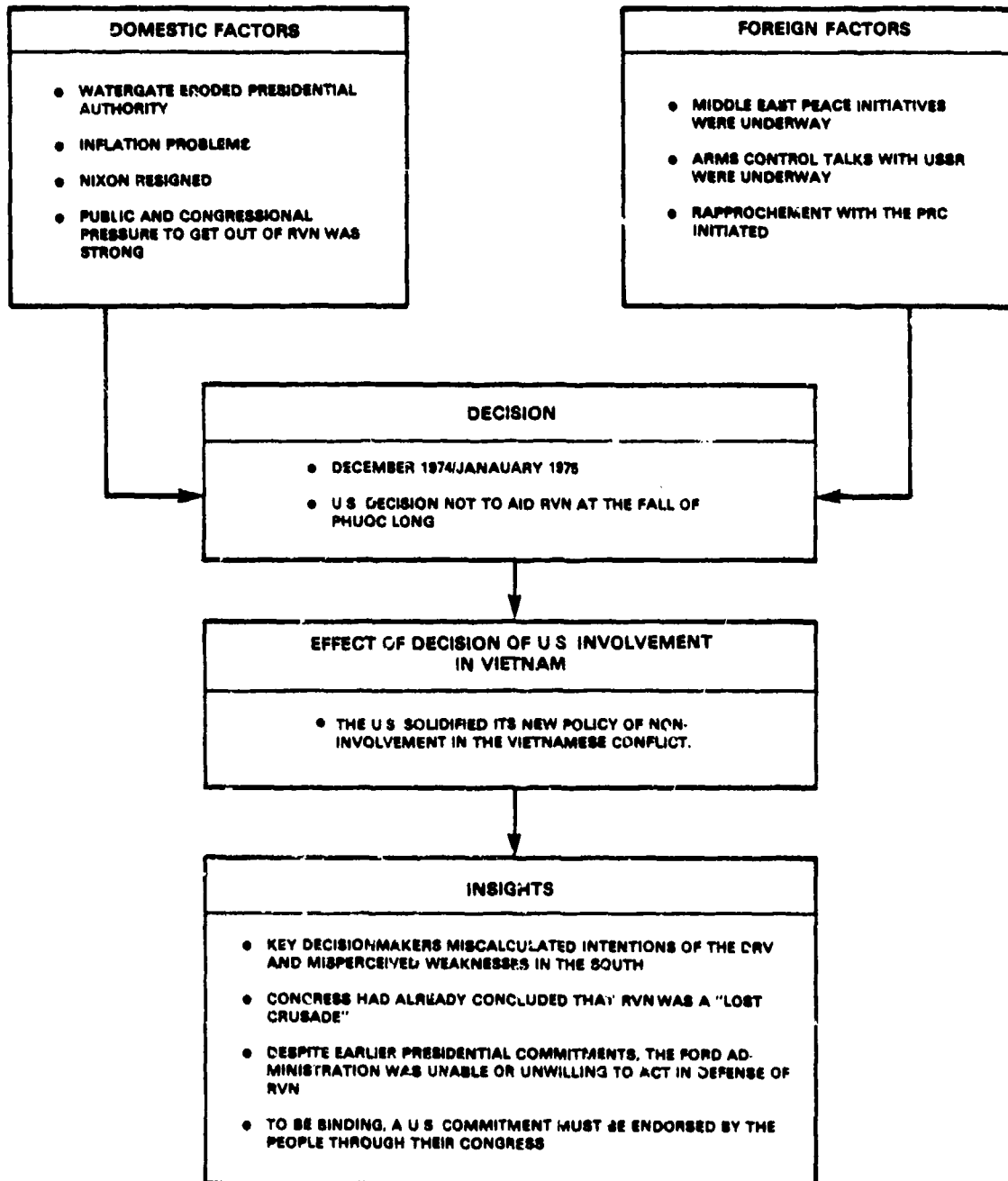
1. Severe reduction of US economic and military support. This decision was a key point in US economic withdrawal from RVN (military withdrawal had already taken place).
2. The oil embargo and high inflation caused the \$700 million US aid to become worth even less.

F. Effectiveness of Decision. The decisions were a continuation of a trend of withdrawal of economic support to RVN to which Congress adhered. Thus, the purpose of the decisions--withdrawal of US involvement--was achieved. Additional effects, unintended though they were, include the creation of ammunition, POL, and equipment shortages, and a further weakening of morale among RVNAF troops and the population of RVN.61/

G. Insights.

1. The Vietnam conflict had no popular support in the US and Congress responded to popular sentiments by imposing itself as decision maker.
2. At the same time, the power and influence of the presidency were lessened due to the effects of Watergate.
3. The rapidly decreasing support for RVN seriously weakened RVNAF's military posture while PAVN grew stronger.

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Figure A-17. Decision XVII: US Decision Not to Aid RVN at the Fall of Phuoc Long

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XVII. US DECISION NOT TO AID SOUTH VIETNAM'S DEFENSE OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCE 62/

A. Decision. The US decided against intervening on behalf of the South Vietnamese at the time of the DRV attack on Phuoc Long. Although the US entered its diplomatic protests, it refrained from sending ground/air materiel and support to South Vietnam as the attack was underway and following the fall of the province. This decision was taken in spite of Nixon's secret assurance to Thieu in November 1972 and January 1973 that, should the North violate the cease-fire in a major way, the US could be counted on to react with force. These assurances were provided to Thieu through two personal letters from President Nixon. 63/

1. When: December 1974/January 1975
2. Principal Decision Makers: Congress as decision maker, opposed by President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger.
3. Purpose: Adherence to US commitment to withdrawal
4. Themes: RVN must fight its own war and US must withdraw. The broad themes of US withdrawal and deescalation were present in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, there were differences of opinion in Congress and the Ford administration as to how fast the US should withdraw. President Ford and Dr. Kissinger felt that the US should continue to provide financial support for the purchase of military equipment and supplies for the country to buy time for a "decent interval." Kissinger and Ford were still concerned with the issue of American prestige and image. Kissinger's statement raises this point. "I believe, and the Administration believes, that if Vietnam falls as a result of an American decision to cut off its aid, that this will have, over a period of time, the most serious consequences for the conduct of our foreign policy... it must raise the gravest doubts in the minds of many countries that have been associated with us" (February 25, 1975). 64/ Congress, however, took the view that Vietnam would have to make it on its own as there was no public support for further aid.

B. Precedents

1. Paris Peace Agreement - 27 January 1973 signed by the US called for a reduction of US presence in the region.
2. Both sides violated the truce by "planting flags" in claimed territory. In fact DRV stepped up its infiltration of men and equipment to the South - despite this, US responses were light in view of the offense. While at first the US

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embarked on a bombing campaign to punish the North for its violations, the Congress reacted strongly and the bombing was halted. Harsh words characterized the level of US responses to violations by the North.

3. June 1973 - Congress passed a bill curtailing all military action by US forces in or over Indochina; Nixon, disapproving of the measure, negotiated to delay the effective date until 15 August 1973.
4. October/November 1973 - Congress passed the War Powers Resolution limiting the president's traditional freedom of action with regard to employment of armed forces. Congress overrode the presidential veto and the Resolution became law PL93-148.
5. Congressional aid cuts as described in Decision XVI.

C. Options.

1. Intervention by the US was the option not taken. While the US sent the aircraft carrier Enterprise to the Vietnamese coast and ordered the Third US Marine Division (located in Okinawa) to emergency alert, no military action was taken. Defense Secretary Schlesinger is reported to have said that this (Phuoc Long attack) was not a massive offensive by the North and could be ignored.65/
2. A second range of options concerned the provision of additional financial assistance in order to buoy RVN up while it was fighting the North. The Ford administration in January 1975 announced that it would ask Congress for additional military aid for the region, to include supplemental aid of \$300 million for RVN. This was followed on February 8, 1975, by Ford's endorsement of the idea that the US embark on a massive aid program to RVN such that the country might be "economically independent" within three years.

D. Influential Factors.

1. Foreign:

- a. By 1975, the US was preoccupied with achieving a peace settlement in the Middle East and Kissinger, in particular, as the link from Nixon's administration to Ford's, was consumed by step-by-step diplomatic maneuvers.
- b. US progress in achieving rapprochement with the USSR (SALT talks etc.) and the PRC could not be jeopardized.

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2. Domestic:

- a. Watergate had seriously eroded Presidential authority. Nixon had resigned, and Congress took actions to insure that all activities to be conducted by the US in RVN required Congressional authorization.
- b. There was tremendous public pressure (reflected in public opinion polls, protests) to extricate ourselves from the Vietnamese conflict region. Kent State University, May 1974, and other protests demonstrated the fervor of public commitment to stay out of Vietnam.
- c. The US economy suffered from severe inflation.

E. Effect of Decision on US Involvement in Vietnam. Having stepped aside while the North took and held an entire province of the South, the US signalled its total disengagement from the war. The decision lent credibility to the US withdrawal effort. The decision had a very clear impact on the North as it indicated that the US would not/could not intervene in the South. The attack on Phuoc Long is described as a "trial balloon" attack by the North, and the effect on the North was immediate. Le Duan stated, "The world supports us. Never before have the military and political conditions been more propitious."

F. Effectiveness of Decision. With US intervention no longer likely, the North felt unhindered in its attack on the South.

G. Insights.

1. The key US decision makers, particularly Congress, may have seriously miscalculated the intentions of the North and the weaknesses of the Southern defense.
2. Governments cannot be counted on to adhere to a peace treaty if they feel that their aims have not been met. Kissinger may have misjudged the sincerity of the DRV or he may have believed that the treaty was the best that could be accomplished given the situation.
3. US commitments to its allies must be made according to the probability for their realization. President Nixon's promises to Thieu were not realistic given Congressional attitudes at the time and Congressional limitations on presidential power.

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APPENDIX A
ENDNOTES

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12. Ibid., Book 10, pp. 709-713, 676-741.
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15. See DOD US/VN Relations, pp. 419-421, NSAM 52: Decision to send CIA for covert harrassment of DRV and the November 10, 1961 decision to commit a US Air Force Counterinsurgency unit.
16. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 11, p. 343.
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21. Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson, interview at BDM, September 8, 1979.
22. Sources for this decision included the following:
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24. Ibid., p. 198.
25. Cooper, p. 297.
26. John N. Moore, Law And The Indochina War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).
27. Sources for this decision included the following:

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DOD US/VN Relations, Books 4 and 8.

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31. Ibid., p. 417.
32. Johnson, p. 122.
33. Lewy, p. 41.
34. Ibid., p. 47.
35. DOD Chronology of Build-Up Activity, Phase I in The Build-Up of U.S. Forces, DOD US/VN Relations, Book 4, IV.C.5, pp. 5-14.
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39. Sources for this decision included the following:

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Doris Kearns, Lyndon B. Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Signet, 1976).
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41. Kearns, p. 296.
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Gravel, op. cit.

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43. Henry Kissinger, "The Viet Nam Negotiations," Foreign Affairs, 47:2, (January 1969).

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44. Ibid.
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 - William C. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports (New York: Doubleday, 1978).
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 - William Shawcross, Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).
53. Ibid. See also "Letters" in The Economist, September 8, 1979, pp. 6-7, in which William Shawcross responds to a review of his book Sideshow. Henry A. Kissinger, while agreeing with the reviewer that the book is "misleading and unfair," provides his own succinct defense of US policy and his description of some of the results of the war.
54. Sources for this decision included the following:

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Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, Strategy for Defeat (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978)

General William Momyer, Air Power In Three Wars, Department of Air Force (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), pp. 236-244.

Richard Nixon, Memoirs (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978).

55. Lewy, op. cit., p. 392.

56. Ibid., p. 411.

57. Momyer, p. 243.

58. Sharp, p. 247.

59. Sources for this decision included the following:

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Nixon, op. cit.

D. R. Palmer, Summons of the Trumpet (San Francisco: Presidio Press, 1978).

John Stoessinger, Henry Kissinger: The Anguish of Power (Toronto: G. McLeod, 1976).

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Allen Goodman, The Lost Peace (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978).

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Snapp, op. cit.

Sen. Gen. Van Tien Dung, "Great Spring Victory", FBIS, 6/7/76, IV, 110, Supp. 38.

61. Lewy, pp. 208-209.

62. Sources for this decision included the following:

Ky, op. cit.

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Snepp, op. cit.

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63. Lewy, pp. 202-203.

64. Goodman, Epigraph II (Preface).

65. Dung, pp. 6-7.

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APPENDIX B SUPPLEMENTAL DATA TO CHAPTER 3: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON KEY US VIETNAM DECISION MAKERS, 1945-1975, THEIR BACKGROUNDS AND BIASES

The information included herein is intended as a supplement to Chapter 3, "Washington and Vietnam: US National Level Policy Makers and the Policy-Making Process." The appendix is divided by the six post-WWII presidential administrations; for each administration five or six key US Vietnam decision makers are discussed. These biographical sketches are not intended to be exhaustive studies of each particular decision maker's background, personality, and individual biases. Moreover, the selection of the key Vietnam decision makers is not definitive or exhaustive. In each of the administrations discussed in Chapter 3, a graphic overview of other important Vietnam decision makers is included. Those chosen appeared to have been the key US decision makers involved in major US policy making regarding Vietnam. The sources used in compiling Appendix B appear in the Volume III Bibliography. In addition, direct citations appear in the endnote section for Appendix B.

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APPENDIX B KEY DECISION MAKERS

A. KEY DECISION MAKERS WITHIN THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

The Truman administration's most influential decision makers involved in Vietnam-related matters included President Harry S. Truman, Under Secretary of State (later, Secretary of State) Dean Acheson, Secretary of State (later, Secretary of Defense) George Marshall, Mr. George M. Abbott - the US Consul General in Saigon, and Deputy Undersecretary of State (later, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs) Dean Rusk. In addition to the above individuals, whose roles and influence will be discussed below, other important advisers involved in early Vietnam decision making appeared in Chapter 3, Figure 3-1, a graphic representation of the decision makers' positions within the administration.

1. President Harry Truman

Harry Truman assumed the presidency on April 12, 1945, upon the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Although he had been aware of Roosevelt's deteriorating health, Truman was initially overwhelmed and ill at ease in the presidency.^{1/} As vice president, he had participated only marginally in high-level decision making.^{2/} With the passage of time, his familiarity with foreign affairs grew and he came to share the views held by many of his top-level advisers that communist aggression was a Moscow-inspired and directed operation, bent on consuming all of Europe and Asia.^{3/} His famous speech of 1947, concerning aid to Greece and Turkey, set the stage for containing communism by offers of US military and economic assistance to the newer and hence weaker countries of the world.^{4/} Known as the Truman Doctrine, this policy was broadly applied by President Truman and his administration; Vietnam, for example, was given US aid based on this doctrine.

2. George Marshall

General George Marshall, Truman's third Secretary of State, was praised by the president for his outstanding leadership abilities.^{5/} Prior

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to succeeding Secretary Byrnes, General Marshall headed a mission to China in an effort to reconcile nationalist and communist forces. His experiences in China helped shape his understanding of communism and nationalism in the post-war environment; his personal statement to the president upon returning from his year-long mission in January 1947, revealed both his concern about the Chinese Communist Party's activities and his understanding of communism as a possible vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiments.6/

As Secretary of State, Marshall's first mission was to discuss with the Soviet leaders the problem of Germany's reunification. His failure to reach an acceptable agreement with the Soviet leaders stimulated his disdain for the USSR and its policies regarding Eastern Europe. The general's most significant contribution was his plan for European economic recovery; the Marshall Plan became a basis for policy toward areas outside of the European community, including Indochina.

As Secretary of State, his views on Indochina and on Vietnam, in particular, opposed France's colonialist posture. But he also considered French presence in the area more desirable than Moscow's.7/ During his tenure, Secretary Marshall promoted political - economic solutions for Vietnam as a way to reduce communist influence, prevent Chinese communist penetration, and promote the establishment of an independent and free Vietnam.8/

3. Dean Acheson

Prior to his appointment as Secretary of State, Dean Acheson served as Undersecretary of State, a position which afforded him ample exposure to the complexities of the post-war environment. Although the administration focused its primary attention on the reconstruction of Europe,9/ Mr. Acheson also dealt extensively with Asian affairs. He was instrumental in arranging independence for the Philippines, assisted in the resolution of the Thai-French border disputes of 1946, and urged the English to allow for Burma's "peaceful transition to self-government."10/

Secretary Acheson placed great hopes on the building of a strong and free international order.11/ US military strength, security arrangements such as NATO, and an economically viable Europe would contribute to

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the realization of this goal. With the defeat of the nationalist forces in China, however, the Truman administration came under heavy domestic criticism for losing an ally to communism. Secretary Acheson sought to explain the loss, vowing that, barring direct military intervention which the US public would never have tolerated, the Truman administration had done all that was feasible to "save" China.^{12/} Acheson concluded from the Chinese experience that no amount of US military and economic aid could save a government, even if it was recognized by all other major powers and had the full opportunity to achieve its national aims, unless, as he wrote to the American Consulate in Hanoi in May 1949, it could rally the support of the people against the communists by "affording representation" to all important national groups, "manifesting devotion to national as opposed to personal or party interests," and "demonstrating real leadership."^{13/} When pressed by Vietnamese opinion that "US abandonment" of Nationalist China presented an "unfavorable augury" for any noncommunist regime in Vietnam, Acheson stressed that Nationalist China met its fate because of deficiencies in the above qualities and the lack of a will to fight, not because the US "wrote it off."^{14/}

By 1949, Acheson had become fully convinced that Ho Chi Minh was a full fledged Communist. ^{15/} Although he was confronted with the possibility that Ho might be a nationalist, he questioned the relevance of that possibility, given Ho's background. According to Acheson, in his abbreviated-style cable to the American Consulate in Hanoi:

All Stalinists in colonial areas are nationalists. With achievement national aims (i.e., independence) their objective necessarily becomes subordination state to Commie purposes and ruthless extermination not only opposition groups but all elements suspected even slightest deviation. On basis examples eastern Europe it must be assumed such wld be goal Ho and men... ^{16/}

4. George M. Abbott

George Abbott, who served with the US Embassy in France and then as US Consul General in Saigon, provided the Truman administration with an in-country perspective of French-Vietnamese relations and assessments of

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Ho Chi Minh. In 1946, at the request of the US Ambassador to France, Jefferson Caffery, he met with Ho and found the Vietnamese leader desirous of US aid, urging such assistance as beneficial to both the US and his own fledgling government.^{17/} Despite Abbott's early interaction with Ho, his communications with the Truman administration in 1948-1949 indicated his belief that Ho was a communist agent of Moscow who would eventually establish a "New Democratic Republic" in Southeast Asia. The only recourse for deterring such a development, he believed, was US recognition of the Bao Dai government.^{18/} His assessments proved to be influential in the administration's policy regarding Vietnam.

5. Dean Rusk

The role of Deputy Undersecretary of State Dean Rusk in the Truman administration's Vietnam decision making deserves mention because his line of thinking as developed in the late 1940's and early 1950's was later drawn upon during his service with Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.^{19/} As Deputy Undersecretary and as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Mr. Rusk maintained that the US should halt communist aggression in Southeast Asia. In addition to promoting US economic assistance, Rusk urged the JCS to reassess the need for deploying US "resources" in Indochina to prevent the loss of the region which, in his view, was "the most strategically important area of Southeast Asia."^{20/}

B. KEY DECISION MAKERS WITHIN THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

In decisions concerning Vietnam, two individuals had central roles: President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Among the host of individuals involved in the decision-making process, two others had important roles: Under Secretary of State and Chairman of the President's Special Committee on Indochina, General Walter Bedell Smith, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur Radford. In addition to these key officials, whose background and policy recommendations will be discussed below, a large number of senior advisers assisted these key decision makers. Their positions were highlighted in Chapter 3, Figure 3-2, a schematic overview of the Eisenhower administration's high-level personnel.

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1. President Dwight D. Eisenhower

President Eisenhower was at the center of the decision-making process on national-security issues. Eisenhower's experience as Commander of Allied Forces during World War II and his subsequent service as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe made him uniquely familiar with political, economic, and military factors involved in national and multinational security. His military background also gave him a predisposition for arriving at decisions through careful, painstaking staff studies.21/

President Eisenhower was convinced of the validity of the "domino theory" in Southeast Asia. He believed that if Indochina fell, "not only Thailand but Burma and Malaya would be threatened, with added risks to East Pakistan and South Asia as well as to all Indonesia."22/ President Eisenhower also shared three important perceptions with other members of the policy-making establishment: belief in the monolithic nature of communism, belief that "Ho Chi Minh was, of course, a hard-core Communist," and belief that the First Indochina War was a "clear case of freedom defending itself from communist aggression."23/

2. John Foster Dulles

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the chief foreign policy adviser, enjoyed an influence with Eisenhower that was unequalled in the Washington bureaucracy. Dulles had been the principal architect of the Republican Party's "roll back" platform of 1952, and his vehement anti-communist orientation during his years as Secretary of State has been thoroughly recorded by historians.24/ Less well recorded is Dulles's antipathy for colonialism. In his words,

Colonialism is the American dilemma. Our foreign policy is squeezed between our opposition to colonialism which in any event is inevitably passing, and our ties to the colonial powers with whom we are linked in the Atlantic alliance. We must be the mediator between the European colonial powers and the people struggling for independence.25/

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Dulles was particularly disturbed by French colonial policies in Indochina. He deplored what he considered to be the venal readiness of the French government to establish commercial relations with the Viet Minh, and believed that if Vietnam was to survive as a bulwark against the expansion of international communism in Asia, the French would have to declare their intention to grant the Associated States full independence after (what later came to be called) the First Indochina War.26/

Dulles was a man of exceptional intellectual power and purpose, and he insisted on maintaining a strictly personal and private line to President Eisenhower.27/ Dulles concentrated on the making of policy. He had no interest in administering the Department of State, which he left to his subordinates.28/ His ideas on policy were largely self-developed; he used his subordinates to produce only minor refinements.29/ In addition, probably as a result of his own observation of the disastrous veto of the League of Nations by the US Senate, Dulles was extremely sensitive to public and particularly congressional opinion, which was reflected in a steady collaboration between the executive and legislative branches during his tenure as Secretary of State.30/ This collaboration was clearly evinced during the Vietnam crisis over Dien Bien Phu.

3. Arthur Radford

President Eisenhower, a military expert in his own right, turned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, particularly the Chairman, Admiral Radford, for advice on military policy, and not to Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson. Radford had served previously as Commander of the Pacific Fleet and claimed expertise in Asian affairs.31/ Like Eisenhower and Dulles, Radford was zealous in his anticommunism.32/ This anticommunist posture led him to argue for military intervention in Indochina. However, his repeated arguments for military intervention at Dien Bien Phu were countered by other members of the Joint Chiefs, particularly Army Chief of Staff, General Matthew Ridgway.

4. Walter Bedell Smith

More influential than Admiral Radford in Vietnam decision making was Under Secretary of State, General Walter Bedell Smith. Smith was a

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longtime personal friend of Eisenhower's. He had served as General Eisenhower's wartime Chief of Staff, and later served with distinction as US Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. According to Eisenhower, Smith's statesmanlike "tact and understanding were remarkable to those who had known him only through his reputation in the Army as a tough and rigid taskmaster."^{33/} Smith's background and personality were well suited for his role in the Dien Bien Phu crisis, which was to help initiate discussions with Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand, in the hope of arranging "united action" against the communist forces at Dien Bien Phu.

C. KEY DECISION MAKERS WITHIN THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

President John Kennedy's commitment to a creative, action-oriented foreign policy was reflected in his choice of advisers. The men most influential in Vietnam decision making -- Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Dean Rusk, Maxwell Taylor, and Walt Rostow had in common intellectual, scholarly backgrounds and an eagerness to employ their expertise within the dynamic environment provided by the new President.^{34/} Figure 3-3, appearing in Chapter 3, provides a graphic representation of the positions held by the above advisers as well as those of other important individuals in the Kennedy administration.

1. President John F. Kennedy

Four experiences in President Kennedy's past significantly influenced his decisions relating to Vietnam. First, as the son of the US Ambassador to Great Britain, Kennedy witnessed the diplomatic developments in Europe leading to World War II. He returned to Harvard to write his thesis on the appeasement at Munich, later published as Why England Slept. Kennedy's understanding of the consequences of that appeasement helped determine his perception that security for any country rested on a superior military force and the will to use it. Moreover, he learned the uniqueness of the situation that led to the Munich tragedy. Unlike other post-war presidents, he did not equate the situation in Vietnam with Hitler's attack

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on Czechoslovakia. Rather he considered the Vietnam conflict to be a civil war, involving insurgent forces led by Ho Chi Minh, which would be won by the side that offered the Vietnamese people the most in terms of freedom to choose their political leaders, security, and nation-building programs. He stressed the importance of politico-military, counterinsurgency operations to help resolve the conflict.^{35/} Second, as a US Senator, Kennedy made two trips to South Vietnam and undertook a concerted study of Vietnam's problems; as a result, he believed that a prerequisite to defeating communism in Vietnam was the development of a viable, nationalist government.^{36/} For Kennedy, support of Diem was a method for achieving this goal. He did not believe that the indigenous communist movement led by Ho Chi Minh represented the people's aspirations for independence and national self-determination. Third, Kennedy reacted strongly to Khrushchev's speech on "wars of national liberation," delivered a month before Kennedy assumed the presidency. Viewing this speech as a direct challenge to the free world and his administration, the president-elect steeled his resolve to make a clear showing of US strength in Vietnam. Fourth, in light of his perception of the Korean experience, Kennedy was determined to prevent US involvement in another protracted land war in Asia. Shortly before his presidential inauguration, he was again warned of the dangers of such involvement in a special briefing by General Douglas MacArthur. This briefing made a lasting impression on the young President.^{37/}

2. Robert McNamara

President Kennedy's closest adviser on Vietnam was his Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara. McNamara was highly skilled in the art of bureaucratic management, gaining much of his expertise from services with the Ford Motor Company. He managed the Defense Department like a business, utilizing quantitative techniques of systems analysis to gain maximum cost-effectiveness. His management ability and his extraordinarily retentive mind impressed President Kennedy; as a result, McNamara gained unprecedented influence in the formulation of US military policy. Since this influence was sometimes seen as infringing on the province of the military professionals who often perceived McNamara and his staff as arrogant,

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inexperienced civilians capable of overruling their expert advice, there was resentment towards McNamara and his role.38/

In the area of military policy, Secretary McNamara was instrumental in developing a greatly increased nuclear capability. In addition, he emphasized programs for the improvement of US conventional warfare capabilities.39/ McNamara advocated politico-military solutions for the insurgency problem in Vietnam and, in October 1961, urged the sending of combat forces to South Vietnam to prevent its loss to communism.40/

3. McGeorge Bundy

McGeorge Bundy, Kennedy's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, also exerted considerable influence in the White House; like McNamara, he was extremely intelligent and an able administrator. Bundy sought to clarify options for the President; his efficiency in delegating responsibility to his own staff and in eliciting response and cooperation from others aided the development of these options.41/ In contrast to his predecessors under Truman and Eisenhower, whose functions were predominately administrative, Bundy and his staff enjoyed considerable influence in the formulation of national security policy.42/

4. Dean Rusk

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, a low-key Southern gentleman, deferred to Secretary McNamara on matters relating to Vietnam, despite his expertise in Asian affairs,43/ Secretary Rusk did, however, provide a historical dimension to Vietnam decision making, having served as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in the Truman administration.

President Kennedy was disappointed that Rusk failed to develop imaginative, dynamic solutions to problems in Vietnam,44/ yet, Rusk, perhaps in deference to Mr. Kennedy's ambition to be his own Secretary of State, never sought to be the president's alter ego in foreign policy.45/ While he maintained a close, personal line to the president, he realized he had other duties to fulfill, including constant interaction with other governmental departments involved in the formulation of US foreign policy.46/ Secretary Rusk was strongly anticommunist, and was especially convinced that Communist China was responsible for the turmoil in Vietnam.

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5. Maxwell Taylor

General Maxwell Taylor had impressed Mr. Kennedy with his criticism in The Uncertain Trumpet of the Eisenhower administration's strategy of massive retaliation. Taylor advocated a strategy of "flexible response," which emphasized capabilities for responding to limited wars with conventional forces and weaponry. When President Kennedy's confidence in the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was diminished by the experience of the Bay of Pigs, he created a new position in his administration, Special Military Representative to the President, and appointed General Taylor to fill this post.^{47/} Taylor argued for political and administrative reforms and counterinsurgency operations in South Vietnam. In his view, US military support should include the conventional bombing of North Vietnam; but as a determined advocate of the "never again" school, ^{48/} he did not favor the use of American ground combat forces unless such a step became absolutely necessary. He helped establish and chaired the Special Group for Counterinsurgency to discuss ways of meeting the threat of insurgency warfare, especially as exported across national borders.^{49/} According to Taylor, this group assured recognition throughout the government "that subversive insurgency was a political-military conflict equal in importance to conventional warfare."^{50/} In October 1962, General Taylor was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and served in that capacity until July 1964.

6. Walt Rostow

Walt Rostow, formerly a professor of economics, served as McGeorge Bundy's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs early in the Kennedy administration. Rostow was influential in developing the Counterinsurgency Plan (CIP).^{51/} In addition, he was the first of Kennedy's advisers to deal closely with Vietnam-related matters, heading a White House task force in February 1961, which kept a close watch on developments in Laos and Vietnam.^{52/} Yet President Kennedy, while impressed with Mr. Rostow's creativity, became suspicious of his judgment on questions concerning the use of military force. Rostow had been one of the most vociferous advocates of the bombing of North Vietnam and of using

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US combat forces in the South. President Kennedy consistently rejected that advice, believing that Vietnam was primarily a political conflict which required counterinsurgency efforts, advisers, and aid. After a few months in office, President Kennedy appointed Mr. Rostow Chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council, thereby moving him from the White House to a somewhat less powerful, "safer" position more suited to his creative approach to policy making.^{53/} In this position, Mr. Rostow put his professional economic talents to use in planning programs for the economic development of Third World countries.^{54/}

D. KEY DECISION MAKERS WITHIN THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

Johnson's continuity in Vietnam policy sprang not only from his own background and preconceptions but also from the fact that he kept many of President Kennedy's Cabinet and White House Staff members as advisers. Although Dean Rusk was the only major Vietnam adviser to remain in the Johnson Administration until Johnson left office in January 1969, several of Kennedy's top-level advisers, such as Robert McNamara and Walt Rostow, McGeorge Bundy's replacement,^{55/} continued to serve Johnson for the majority of his presidential tenure. The positions of these and other important advisers appeared in Chapter 3, Figure 3-4, an overview of the Johnson administration.

1. President Lyndon B. Johnson

Three major factors influenced President Johnson's Vietnam decisions. First, as a Democrat who had lived through the "loss" of China and the McCarthy era, he believed strongly that he must not be "soft" on communism or "lose" South Vietnam to communists.^{56/} Second, his previous experience in the Congress, particularly as Senate Majority Leader, had taught him the value of achieving consensus, often to the detriment of minority views, by squelching all debate.^{57/} His desire to reason together and achieve consensus on Vietnam policy was reflected in his special "Tuesday lunch group" meetings where representatives from various departments and agencies met regularly to discuss most actions relating to

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Vietnam. Based on this rationale, Johnson believed that every man could be bargained with, including Ho Chi Minh, and that a strategy of gradual escalation in Vietnam provided the US with bargaining leverage at a reasonable cost to the United States.^{58/} Third, President Johnson, whose great strength lay in the area of domestic politics, was fundamentally insecure when dealing in foreign affairs. This insecurity was reflected in his attitude toward key advisers on Vietnam policy. Those who disagreed with his basic objective of preventing the loss of South Vietnam to the communist forces, or with his strategies for achieving that objective, were often excluded from high-level decision making.^{59/}

2. Robert McNamara

President Johnson described Robert McNamara as "the ablest man I've ever met." Johnson was awed by McNamara's facility with statistics, and strongly supported McNamara's systems-analysis approach to military questions concerning Vietnam.^{60/} As Johnson's Secretary of Defense, McNamara continued to advocate a broad range of political and economic, as well as military actions to prevent the "loss" of South Vietnam. He also advocated bombing restrictions which caused considerable consternation within the JCS.^{61/} By late 1967, McNamara was disillusioned about US involvement in Vietnam, and he began to press for deescalation.^{62/} This position ran counter to Johnson's instincts and stated policy, causing the President to lose confidence in his Secretary of Defense.^{63/} Clark Clifford replaced McNamara as Secretary of Defense one month after the Tet '68 Offensive abated and one day after President Johnson announced his decision not to run for reelection.

3. McGeorge Bundy

Like McNamara, McGeorge Bundy was retained by President Johnson as a close adviser after Kennedy's death. Bundy continued to serve as Special Assistant for National Security Affairs until 1966, when he resigned to become President of The Ford Foundation. This decision to leave the administration allegedly stemmed from his dissatisfaction with Johnson's overall approach to policy formulation and not from a softening of his own position regarding the war.^{64/} Until that time, Bundy had

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supported military solutions, including the bombing of North Vietnam and the use of ground forces, partly because he believed that the United States, as a superpower, had the responsibility for resisting communist aggression.^{65/} and partly because he believed that a strong US presence in Southeast Asia was needed in order to maintain the credibility of American defense commitments with other allies. He had been deeply moved by his official trips to Vietnam, during which he saw the consequences of terrorist actions by Vietnamese communist forces.^{66/} President Johnson was impressed with Bundy's knowledge of foreign affairs and relied on his advice as a member of the Tuesday Lunch Group.

4. Dean Rusk

Dean Rusk continued as Secretary of State throughout President Johnson's term of office. His continued service was a testament to his unswerving loyalty to the president as much as it was to the quality of his stewardship.^{67/} Johnson greatly prized and rewarded loyalty; at times this tendency caused him to confuse dissent with disloyalty.^{68/} Rusk believed that Communist China was bent on consuming the "free world" and that the Soviet Union and China constituted a monolithic communist power structure despite contrary evidence from his subordinates. By 1968, however, it appears Rusk did acknowledge that the monolithic view of communism was an outmoded concept.^{69/}

5. Clark Clifford

Clark Clifford succeeded McNamara as Secretary of Defense in March 1968. His long-time personal friendship with President Johnson and his reputation for anticommunism, established while serving as an adviser to President Truman, endowed him with important credentials. These factors enhanced his influence when advocating a reversal of Johnson's Vietnam policy in the spring of 1968. Johnson could, therefore, not suspect him of being "soft" on communism. However, as Clifford geared up for his new responsibilities as Secretary of Defense, he realized that support for Johnson's war policies had waned substantially. Armed with his Task Force's findings, he conveyed to Johnson that the administration must seek a new course. Johnson's reaction to Clifford's appraisal was apparently

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one of dismay; Clifford's coming aboard was to have been a means of reestablishing solid group harmony, and then, as Clifford himself stated, "this Judas appeared."70/ Clifford stayed on in the administration serving as one of the President's more influential advisers bent on reassessing US policy regarding Vietnam.

6. Walt Rostow

Walt Rostow is noteworthy because, as Bundy's successor in 1966, he became a highly influential advocate of the bombing and use of ground forces in Vietnam. He was a continuous supporter of a hard-line position in Vietnam, founded on decisive military action. Even more than Rusk, Mr. Rostow was a vehement anticommunist.71/ His close proximity to Johnson in 1966, after his exile in the State Department, is believed to have been largely responsible for Johnson's excessive optimism concerning the progress of the war.72/ Rostow has been described as having a penchant for "mind-guarding" and for the "cleansing" of incoming intelligence, when he served as Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.

E. KEY DECISION MAKERS WITHIN THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

Of the individuals who served in the Nixon administration, those that played the most significant roles in overall Vietnam decision making included President Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Melvin Laird and William Rogers. In addition to these key officials, whose backgrounds and policy recommendations will be discussed below, a large number of senior advisers assisted these key decisionmakers. Their positions are highlighted in Chapter 3, Figure 3-5, a schematic overview of the Nixon administration's high-level personnel.

1. President Richard M. Nixon

Two significant factors which influenced President Nixon's approach to international affairs were belief in the importance of a strong posture towards communism and belief in the necessity of a centralized, personal foreign policy. Nixon's views on communism coalesced during his tenure as vice president under President Dwight Eisenhower. From his

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experiences during the Korean war era, he came to appreciate the use of force as potential tool for eliciting desired diplomatic responses. By the time he became president, Nixon had developed a reputation as a hard-liner capable of potent anticommunist rhetoric. But he also was pragmatic in his approach to foreign policy, and appreciated the opportunity to initiate detente with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

This major shift in US foreign relations stemmed from President Nixon's belief that the Vietnam war could be terminated favorably if the US made use of the tensions which existed between Peking and Moscow. The promotion of peace in Vietnam and detente with the Soviet Union and the PRC were the Nixon administration's top priorities. They were to be accomplished via linkage politics, a strategy which Nixon and Kissinger strongly endorsed. In short, the administration's linkage policy combined Kissinger's theories on power balancing with Nixon's belief that the Soviet Union held the key to peace in Vietnam.^{73/} In essence, linkage was a form of diplomatic barter: the Soviet Union, for example, would reap US credit in return for cooperation in reducing the tensions in Southeast Asia. The realization of this goal was to be accomplished by means of personal diplomacy, which both Nixon and Kissinger practiced extensively.

President Nixon had a penchant for privacy which was clearly evident in his decision-making style. When making decisions, he generally pigeonholed himself in his office with notepad and pencil, ultimately making all final decisions in private. His penchant for privacy at times bordered on secrecy; his fear of leaks and antipathy towards the press tended only to increase this tendency.

2. Henry Kissinger

In Henry Kissinger, Nixon found a man who promoted an approach to foreign affairs which he advocated and admired. Their working relationships as President and Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (and later, as Secretary of State) was extremely close -- based on a rare compatibility of mind and temperament.^{74/}

Henry Kissinger's centralized approach to decision making and his preference for linkage diplomacy stand out as the two major features of his

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overall approach to foreign policy. His preference for centralized decision making stems from his views regarding the dangers inherent in any bureaucracy:

The bureaucracy absorbs the energies of top executives...Attention tends to be diverted from the act of choice--which is the ultimate test of statesmanship--to the accumulation of facts. Decisions can be avoided until a crisis brooks no further delay...But at that point the scope for constructive action is at a minimum...Moreover, the reputation, indeed the political survival, of most leaders depends on their ability to realize their goals, however these may have been arrived at.75/

His was a conventional approach to foreign affairs based on the notion of power balance in the international arena; peace could be achieved and maintained only in a stable international scene. Kissinger's approach to resolving the Vietnam conflict by way of enlisting Moscow's and Peking's participation stemmed from his general approach to international affairs. A former Harvard historian, Kissinger found contemporary application for the diplomatic power-balancing maneuvering of Metternich, whom he had closely studied.76/

A difficult man to work for, Kissinger's overall strength was greatly enhanced precisely because his approach fit smoothly into Nixon's preferred mode of decision making. The president's trust in Kissinger reinforced his special assistant's overall effectiveness and strength.77/ However, one major drawback to Kissinger's dominance of the administration's national security decision making was that the administration was frequently out of touch with events in Vietnam.78/ This dilemma was particularly apparent during Kissinger's frequent trips to the Middle East in hopes of realizing a peace settlement.

Kissinger's powers in the administration reached a peak in 1973, when he replaced William Rogers as Secretary of State, thereby assuming dual authority in the formulation of national security policy - as Secretary of State and Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.

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3. William Rogers

William Rogers served as Secretary of State from 1969 to 1973, leaving private law practice to join the Nixon administration. Lacking significant background in foreign affairs, Secretary Rogers' influence in the administration steadily declined concurrent with Kissinger's increasing dominance in the decision-making process.

Uneasy with the Nixon-Kissinger preference for personal diplomacy, Secretary of State Rogers strongly opposed Kissinger's extension of authority into policy formulation which Rogers considered within the realm of the State Department.^{79/} Rogers opposed any continuation of military operations in Southeast Asia, and along with Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, advocated a prompt liquidation of the US war effort.^{80/} While President Nixon maintained that Rogers was his chief foreign policy adviser and spokesman for the administration, Rogers' influence within the administration was negligible on Vietnam policy compared to Kissinger's.^{81/}

4. Melvin Laird

Secretary of Defense Laird was, like Rogers, a strong advocate of rapid Vietnamization combined with the rapid withdrawal of US forces. This approach contrasted with that advocated by Nixon, Kissinger, and the JCS, all of whom desired a more gradual withdrawal and a less hasty Vietnamization. Laird's chief objective was to get out of Vietnam as quickly as possible--all other issues were secondary.^{82/} Laird and Rogers were the Nixon administration's highest level opponents of military escalation in the Indochina area ^{83/} In fact, it was Laird who actually coined the term "Vietnamization" and, at every possible opportunity, he promoted this program with the public in his search for a political solution to the war.^{84/} He made use of his familiarity with Congress by meeting frequently with various legislators to promote his overall approach for the war's termination; apparently he was quite successful in this undertaking.^{85/} It is therefore possible that the Secretary's interaction with Congress reinforced the legislature's growing anti-interventionist sentiments.

In his stewardship of the Defense Department, he advocated an increase in the military's overall input in the decision-making process.

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However, in practice, it appears he distrusted the JCS, owing to their close relationship with Kissinger, and actually sought to restrict their interaction with high-level decision makers. According to Admiral Sharp,

Laird operated according to a closely held "game plan," a blueprint of precise and skillfully devised political moves carried out by a small group of confidants. When Kissinger sought my views on the basis of my experience in Vietnam, the Secretary made clear his disapproval of my talking directly with Kissinger. Although the two were seldom together in my presence, Laird seemed to be concerned that Kissinger was exerting undue influence on policies of the Department of Defense.^{86/}

F. KEY DECISION MAKERS WITHIN THE FORD ADMINISTRATION

Similar to Lyndon Johnson's approach to the transition period, after President Kennedy's assassination, President Ford also sought to maintain a modicum of administrative stability and continuity after Nixon's resignation. He insisted that the transition period be smoothly handled by a special staff selected for this purpose, and made few personnel changes in the ranks of the high-level bureaucracy. Other key decision makers involved in Vietnam-related issues included Henry Kissinger, James Schlesinger and Graham Martin, each of whom had served under President Nixon. The respective positions of these individuals within the bureaucracy, as well as those of other important advisers, appeared in Chapter 3, Figure 3-6, an overview of the Ford administration.

1. President Gerald Ford

Gerald Ford had over twenty years of experience in the US Congress before entering the Nixon administration as vice president in 1973. As a congressman, he had consistently advocated a US military posture of strength and supported legislation which provided ample military assistance to US allies. His resolve to contain communism was similar to that of his five postwar presidential predecessors. A statement by Congressman Ford just prior to the Gulf of Tonkin crisis illustrates this resolve.

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Our lesson in Cuba ought to guide us during the third great crisis of this decade - in Viet Nam. In Cuba, our early vacillation encouraged the Communists to bolder and bolder aggression. We cannot - we dare not - lead them to repeat that mistake in Viet Nam. The Communist leaders in Moscow, Peking and Hanoi must fully understand that the United States considers the freedom of South Viet Nam vital to our interests. And they must know that we are not bluffing in our determination to defend those interests. ...Toward this end I recommended a short time ago that we intensify our air strikes against significant military targets in North Viet Nam... 87/

As Congressional Minority Leader in the early seventies, Mr. Ford's record clearly indicates that he in no way softened his view regarding US commitments in Southeast Asia. 88/

President Ford was familiar with foreign affairs. His membership in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee provided him the opportunity to question Secretaries of State and Defense, and the Directors of the Central Intelligence Agency. He had also traveled extensively in Europe and Southeast Asia. As vice president he was afforded the opportunity to participate in briefings given by Dr. Kissinger on a variety of foreign policy issues. 89/ He endorsed Nixon's gradual Vietnamization program and the 1973 signing of the Paris Peace Accords. 90/

Gerald Ford's views on the role and responsibilities of the presidency deserve mention because, as president, he was confronted by an increasingly assertive Congress which he felt had undermined the power of the president as Commander-in-Chief with the passage of the 1973 War Powers Act. 91/ Indeed, before leaving Congress for the vice presidency, he had opposed the passage of this act. As president, he came to view Congress as being overly involved in the day-to-day operation of US foreign policy, a complaint which increased as he wrestled with Congress over appropriations to shore up the rapidly deteriorating situation in South Vietnam. Therefore, while he believed that his responsibilities as president included the effective and expeditious resolution of crises, in practice, he found his freedom of action severely constrained by Congress.

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2. Henry Kissinger

Gerald Ford chose to retain Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State because of his high regard for Kissinger's ability. According to Ford,

He [Kissinger] had gone through hell during the final days of the Nixon administration, and he had agreed to stay on only because I said I needed him. Sure he had an ego ... and it's also true he had a penchant for secrecy. But that, I felt, was a necessary ingredient of successful diplomacy... Our personalities meshed. I respected his expertise in foreign policy and he respected my judgment in domestic policies. He was a total pragmatist who thought in terms of power and national interest instead of ideology... 92/

Since the signing of the Peace Accords, Dr. Kissinger had turned his attention to other international concerns and tried to restore acceptance of the validity of the domino theory. When faced with the rapidly deteriorating situation in South Vietnam in late 1974 and early 1975, he stated:

We must understand that peace is indivisible. The US cannot pursue a policy of selective reliability. We cannot abandon friends in one part of the world without jeopardizing the security of friends everywhere... [if Saigon falls]... then we are likely to find a massive shift in the foreign policies of many countries and a fundamental threat over a period of time to the security of the U.S. 93/

Kissinger's distress was aggravated by congressional reluctance to support the administration's requests for aid to rescue South Vietnam. Executive-legislative haggling over military aid appropriations was the most significant feature of the Vietnam decision-making process during the Ford administration, and Kissinger was one of the main participants in these debates.

3. James Schlesinger

President Ford also retained Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, when the former took office in August 1974. However, in contrast to the Ford-Kissinger relationship, Ford had difficulties in dealing with Schlesinger. 94/ Aware of the nation's need to heal its war-inflicted

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wounds, Schlesinger suggested that the president take positive action regarding the status of Vietnam draft evaders and deserters. Apparently he was influential with the president on this issue, for the president shortly thereafter developed a program to rehabilitate these men.95/

Schlesinger's relationship with Dr. Kissinger was also marred by tension. Both men, dominant and aggressive, did not always agree on strategies to save South Vietnam.96/ By March 1975, tension between the two men ran so high that it complicated the administration's development of a concerted strategy for dealing with the crisis in Vietnam.97/ Schlesinger's resignation was finally requested by the president prior to the 1976 presidential election.

4. Graham Martin

As a career diplomat who was assigned the ambassadorial post to Saigon in 1973, Graham Martin had previous experience in US-Vietnamese diplomacy. He participated in the 1954 Geneva negotiations and joined the 1973 Paris talks as an observer.98/ His participation in national-level Vietnam decision making became more visible as congressional resistance to the administration's aid requests increased. Ambassador Martin made frequent trips to Washington to lobby for the administration's aid packages, illustrating his commitment to saving the rapidly weakening Saigon government.

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APPENDIX B
ENDNOTES

1. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs (New York: Doubleday, 1956) Vol. 1, pp. 1-4, and Gordon Hoxie, Command Decision and the Presidency (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1977), p. 55.
2. Hoxie, pp. 55-56.
3. Janis Irving, Victims of Groupthink (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), p. 61; and "Origins of the U.S. Involvement in Vietnam," US-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967. Prepared by the Department of Defense. Printed for the Use of the House Committee on Armed Services. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971) in 12 Books; Book 1, I.A.3. pp. A51-A58, Hereafter DOD US/VN Relations.
4. Barton J. Bernstein and Allen Matusow, The Truman Administration (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 251-256, and Russell Fifield, Americans in Southeast Asia (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell), p. 65.
5. Hoxie, p. 80.
6. Bernstein, pp. 331-332.
7. Cable from Secretary of State G. Marshall to American Embassy, Paris, cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, p. 99.
8. Ibid., Book 8, pp. 130, 135, 144.
9. Fifield, p. 67.
10. Ibid., pp. 71-73, 75, 100.
11. See for example, "Strengthening the Forces of Freedom," in Bernstein and Matusow, pp. 289-293.
12. See Acheson's "Summary of China Policy" in Bernstein and Matusow, pp. 300-309.
13. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, p. 198, Cable from Acheson to American Consul in Hanoi, May 20, 1949.
14. Ibid., Book 8, pp. 198, 199.
15. Ibid., Book 8, p. 196.
16. Ibid., Book 8, p. 196, and Fifield, p. 126.
17. Fifield, p. 118, Ho's discussion with Abbott was one in a series of oral and written communications with the US in which Ho requested US

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- support for Vietnam's search for self-determination. "U.S. Neutrality in the Franco-Viet Minh War, 1946-1949: Failures of Negotiated Settlement" cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 1, 1.A.2. pp. A-28-A-29. Also see, in Book 8, the following: Memo From The Assistant Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs London to the Secretary of State, February 1946, p. 61; Telegram from The Vice Council at Hanoi O'Sullivan to the Secretary of State, June 5, 1946, p. 71; and Department of State Cable to AMCONSUL Saigon, February 3, 1948, p. 117.
18. Cable from Abbott to Department of State, November 5, 1948, cited in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, p. 159; and American Consulate General Saigon Memorandum on Indochina for the New Delhi Foreign Service Conference, p. 157.
 19. See section on President Lyndon Johnson in Appendix B - The Johnson Administration.
 20. DOD US/VN Relations, Book 8, p. 288, Letter from Dean Rusk, Deputy Under Secretary of State, to MG James Burns, Office of Secretary of Defense and Fifield, p. 142.
 21. Ibid., p. 249.
 22. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 333.
 23. Ibid., pp. 333-336.
 24. Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), pp. 217-221. "Roll Back" went a step further than "containment." The former entailed the "liberation" of peoples who were already under communist leadership, whereas the latter stressed maintenance of the status quo by halting current or future communist expansionism.
 25. Andrew H. Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1965), p. 84.
 26. Townsend Hoopes, The Devil and John Foster Dulles (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1973), p. 252.
 27. Townsend Hoopes, p. 140. According to Sherman Adams, the President's principal staff man in the White House, Dulles would bypass and enter the President's anteroom, ask the lady secretary if the President was engaged, and "if the answer was no, he just opened the door and walked in." Dulles enjoyed the confidence and respect of the President partly because of his meticulous preparation, down to and including a recommended course of action for the problem at hand.

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28. Ibid., p. 142-145.
29. Ibid., p. 141-143.
30. Charles Yost, The Conduct and Misconduct of Foreign Affairs (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 68.
31. Richard K. Betts Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 66-67.
32. Ibid., p. 177.
33. Eisenhower, p. 367.
34. Paul M. Kattenburg, "Viet Nam and US Diplomacy 1940-1970," Orbis 15, #3, Fall 1971.
35. Robert Gallucci, Neither Peace Nor Honor (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 15-16.
36. Roger Hilsman, To Move a Nation (New York: Doubleday), p. 423.
37. Frank Merli and Theodore Wilson, ed., Makers of American Diplomacy (New York: Charles Scribners), p. 327, and U. A. Johnson, BDM interview, January 9, 1979.
38. Lawrence J. Korb, The Joint Chiefs of Staff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 119.
39. Merli, p. 325.
40. Russell Weigley, The American Way of War (New York: MacMillan Co., 1973), p. 459.
41. John Leacacos, Fires in the In-Basket (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 138-139.
42. David K. Hall, "The Custodian-Manager of the Policymaking Process", in U.S., Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1975) Vol. 2, p. 108.
43. Merli, p. 322; Leacacos, p. 132; BDM Interview June 13, 1979 with Dr. Vincent Davis. In a private meeting with Mr. Rusk, Dr. Davis queried Rusk concerning the apparent deference. Mr. Rusk himself explained that in matters concerning Vietnam he and his staff generally concurred with McNamara's approach to the problem.

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44. Leacacos, p. 6.
45. Ibid., p. 124, 128.
46. Ibid., p. 124.
47. Theodore Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper & Row), p. 606, and Betts, p. 67.
48. Fred Greene, U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968), p. 30.
49. In an interview with BDM analysts, General Taylor indicated that President Kennedy had an excellent appreciation of the potential role of counterinsurgency operations in "wars of national liberation." In fact, Kennedy was obliged to explain the concept of counterinsurgency to General Taylor so that the latter could understand it and explain the concept to other military professionals.
50. Maxwell Taylor, Swords and Plowshares (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1972), p. 201.
51. Arthur Schlesinger, A Thousand Days (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 341.
52. Leacacos, p. 165.
53. Hoopes, p. 21.
54. Leacacos, p. 166.
55. Two significant changes occurred: Walt Rostow supplanted McGeorge Bundy in 1966 after the latter became disillusioned with the war, and Clark Clifford replaced Defense Secretary McNamara shortly after the Tet Offensive of 1968.
56. Tom Wicker, JFK and LBJ (Baltimore: Pelican, 1970) pp. 205, 248; and Gallucci, p. 43.
57. Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Signet, 1976), pp. 142-145.
58. Ibid., pp. 268-270, 279; and Wicker, p. 153.
59. Gallucci, p. 99; Schlesinger, pp. 184-185; and Kearns, p. 335.
60. Hoopes, pp. 17-18; Lyndon Johnson, The Vantage Point (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1971), p. 20; Dr. Vince Davis, interview at BDM, June 13, 1979.

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61. Henry L. Trewhitt, McNamara (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 225-227.
62. Wicker, p. 198; Jim F. Heath, Decade of Disillusionment (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1975), p. 102, DOD US/VN Relations, Book 6, p. 138.
63. Heath, p. 102; Hoopes, pp. 83, 90.
64. David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 624-625.
65. Hoopes, pp. 18-20.
66. Ambassador Maxwell Taylor had previously recommended bombing the DRV on two occasions, but his recommendations were not accepted. Bundy was in South Vietnam when the Viet Cong attacked the US barracks at Pleiku, and he joined in Taylor's third recommendation for bombing. Ambassador Taylor credits Bundy with having tipped the scales in his favor. The bombing request was approved. Maxwell Taylor, BDM interview, July 11, 1979.
67. Ibid.
68. Johnson, p. 208; Henry Graff, The Tuesday Cabinet (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 40.
69. Kearns, pp. 334-336.
70. Interview with Dr. Davis, BDM, June 13, 1979; examples may be found in DOD US/VN Relations, Book 7, D-81.
71. Hoopes, p. 181; Kearns pp. 361-362.
72. Hoopes, pp. 20-21.
73. Marvin Kalb and Julie Abel, Roots of Involvement (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 102-3.
74. A. Hartley, "American Foreign Policy in the Nixon Era," Adelphi Papers, #110 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 1.
75. Henry Kissinger, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy," in Conditions of World Order (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), pp. 168-170.
76. Michael Roskin, "An American Metternich: Henry A. Kissinger and the Global Balance of Powers," in Merli, p. 377.
77. I. M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy (Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 125.

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78. Stephen Graubard, Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), p. 276.
79. Theodore White, Breach of Faith (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), p. 105.
80. Halberstam, p. 644; White, p. 380.
81. Destler, p. 131.
82. Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, Strategic Direction of the Armed Forces (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College, 1977), pp. 36-37.
83. General Andrew J. Goodpaster, Interview at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, April 19, 1976 transcript at US Army Military History Research Collection, Senior Officers Debriefing Program, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.; Destler, p. 29; and Tad Szulc The Illusion of Peace: Foreign Policy in the Nixon Years (New York: Viking Press, 1978), pp. 60, 290.
84. Sharp, Strategic Direction, pp. 36-37.
85. Ibid.
86. General William Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 387. Admiral Sharp obviously concurs with this evaluation since he quoted this passage as an example of the delicate relationship between the two secretaries. See Sharp, p. 37.
87. Speech by Gerald Ford at the National Press Club, July 1965, cited in President Ford: The Man and His Record (Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1974).
88. Ibid.
89. Gerald Ford, A Time to Heal (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 129.
90. See "President Ford: The Man and His Record."
91. See Hoxie, pp. xvii-xviii.
92. Ford, p. 129.
93. Gelb, p. 351.
94. Ford, p. 136. In the first days of the Ford administration, the President was irritated by rumors that Schlesinger, concerned about Nixon's mental stability during his last days in office, had taken measures to ensure that Nixon could not issue unilateral orders to the Armed Services. Ford told Schlesinger that he was aware of these

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rumors, and while not pointing a finger directly at the Secretary of Defense, stated that he wanted the situation straightened out immediately. Ford's comment after his meeting with Schlesinger indicated a disharmony between the two. "...that was the first run-in I had with Schlesinger. I hoped it would be the last, but I suspected otherwise."

95. Ford, p. 141.
96. Frank Snapp, Decent Interval (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 153.
97. Ibid., p. 235.
98. While he felt Le Duc Tho had not changed much since 1954, he was impressed by some of the younger technocrats who took part in the 1973 talks. He considered them more malleable and more inclined toward moderation. See Snapp, p. 63.

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APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA TO CHAPTER 1: A SERIES OF SIX CHARTS SUMMARIZING US GLOBAL INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES, PERCEIVED THREATS, AND STRATEGIES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO US INTERESTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, 1945-1975

Six charts appear in Appendix C, each representing a five year time-period during the 30 year era of US involvement in Vietnam. Each chart depicts the interrelationship between US global interests and objectives, perceived threats, and strategies with those related to Southeast Asia. All information summarized in each graphic is taken directly from US national policy statements which appeared during each particular time period. The US Department of Defense publication, United States - Vietnam Relations 1945-1967 and US Department of State Buletins served as the primary sources for the extraction of such statements. All other sources used in the preparation of these charts appear in the Volume III Bibliography.

1945 - 1960

INTERESTS/OBJECTIVES	PERCEIVED THREATS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REBUILD EUROPE; ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION • BUILD A STRONG INTERNATIONAL ORDER • CONTAIN COMMUNISM • PROMOTE SELF-DETERMINATION, INDEPENDENCE OF WORLD'S COLONIES 	<p style="text-align: center;">ON A GLOBAL BASIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOVIET IMPERIALISM AND EXPANSIONIST DRIVE • POST-WAR OBJECTIVES OF US ALLIES • ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM • COLONIALISM • US LACK OF WELL DEFINED POLICY REGARDING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRUMAN DOCTRINE • PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION • PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND COOPERATION • ECONOMIC, MILITARY, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES • PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS • PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHEN FEASIBLE • NSC 64 AND NSC 68
<p>-----</p> <p>SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED</p> <p>-----</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROVIDE FOR A PROGRESSIVE MEASURE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLONIALISM AND BRITISH/AMERICAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE OF

4841/78W

Figure C-1. Summary of US Global Policy to US Policy for Southeast Asia

- PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS
- PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHEN FEASIBLE
- NSC 64 AND NSC 68

SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED

- PROVIDE FOR A PROGRESSIVE MEASURE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR ALL DEPENDENT PEOPLES LOOKING TOWARD THEIR EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE OR INCORPORATION IN SOME FORM OF FEDERATION ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE ABILITY OF THE PEOPLES TO ASSUME THESE RESPONSIBILITIES
- ENCOURAGE PEOPLES OF ASIAN STATES TO TAKE LEADERSHIP IN MEETING COMMON PROBLEMS OF THE AREA
- CONTAIN COMMUNISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO PROTECT STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN FAR EAST
- AVOID LOSS OF ANOTHER ASIAN POWER TO COMMUNISM (POST-CHINA, 1949)
- SUPPORT FREE PEOPLES RESISTING ATTEMPTED SUBJUGATION BY ARMED MINORITIES OR BY OUTSIDE PRESSURES

- COLONIALISM AND BRITISH/FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARDS COLONIES
- THE SOVIET UNION IN ASIA:
 - SOVIET CONTROL OF OR PRESENCE IN THE FAR EAST AS THREAT TO BALANCE OF POWER IN ASIA
 - THREAT OF KREMLIN DIRECTED SUBVERSIVE COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS
 - COMMUNIST AFFILIATION OF HO CHI MINH
 - LOSS OF CHINA TO COMMUNIST ORBIT
- RIGHT AND LEFT POLITICAL PARTIES IN FRANCE AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE BALANCE OF POWER IN ASIA
- WEAKNESS OF FRANCE; CONFLICT WITH VIETNAM TIES DOWN FRENCH TROOPS IN INDOCHINA, WEAKENS FRENCH ECONOMY FURTHER AND THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY, AND DENYS THE AVAILABILITY OF INDOCHINESE SURPLUS RESOURCES, THEREBY CAUSING SHORTAGES AND DISORDER
- ANY ATTEMPT BY A MAJOR ASIAN POWER, E.G. JAPAN, INDIA, CHINA, TO DOMINATE THE ASIAN CONTINENT

- PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE OF COLONIES
 - TRUSTEESHIP AND NEUTRALITY CONCEPTS
 - REQUEST FRENCH INDICATION OF GOOD WILL REGARDING CIVIL LIBERTIES IN INDOCHINA
 - ARTICLE 73 OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER
 - NSC 48/2: URGING FRANCE TO ENGENDER VIETNAMESE SUPPORT FOR NON-COMMUNIST NATIONALIST LEADERS SUCH AS BAO DAI
- TRUMAN DOCTRINE: DIRECT AID (ECONOMIC, MILITARY, POLITICAL) TO PROMOTE THE PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS
- COLLECTIVE DEFENSE AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE MUTUAL DEFENSE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR ASIA

2

1950 - 1955

INTERESTS/OBJECTIVES	PERCEIVED THREATS	STRATEGIES
<p>----- ON A GLOBAL BASIS -----</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREVENT THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN THE WORLD • CONTAIN COMMUNISM TO PROTECT US AND ALLIES' ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS • PREVENT WORLD WAR III • PROMOTE INFLUENCE OF WORLD'S COLONIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN EUROPE AND IN ASIA: MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM • SUBVERSION AND GUERRILLA WARFARE • WEAKNESS OF WESTERN EUROPE, PARTICULARLY IN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS • US INTERNAL CONDEMNATIONS AGAINST WEAKNESS IN THE FACE OF COMMUNIST AGGRESSION ('LOSS' OF CHINA, McCARTHY) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS; UNITED ACTION • MASSIVE RETALIATION; NSC 162//; • LIBERATION DOCTRINE; PREPARATION FOR COUNTERING GUERRILLA WARFARE; ROLL-BACK • PROMOTE SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD'S DEVELOPING NATIONS • PROMOTE DISUNITY IN COMMUNIST BLOC
<p>----- SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED -----</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROTECT INDOCHINA FROM COMMUNISM TO PRESERVE IT AS A RESOURCE BASE ESPECIALLY FOR JAPAN, IN ORDER TO PREVENT JAPAN FROM TURNING TO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES FOR TRADE AND RESOURCES (RESOURCES INCLUDED TIN, TUNGSTEN, RICE, RUBBER, OIL, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMMUNISM'S ADVANCE IN ASIA - 'LOSS' OF CHINA AND POSSIBLE CHINESE INTERVENTION IN INDOCHINA - NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION - IMPACT OF COMMUNIST CONTROL OF SEA ON THE BALANCE OF POWER IN ASIA • INCOMPATIBILITY OF US INTERESTS: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROMOTE INDOCHINESE INDEPENDENCE VIA NON-COMMUNIST NATIONALIST LEADERSHIP (BAO DAI OR OTHER ALTERNATIVE) AND RECOGNITION OF THE ASSOCIATED STATES • ASSIST THE FRENCH IN INDOCHINA

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Figure C-2. Summary of US Global Policy to US Policy for Southeast Asia

SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED

- PROTECT INDOCHINA FROM COMMUNISM TO PRESERVE IT AS A RESOURCE BASE ESPECIALLY FOR JAPAN, IN ORDER TO PREVENT JAPAN FROM TURNING TO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES FOR TRADE AND RESOURCES (RESOURCES INCLUDED TIN, JUNGSTEN, RICE, RUBBER, OIL, AND IRON ORE.)
- PROTECT INDOCHINA AS A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT STRATEGIC REGION:
 - PROTECT THE OFF-SHORE ISLAND CHAIN
 - PREVENT FALLING DOMINOS BY SUPPORTING VIETNAM AS ONE OF THOSE DOMINOS
 - PREVENT LOSS OF CERTAIN STRATEGIC MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR THE COMPLETION OF US STOCKPILE PROJECTS
 - PREVENT ITS LOSS AS A CROSS-ROAD OF COMMUNICATIONS
 - PREVENT LOSS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA BECAUSE IT IS A VITAL SEGMENT IN LINE OF CONTAINMENT AND AS BASE FOR OPERATIONS IN CONTAINING COMMUNISM
- SECURE FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE COMMUNITY
- AVOID FRENCH SELL-OUT AT GENEVA
- AVOID UNILATERAL ACTION IN ASIA
- PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE OF INDOCHINA BY FINDING AND SUPPORTING VIABLE, NATIONALIST, NON-COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP

- COMMUNISM'S ADVANCE IN ASIA:
 - 'LOSS' OF CHINA AND POSSIBLE CHINESE INTERVENTION IN INDOCHINA
 - NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION
 - IMPACT OF COMMUNIST CONTROL OF SEA ON THE BALANCE OF POWER IN ASIA
- INCOMPATIBILITY OF US INTERESTS:
 - FRANCE TO FIGHT ANTI-COMMUNIST WAR IN INDOCHINA VS. THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION
- FRENCH PREOCCUPATION WITH ALGERIA (AFTER DIEN BIEN PHU DEFEAT)
- EMERGING FORCE OF THIRD WORLD AND CONCEPT OF NON-ALIGNMENT AS EVIDENCED AT THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE

- PROMOTE INDOCHINESE INDEPENDENCE VIA NON-COMMUNIST NATIONALIST LEADERSHIP (BAO DAI OR OTHER ALTERNATIVE) AND RECOGNITION OF THE ASSOCIATED STATES
- ASSIST THE FRENCH IN INDOCHINA IN OPPOSING COMMUNISM:
 - ESTABLISHMENT OF MILITARY MISSION
 - COVERT OPERATIONS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA TO INTERFERE WITH COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES
 - GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS
 - SEATO: REGIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS
 - UNITED ACTION TO CURTAIL AGGRESSION IN INDOCHINA IN RETURN FOR FRENCH GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO INDOCHINA

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1955 - 1960

INTERESTS/OBJECTIVES	PERCEIVED THREATS	STRATEGIES
<p>----- ON A GLOBAL BASIS -----</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HALT THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD • PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNISM • DETER TOTAL WAR • SHORE UP US CREDIBILITY • PRESERVE SECURITY OF THE US AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM ON A WORLDWIDE BASIS • USSR NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROMESS (SPUTNIK) • SUBVERSION AND PROTRACTED GUERRILLA WARFARE • CHINESE CHALLENGE TO BIPOLARITY • US LACK OF APPRECIATION FOR THE DEVELOPING SINO-SOVIET SPLIT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EISENHOWER DOCTRINE • MASSIVE (SELECTIVE) RETALIATION; • DETERRENCE • SAFEGUARDED DISARMAMENT • PROMOTE BILATERAL AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS • PROVIDE ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING NATIONS IN THE FACE OF COMMUNIST SUBVERSION • EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AND VULNERABILITIES OF BLOC COUNTRIES
<p>----- SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED -----</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROTECT INDOCHINA FROM COMMUNISM TO PRESERVE IT AS A RESOURCE BASE FOR JAPAN AND THE FREE WORLD • MAINTAIN WORLDWIDE RESPECT FOR US LEADERSHIP AND BE READY TO RESPOND RESOLUTELY WHEN CHALLENGED, I.E., IF SOUTHEAST ASIA • PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIAN STATES AS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM OVER THE CONTINENT OF ASIA, INCLUDING CHINA, NORTH KOREA, AND NORTH VIETNAM • ASIANS' DISTRUST OF COLONIALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE US ATTEMPT TO CULTIVATE TIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA • THE IMPROVEMENT OF VIET-MINH CAPABILITIES SINCE GENEVA (1954) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DETERRENCE OF CHINESE INTERVENTION IN INDOCHINA BY US THREAT OF USING NUCLEAR WEAPONS • FROM NSC 5809: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROVISION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTHEAST ASIA - ASSIST POLICE FORCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES TO OBTAIN TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT TO DETECT AND

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Figure C-3. Summary of US Global Policy, to US Policy for Southeast Asia

SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED

- PROTECT INDOCHINA FROM COMMUNISM TO PRESERVE IT AS A RESOURCE BASE FOR JAPAN AND THE FREE WORLD
- MAINTAIN WORLDWIDE RESPECT FOR US LEADERSHIP AND BE READY TO RESPOND RESOLUTELY WHEN CHALLENGED, I.E., IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
- PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIAN STATES AS IMPORTANT TO US SECURITY INTERESTS
- PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION OF A FREE AND INDEPENDENT VIETNAM UNDER ANTI-COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP

- ADVANCE OF MONOLITHIC COMMUNISM OVER THE CONTINENT OF ASIA, INCLUDING CHINA, NORTH KOREA, AND NORTH VIETNAM
- ASIANS' DISTRUST OF COLONIALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE US ATTEMPT TO CULTIVATE TIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
- THE IMPROVEMENT OF VIET-MINH CAPABILITIES SINCE GENEVA (1954)
- TURBULENCE IN LAOS
- SUBVERSION AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNIST INSURRECTION
- COMMUNIST POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OFFENSIVE: EXPLOITATION OF WEAKER, NON-COMMUNIST STATES' BACKWARDNESS
- POSSIBLE LOATHNESS OF US ALLIES TO DEFEND ASIAN STATES AS PROVIDED FOR BY UN CHARTER OR SEATO OBLIGATIONS
- NEUTRALITY AND NON-ALIGNMENT

- DETERRENCE OF CHINESE INTERVENTION IN INDOCHINA BY US THREAT OF USING NUCLEAR WEAPONS
- FROM NSC 5809:
 - PROVISION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTHEAST ASIA
 - ASSIST POLICE FORCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES TO OBTAIN TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT TO DETECT AND CONTAIN COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES
 - IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE COVERT OPERATIONS DESIGNED TO ASSIST IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF US OBJECTIVES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
 - PROMOTE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROGRAMS TO DEVELOP SOUTHEAST ASIAN STABILITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND NON-RELIANCE ON COMMUNIST BLOC FOR ASSISTANCE: PROMOTE MULTI-LATERAL TRADE, CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS AND US INVESTMENT IN THE REGION
 - ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL INDIGENOUS FORCES TO FIGHT COMMUNISM
 - MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF US FORCES IN THE FAR EAST AREA TO EXERT A DETERRING INFLUENCE ON COMMUNIST AGGRESSION
 - INVOKE REGIONAL SECURITY OBLIGATIONS (SEATO) WHEN NECESSARY TO HALT AGGRESSION

1960 - 1965

INTERESTS/OBJECTIVES	PERCEIVED THREATS	STRATEGIES
ON A GLOBAL BASIS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREVENT COMMUNISM'S DRIVE TO DOMINATE THE WORLD • MAINTAIN AND PROTECT US SECURITY BY PRESERVING A FREE ASIA AND FREE WORLD • PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN US PLEDGES OF ASSISTANCE AND CREDIBILITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMMUNIST AGGRESSION, IMPERIALISM, AND SUBVERSION • WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND BRUSHFIRE AGGRESSION • LOSS OF US PRESTIGE AND CREDIBILITY WITH ALLIES AND US PUBLIC • NUCLEAR PARITY WITH THE SOVIET UNION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATION-BUILDING; PROVISION OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO DEVELOPING NATIONS • FLEXIBLE RESPONSE; ABILITY TO WAGE LIMITED WARS, GRADUATED ESCALATION, AND COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE
SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HALT PRC'S POWER DRIVE IN ASIA BEFORE MAJOR CONFLAGRATION RESULTS • PREVENT PIECEMEAL LOSS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA (SOUTH VIETNAM, WHILE SMALL, IS A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT PIECE OF THE JIGSAW PUZZLE) • PRESERVE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT FROM DISRUPTION AND INTERVENTION • PRESERVE A NEUTRAL LAOS • MAINTAIN PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA • WORK TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF A PROGRESSIVE AND PROSPEROUS PACIFIC COMMUNITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRUSHFIRE AGGRESSION; TACTICS OF 'SPREAD AND CONQUER' • CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY • NEGATIVE IMPACT OF US DISENGAGEMENT FROM VIETNAM ON ALLIES' VIEW OF US COMMITMENT TO NATO AND OTHER DEFENSE COMMITMENTS • LOSS OF SOUTH VIETNAM BEHIND THE 'BAMBOO CURTAIN' WOULD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRANSFER 20 MILLION PEOPLE OF FREE WORLD TO COMMUNIST BLOC - PUSH REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND INDONESIA TO ACCOMMODATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS - DESTROY SEATO AND UNDERMINE US CREDIBILITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COUNTERINSURGENCY, COVERT OPERATIONS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE • INTRODUCTION OF COMBAT TROOPS IF DEEMED NECESSARY • CONTINUED AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM; ADVISERS AND TECHNICAL, MILITARY, AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE • UNDERMINE DRV/NLF MORALE • PROMOTE SOUTH VIETNAM'S PROGRESS TOWARDS DEVELOPING ITS OWN SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND INITIATIVE IN MEETINGS ITS DEFENSE NEEDS

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Figure C-4. Summary of US Global Policy, 1960-1965, and US Policy for Southeast Asia

ATIONS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE
INTRODUCTION OF COMBAT TROOPS IF
DEEMED NECESSARY

- CONTINUED AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM: ADVISERS AND TECHNICAL, MILITARY, AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
- UNDERMINE DRV/NLF MORALE
- PROMOTE SOUTH VIETNAM'S PROGRESS TOWARDS DEVELOPING ITS OWN SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND INITIATIVE IN MEETINGS ITS DEFENSE NEEDS

CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY

- NEGATIVE IMPACT OF US DISENGAGEMENT FROM VIETNAM ON ALLIES' VIEW OF US COMMITMENT TO NATO AND OTHER DEFENSE COMMITMENTS
- LOSS OF SOUTH VIETNAM BEHIND THE 'BAMBOO CURTAIN' WOULD:
 - TRANSFER 20 MILLION PEOPLE OF FREE WORLD TO COMMUNIST BLOC
 - PUSH REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND INDONESIA TO ACCOMMODATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS
 - DESTROY SEATO AND UNDERMINE US CREDIBILITY
 - STIMULATE BITTER INTERNAL DEBATE IN THE US AND HARASSMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
 - LIMIT US ABILITY TO WAGE LIMITED WAR BY DENYING AIR, LAND, SEA BASES; COMPLICATING LOGS
- CHINESE STRATEGY OF 'TALK-FIGHT' AND ITS EFFECT OF CONFUSION ON THE FREE WORLD
- US LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH LIMITED, ESPECIALLY GUERRILLA, CONFLICTS
- DIEM'S EXCESSES IN RULE AND SOUTH VIETNAM'S INTERNAL STRIFE

PREVENT PIECEMEAL LOSS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA (SOUTH VIETNAM, WHILE SMALL, IS A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT PIECE OF THE JIGSAW PUZZLE)

- PRESERVE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT FROM DISRUPTION AND INTERVENTION
- PRESERVE A NEUTRAL LAOS
- MAINTAIN PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
- WORK TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF A PROGRESSIVE AND PROSPEROUS PACIFIC COMMUNITY
- PROVE THE US CAPABILITY IN CHECKING COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

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1965 - 1970

INTERESTS/OBJECTIVES	PERCEIVED THREATS	STRATEGIES
----- ON A GLOBAL BASIS -----		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREVENT COMMUNISM'S DRIVE TO DOMINATE THE WORLD • STRENGTHEN US - ALLIED RELATIONS • PREVENT WORLD WAR III • CALM TENSIONS WITH USSR AND PRC • PREVENT LOSS OF US CREDIBILITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NUCLEAR PARITY WITH THE USSR • PRC AS MAJOR FORCE BENT ON WORLD DOMINATION • US CREDIBILITY LOSS AND POSSIBLE FAILURE OF COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY • WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION, SUBVERSION AND GUERRILLA WARFARE • GLOBAL TURBULENCE, ESPECIALLY IN THIRD WORLD • DEVELOPING NATIONS 'OVER-DEPENDENCE' ON THE US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'TALK-FIGHT' • PROVISION OF ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING NATIONS • FLEXIBLE RESPONSE • INITIATE DIALOGUE WITH PRC AND USSR • NIXON DOCTRINE AND REALISTIC DETERRENCE • PERSONAL (AND OFTEN SECRET) DIPLOMACY • USE USSR-PRC RIFT FOR POLITICAL LEVERAGE
----- SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED -----		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HALT PRC'S DRIVE IN ASIA BEFORE MAJOR CONFLAGRATION RESULTS • PREVENT PIECEMEAL LOSS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA (SOUTH VIETNAM, WHILE SMALL, IS A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT PIECE OF THE JIGSAW PUZZLE) • PRESERVE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT FROM DISRUPTION AND INTERVENTION • MAINTAIN PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA • PROVE THE US CAPABILITY IN CHECKING COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN THIRD WORLD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRUSHFIRE AGGRESSION: TACTICS OF 'SPREAD AND CONQUER' • CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY • NEGATIVE IMPACT OF US DISENGAGEMENT FROM VIETNAM ON ALLIES' VIEW OF US COMMITMENT TO NATO AND OTHER DEFENSE COMMITMENTS • LOSS OF SOUTH VIETNAM BEHIND THE 'BAMBOO CURTAIN' WOULD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRANSFER 20 MILLION PEOPLE OF FREE WORLD TO COMMUNIST BLOCK - PUSH REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND INDONESIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COUNTER-INSURGENCY, COVERT OPERATIONS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE • INTRODUCTION OF CONVENTIONAL COMBAT FORCES AND BOMBING CAMPAIGNS AGAINST DRV TARGETS, SANCTUARIES, LOCs • CONTINUED AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM: ADVISERS AND TECHNICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE • PROMOTE SOUTH VIETNAM'S PROGRESS TOWARDS SELF-HELP, SELF-DEFENSE, AND SELF-RELIANCE • NEGOTIATE A JUST, HONORABLE, AND DURABLE PEACE

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Figure C-5. Summary of US Global Policy, 1965 to US Policy for Southeast Asia

SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HALT PRC'S DRIVE IN ASIA BEFORE MAJOR CONFLAGRATION RESULTS ● PREVENT PIECEMEAL LOSS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA (SOUTH VIETNAM, WHILE SMALL, IS A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT PIECE OF THE JIGSAW PUZZLE) ● PRESERVE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT FROM DISRUPTION AND INTERVENTION ● MAINTAIN PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ● PROVE THE US CAPABILITY IN CHECKING COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ● AGGRESSION SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO SUCCEED - PREVENT ANOTHER MUNICH CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES ● PREVENT LOSS OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S MORALE ● PROMOTE SELF-HELP AND SELF-DEFENSE OF ALLIES, AVOIDING OVER-DEPENDENCE ON US ● PRESERVE A FREE AND INDEPENDENT SOUTH VIETNAM AND SOUTHEAST ASIA ● SECURE AN HONORABLE, JUST, AND DURABLE PEACE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BRUSHFIRE AGGRESSION: TACTICS OF 'SPREAD AND CONQUER' ● CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY ● NEGATIVE IMPACT OF US DISENGAGEMENT FROM VIETNAM ON ALLIES' VIEW OF US COMMITMENT TO NATO AND OTHER DEFENSE COMMITMENTS ● LOSS OF SOUTH VIETNAM BEHIND THE 'BAMBOO CURTAIN' WOULD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRANSFER 20 MILLION PEOPLE OF FREE WORLD TO COMMUNIST BLOCK - PUSH REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND INDONESIA TO ACCOMMODATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS - DESTROY SEATO AND UNDERMINE US CREDIBILITY - STIMULATE BITTER INTERNAL DEBATE IN THE US AND HARASSMENT OF ADMINISTRATION - LIMIT US ABILITY TO WAGE LIMITED WAR BY DENYING AIR, LAND, SEA BASES: COMPLICATING LOGS AND INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS' ● CHINESE STRATEGY OF 'TALK-FIGHT' AND ITS EFFECT OF CONFUSION ON THE FREE WORLD ● OVERDEPENDENCE OF ALLIES ON US ● US INTROSPECTION AND ISOLATION IF US LOSES IN VIETNAM ● DRV AGGRESSION ● PRC AND USSR ASSISTANCE TO DRV ● SUBVERSION IN THE THIRD WORLD, ESPECIALLY IN LAOS, CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● COUNTER-INSURGENCY, COVERT OPERATIONS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE ● INTRODUCTION OF CONVENTIONAL COMBAT FORCES AND BOMBING CAMPAIGNS AGAINST DRV TARGETS, SANCTUARIES, LOGS ● CONTINUED AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM: ADVISERS AND TECHNICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ● PROMOTE SOUTH VIETNAM'S PROGRESS TOWARDS SELF-HELP, SELF-DEFENSE, AND SELF-RELIANCE ● NEGOTIATE A JUST, HONORABLE, AND DURABLE PEACE ● NIXON DOCTRINE ● VIETNAMIZATION ● CURTAIL DRV USE OF SANCTUARIES BY (SECRET) BOMBINGS AND GROUND OPERATIONS ● GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL OF US FORCES ● INFUSION OF ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE (MILITARY AND ECONOMIC) TO SOUTH VIETNAM
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1970 - 1976

INTERESTS/OBJECTIVES	PERCEIVED THREATS	STRATEGIES
----- ON A GLOBAL BASIS -----		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAINTAIN VITALITY OF US GLOBAL ALLIANCES • RESOLVE LOCAL CONFLICTS PRIOR TO THE USE OF FORCE • DETER NUCLEAR WAR • BUILD A STABLE WORLD ORDER BASED ON MUTUAL RESTRAINT AND UNDERSTANDING • PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF DEVELOPING NATIONS • DETER AGGRESSION AND MAINTAIN A STRONG DEFENSE • DECREASE TENSIONS WITH PRC AND USSR • PRESERVE US CREDIBILITY AND COMMITMENTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REGIONALISM: OPEC, COMMON MARKET, ETC. • POSSIBILITY OF LOCAL CONFLICTS ERUPTING INTO MAJOR CONFLAGRATION • COMMUNIST AGGRESSION AND TERRORISM • OVER-RELIANCE ON OR FALSE SECURITY FROM DETERRE • US UNPREPAREDNESS TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM, ESPECIALLY WITH THE THIRD WORLD • ISOLATIONISM AND A CLOSED, COMPARTMENTALIZED WORLD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIXON DOCTRINE AND REALISTIC DETERRENCE • PROVISION OF ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL, AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING NATIONS • PERSONAL (AND OFTEN SECRET) DIPLOMACY • ASSIST SELECTED COUNTRIES IN DEVELOPING THEIR OWN INDIGENOUS DEFENSE CAPABILITIES • ARMS LIMITATIONS: US MAINTENANCE OF BALANCE IN BOTH NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES
----- SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED -----		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SECURE HONORABLE AND DURABLE PEACE IN INDOCHINA FOR BOTH THE VIETNAMESE, OTHER INDOCHINESE PEOPLES, AND FOR AMERICANS - AVOID RELAPSE INTO ANOTHER WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA - STRENGTHEN UNCERTAIN PEACE IN VIETNAM • PRESERVE SEATO AND OTHER PACIFIC DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS • ELIMINATE CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY INTO SOUTH VIETNAM FROM BORDERING NATIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY AND COVERT COMMUNIST INTERVENTION, SUBVERSION, AND TERRORISM • BREAKDOWN OF PEACE OR FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT PEACE AGREEMENT • OVER-EXTENSION OF INFLUENCE BY ANY OF THE MAJOR WORLD POWERS IN THE PACIFIC, IN GENERAL, AND IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, IN PARTICULAR • SOUTH VIETNAM'S WEAKNESS, INSTABILITY, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO CAMBODIA, THAILAND, AND SOUTH VIETNAM • VIETNAMIZATION • PEACE TALKS AND OTHER RELATED NEGOTIATIONS WITH HANOI AND THE PRC • BOMBING OF CAMBODIA AND NORTH VIETNAM, AND OTHER OPERATIONS IN OR OVER CAMBODIA, NORTH VIETNAM, AND LAOS

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Figure C-6. Summary of US Global Policy, 1970 to US Policy for Southeast Asia

SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SECURE HONORABLE AND DURABLE PEACE IN INDOCHINA FOR BOTH THE VIETNAMESE, OTHER INDOCHINESE PEOPLES, AND FOR AMERICANS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AVOID RELAPSE INTO ANOTHER WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA - STRENGTHEN UNCERTAIN PEACE IN VIETNAM • PRESERVE SEATO AND OTHER PACIFIC DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS • ELIMINATE CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY INTO SOUTH VIETNAM FROM BORDERING NATIONS • PRESERVE A FREE, NON-COMMUNIST SOUTH VIETNAM • PROMOTE THE REGION'S SELF-DEVELOPMENT, REGIONAL COOPERATION, STABILITY, SELF-DEFENSE, AND ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENT VISION OF THE FUTURE • STABILIZE THE BALANCE (OF POWER) IN THE REGION WITH OTHER MAJOR POWERS PROFESSING INTEREST IN THE REGION • REDUCE US CASUALTIES IN VIETNAM AND RESOLVE THE MIA/POW PROBLEM • PROMOTE STABLE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM • ENCOURAGE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF CONFLICT IN CAMBODIA • PROMOTE RECONSTRUCTION OF LAOS AND MAINTENANCE OF CEASE-FIRE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCY AND COVERT COMMUNIST INTERVENTION, SUBVERSION, AND TERRORISM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BREAKDOWN OF PEACE OR FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT PEACE AGREEMENT • OVER-EXTENSION OF INFLUENCE BY ANY OF THE MAJOR WORLD POWERS IN THE PACIFIC, IN GENERAL, AND IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, IN PARTICULAR • SOUTH VIETNAM'S WEAKNESS, INSTABILITY, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT • NORTH VIETNAM'S PURSUANCE OF WAR ACTIVITIES • US DOMESTIC DISTRESS GENERATED BY WATER-GATE • FROM THE EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE - CONGRESSIONAL LIMITATIONS ON PROVISION OF AID TO THE REGION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO CAMBODIA, THAILAND, AND SOUTH VIETNAM • VIETNAMIZATION • PEACE TALKS AND OTHER RELATED NEGOTIATIONS WITH HANOI AND THE PRG • BOMBING OF CAMBODIA AND NORTH VIETNAM, AND OTHER OPERATIONS IN OR OVER CAMBODIA, NORTH VIETNAM, AND LAOS • ECONOMIC AID TO SOUTHEAST ASIA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROVISION OF AID TO CAMBODIA, THAILAND, LAOS, AND SOUTH VIETNAM - STIMULATE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRIES IN THE AREA - RETURN REFUGEES TO PRODUCTIVE LIVES • PROMOTE INCREASED ROLE OF US PACIFIC ALLIES (E.G., AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND) IN ANZUS AND OTHER PACIFIC DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS AS STABILIZING INFLUENCE IN REGION • MAINTAIN US TIES WITH AND PARTICIPATION IN SEATO AND OTHER PACIFIC DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS
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PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The following persons participated in the BDM Senior Review Panel meeting on September 7 and 8, 1979 at The BDM Westbranch Conference Center. Members of the panel provided a critique of the original drafts for this volume and offered detailed comments during the panel discussions.

Braestrup, Peter., Editor, Wilson Quarterly. Former Saigon Bureau Chief for The Washington Post and author of Big Story.

Colby, William E., LLB., Former Ambassador and Deputy to COMUSMACV for CORDS, and former Director of Central Intelligence.

Davis, Vincent, Dr., Professor and Director of the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, The University of Kentucky.

Greene, Fred, Dr., Professor, Williams College. Former Director, Office of Research for East Asian Affairs, Department of State.

Hallowell, John H., Dr., James B. Duke Professor of Political Science, Duke University.

Hughes, Thomas L., LLD., President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Former Director for Intelligence and Research, US Department of State with rank of Assistant Secretary of State.

Johnson, U. Alexis, Chairman of the Senior Review Panel. Career Ambassador. Former Under Secretary of State and former Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Thailand, and Japan, and (1964-65) Deputy Ambassador to Maxwell Taylor in the Republic of Vietnam.

Sapin, Burton M., Dr., Dean, School of Public and International Affairs, The George Washington University. Former Foreign Service Officer.

Thompson, Kenneth W., Dr., Director, White Burkett Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.

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INTERVIEWS

The following interviews, conducted by members of the BDM study team, provided either general or specific information useful in Volume III:

Berger, Samuel D., Retired Ambassador. Former Ambassador and Deputy to Ambassador Bunker in Saigon 1968-69. Interviewed at his home in Washington, D.C. on 22 June 1979.

Brady, Leslie S., Retired Foreign Service Officer. Former Public Affairs Officer in Saigon 1951-1952. Interviewed at The BDM Corporation 5 June 1979.

Co in, Lucien, Colonel, US Army (Ret). Former OSS and CIA officer, serving in North Vietnam in 1945-46 and 1955, and in South Vietnam in the mid-1950s and 1961-1964. Interviewed at The BDM Corporation on 25 August 1979.

Davis, Vincent, Dr., Director, Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce. Frequent consultant to high-level offices in the Departments of State and Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. Interviewed at The BDM Corporation 13 June 1979.

Bui D., Former GVN Ambassador to the US (1967-71). Cabinet Secretary in the Defense Ministry in the Bao Dai Government. Interviewed in Washington, D.C. 8 June 1979.

Lemnitzer, Lyman L., General, US Army (Ret) Former Army Chief of Staff and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. Interviewed in the Pentagon on 15 June 1979.

Taylor, Maxwell D., General, US Army (Ret). Former Army Chief of Staff, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam. Interviewed at his home in Washington, D.C. on 11 July 1979.

Westmoreland, William C., General, US Army (Ret) Former COMUSMACV and Army Chief of Staff. Interviewed at The BDM Corporation on 17 August 1979.

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The following persons responded in writing to BDM queries and provided information of use in Volume III:

Croizat, Victor Colonel, USMC (Ret). While employed by the Rand Corporation in 1967, Colonel Croizat translated a document, The Lessons of the War in Indochina, Volume II, written in 1955 by the Commander in Chief, French Forces, Indochina. Colonel Croizat provided The BDM Corporation with his views on US involvement in Indochina in a letter dated 11 September 1979. A detailed transcript covering his experiences in Indochina in the mid-1950s is held by the Oral History Section, History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

Harkins, Paul D., General, US Army (Ret). Former COMUSMACV (1962-64) in a letter to BDM dated 29 August 1979 provided certain of his views of the 1963-64 period in Vietnam.

Nolting, Frederick E., Jr., Retired Ambassador. Former Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam (1961-1963) in a letter to BDM dated 18 June 1979 replied briefly on the Diem coup, about which he still feels strongly, and furnished a copy of an interview he gave to the U.S. News and World Report and which appeared in the 26 July 1971 issue of that magazine, pp. 66-70.

The following transcripts in the US Army Military History Research Collection, Senior Officers Debriefing Program, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania provided some background data or insights useful in Volume III.

Goodpaster, Andrew J., General, US Army (Ret). Former DEPCCOMUSMACV (1968-69) and later SACEUR, USCINCEUR (1970-1974). Interviewed by Col. William D. Johnson and LTC James C. Ferguson, (Class of '76 at AWC) at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 9 January 1976.

Harkins, Paul D., General, US Army (Ret). Former COMUSMACV. Interviewed by Major Jacob B. Couch Jr. in Dallas, Texas on 28 April 1972.

Professor Vincent Davis, Director of the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, made available to the BDM Corporation, for purposes of this study, selected correspondence and tape recordings from John Paul Vann for the period 1965-1972. As a lieutenant colonel, Vann was the senior advisor in Tay Ninh Province in 1963, notably at the Battle of Ap Bac. He retired in 1964 and from 1965 until his death in 1972 he served in Vietnam with USAID and CORDS. He was the Corps Advisor in II Corps as a civilian at the end. Vann was a controversial individual, but his service in Vietnam was longer and more varied than that of any other American, hence his unique value as an observer. The data provided was of some use in Volume III but has its greatest value in Volumes V and VI.

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