AN ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON'S
VIETNAM WAR RHETORIC

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By
Stephen Archer Reilly, B.A.
The Ohio State University
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Approved by

James L. Elden
Adviser
Department of Speech
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CHAPTER I
THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

Machiavelli stated in The Prince that a leader can either rule through love or fear. By fear, Machiavelli meant force. By love, the author described a type of rule which was in accord with the will of the governed.¹ This latter sort of government is that which is demanded in democratic states and as a result, often requires that democratic princes persuade the public of the rightness of their actions.

Such a task began for Richard M. Nixon in January of 1969. For, at that time, he became a democratic prince and inherited the difficult problem of the Vietnam War over which his public was divided in their support of differing methods of discontinuance. Some wanted to use nuclear bombs in Vietnam in an attempt to defeat the North Vietnamese. Others desired to withdraw unilaterally immediately from Vietnam. Most were confused and unsure about what should be done. As the prince of the United States, President Nixon had to persuade the public of the rightness

of his solution to the problem and in that manner act congenially with the will of the majority of Americans.

Should he succeed in gaining this acquiescence, one would think that the President would enhance his reputation with his constituency for he would have accomplished the desired change by reversing a twenty-year American involvement tide. This point is disputed, however, by two students of American politics, Richard Scammon and Benjamin Wattenberg. They stated in The Real Majority that if Nixon does end the war, he is not likely to gain a political trophy for his electoral case.\(^2\) This observation appears to have implications for Nixon's rhetoric. The assignment of discovering these implications and the manner in which the President uses them, if indeed he does, thereby is defined.

To aid in this task of discovery and evaluation, the critical method defined by Lloyd Bitzer in "The Rhetorical Situation" will be used as the tool for analysis of the presidential addresses because of its emphasis on a situational orientation to rhetoric. Bitzer states that rhetoric functions as a response to a particular set of circumstances which invite discourse.\(^3\) These conditions he describes are defined as concerns which are other than they


should be and are correctable, or at least capable of being affected, by discourse. The most obvious implication of this situational belief on rhetoric is, "A rhetorical situation must exist as a necessary condition of rhetorical discourse." A speech, then, "derives its rhetorical significance from the existence of a particular situation." In other words, observes Bitzer, if a rhetorical situation does not exist, then, it is impossible for rhetorical discourse to exist. In the circumstance mentioned above, a speech becomes rhetorical to the extent that it functions as a "fitting response" to a situation; this is analogous to the way in which an answer operates as a fitting response to a question.

In this same question and answer sense, Bitzer claims that the situation controls the rhetorical response. If a person asks a question of another, the other does not respond with just anything. He responds in a specific way so as to meet the needs of the question. Such is the case between the situation and rhetorical discourse. A person does not speak in any way to respond to a situation. He seeks to satisfy the conditions of that situation.

The belief that rhetoric is pragmatic logically follows

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4 Ibid., p. 6.
5 Ibid., p. 5.
6 Ibid., p. 6.
from this orientation to rhetorical discourse. Rhetoric comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself. It is not therefore, strictly speaking, aesthetic, in that the need which this kind of discourse satisfies is not the appreciation of it for itself. Rhetoric, in the same way, is neither strictly scientific nor strictly persuasive. Its function is neither to inform nor explain, as is the function of scientific discourse, nor is rhetoric's function just to persuade. Ultimately rhetoric works, according to Bitzer, to produce action or change in the world. The action or change is required because of the existence of a particular situation. Rhetoric, then, is "a mode of altering reality ... by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action." Because rhetorical discourse seeks to alter reality by the mediation of thought or action it is always persuasive; but again, not all persuasive discourse is rhetoric. Rhetoric must seek to satisfy the needs defined by a particular situation.

Because of the importance of the rhetorical situation in analyzing and evaluating rhetorical discourse, the critic must carefully define the situation. This must be done in order to identify the exigence of the situation which

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7 Ibid., p. 3.
8 Ibid., p. 4.
9 Ibid.
the rhetor must change and the manner in which the rhetor attempts to implement this change. "Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence."10 Three constituents make up any rhetorical situation: the exigence, the audience, and the constraints.

An exigence is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be. The exigencies are the problems or needs in a situation which must be altered. However, not all exigencies are rhetorical. For, in order to be rhetorical, an unsatisfactory condition must be capable of positive modification through, or assisted by speech.

One may argue at this point that the topic of this paper is not applicable under this definition of an exigence, since the exigence, the Vietnam War, cannot be altered by discourse directed to the American people. The existence of fighting in Vietnam can be changed only by negotiation between the United States and the North

10 Ibid., p. 6.
Vietnamese, or by action, escalation of the war, or pulling the troops out. It will be argued later, however, that the existence of the Vietnam War is not the situation with which the President must contend because each of the speeches to be discussed has specific problems concerning the public with which President Nixon is contending. Very generally, it is necessary to point out here, the exigence throughout all the speeches with which the President is concerned is public acceptance of his Vietnam policies.

This brings us to the final point concerning the exigence. In any rhetorical situation, there will be one central exigence which acts as an organizing principle for other exigencies. For example, if the public had accepted President Lyndon B. Johnson's Vietnam policies, the troubling events at the 1968 Democratic Convention perhaps would not have occurred, student demonstrations would have been greatly decreased and questions concerning the credibility of the presidency might not have been raised. The central exigence "specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected."\(^{11}\)

The rhetorical audience is discerned by identifying those persons who can be influenced by discourse and are capable of being mediators of change.\(^{12}\) This definition

\(^{11}\text{Ibid., pp. 6-7.}\)

\(^{12}\text{Ibid., pp. 7-8.}\)
excludes persons such as Abby Hoffman or Robert Welch from President Nixon's rhetorical audience. The reason is that people who have unchangeable convictions in regard to a particular set of circumstances are incapable of being affected by discourse and, therefore, are not, in themselves, rhetorical. The second criterion of the audience is that it be capable of the change which a speech attempts to produce. If one is susceptible to being influenced by discourse but is incapable of producing the desired change, then that person is not part of a speaker's rhetorical audience. The President of the United States is the only person who can be an audience for one who attempts to affect directly American action in Vietnam. He is the only one capable of producing the desired change. If a speaker seeks to affect American action in Vietnam through public pressure, however, his audience would be anyone who is in a position to be influenced by his words.

Finally, the rhetorical situation consists of a set of

13 George Reedy points out in The Twilight of the Presidency (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 37-40, that the President is Commander-in-Chief but Congress has the authority to raise and support forces. Presidents have found it simple, however, to place Congress in a position where it has no alternative other than to back the President. The President has the capacity to order troops into any area of the world. Reedy states it is inconceivable that Congress would refuse to support men who are fighting in the name of their country. Moreover, we entered Vietnam under the power granted to the President by Congress to take all measures necessary in Southeast Asia to repel aggression. Following the committal of troops to repel that aggression, the President is the only one with the power to remove such troops.
constraints. This category is composed of persons, events, objects, and relations which are part of the situation because they have the power to mediate decision and action needed to modify the exigence. These constraints include such elements as beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, images, and the rhetorical situation. They are, first, those which are originated or managed by the speaker and his method; and second, any other constraint which may be operating in a situation. A speaker in a particular circumstance not only uses certain elements of the situation for his betterment but also provides additional ones.\textsuperscript{14}

If President Johnson could have convinced the American people that the United States had a responsibility to protect the government of South Vietnam, he would have managed the American attitude of duty to produce the constraint that we had an obligation in Vietnam. An example of other constraints in a situation over which the speaker has no control might be interpretations by the press of what a speaker said.

These elements of the rhetorical situation present a skeleton outline for analyzing President Nixon's Vietnam speeches. First, the exigencies must be identified since they are the conditions which the discourse seeks to satisfy. The controlling exigence and the other exigencies

\textsuperscript{14}Bitzer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.
will be labeled with a consideration as to why they are problems and how they function with each other to cause other problems. Second, the audience which Nixon is addressing will be described. It was discussed earlier that Nixon is not addressing every person who hears him. The question is, "Who is the audience?" What are its attitudes and beliefs? How are they capable of being influenced? What change does the President seek to bring about? How are they mediators of that change? Finally, there will be an identification of the constraints in each situation. What are they? Which ones are present in the situation? Which ones does Nixon provide? How do they constrain decision so as to modify the exigence? How does Nixon use the constraints to induce change by the audience and thereby meet the exigencies?

As interpreted throughout the centuries rhetoric involves some type of discourse between persons. Most often this has been described as persuasive discourse primarily between speaker and an audience: intrapersonal communication has seldom been considered in the field of rhetoric. This indicates that the very nature of rhetoric implies some type of communicative process. A communicator who is operating in a particular situation with a particular set of influences acting upon him attempts to impart a message to another person who is functioning in a particular
situation with a special set of influences acting upon him.\textsuperscript{15} It is necessary, therefore, that the rhetorical critic analyze those factors which lie outside the speech itself but which affect it. Indeed, no speech takes place in a vacuum. The situation is important, then, to the consideration of rhetorical discourse in that the influences acting on the speaker and receiver affect the way they will perceive the event.\textsuperscript{16} In this way the situation will govern the way a speech is interpreted by a receiver and the needs which a speaker sees. For this reason, if no other, a consideration of the situation has rhetorical significance.

In analyzing any situation the exigencies must be one of the first aspects a critic identifies. This is essentially the reason for rhetorical discourse. This author agrees with Bitzer in his contention that rhetorical discourse is called into existence by a particular set of problems. This is because, as Richard Whately pointed out, change is not good in and for itself.\textsuperscript{17} A reason must, therefore, be given for some change. In attack or support


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 211.

of a status quo, then, some exigence must exist for discourse to be rhetorical. The existence of the Vietnam War was certainly an exigence in 1968. Eugene McCarthy, a relatively unknown senator, gained an impressive number of votes running against President Johnson in the New Hampshire primary of that year by campaigning primarily on the issue that he would bring an end to that war. The central exigence in regard to the war, as stated earlier, is not continuance or discontinuance. Relatively few subscribe to a war of attrition in Vietnam. The question is, "How does the United States get out of Vietnam?" Because the discussion of this issue has proceeded since President Nixon's election, it may be assumed that the Vietnam War is still a substantial problem, an exigence. A rhetorical situation in relation to Vietnam still exists in the Nixon administration.

The audience must be an important consideration to a rhetorical critic. Because rhetoric is a type of persuasive discourse, it must be designed to produce some change in some group of people. A critic cannot properly analyze the persuasive function of speech unless he knows the beliefs and attitudes of the audience. This is because a knowledge of pertinent beliefs and attitudes allows the scholar to identify the manner in which a speaker's words should affect these mental factors to produce the desired effect. In order to understand the
way in which the speaker's words act upon certain attitudes or beliefs in the audience, the student must also know the change which the speaker desires. This gives validity to Bitzer's assertion concerning the persuadable audience. If the assumption is true that rhetoric by its nature is persuasive, a speaker must have the potentiality to influence, or persuade, an audience in order for an act to be rhetorical. Such a concept has particular significance for this study.

When the President delivers an address on television anyone can hear him. Among Nixon's potential listeners are, no doubt, many who staunchly oppose his basic stance, the Robert Welch or Abby Hoffman types. For them, anything other than a change of policy, to the one they believe in, will be less than satisfying. There will be those staunchly in favor of Nixon's position. There will also be a wide middle ground that ranges from those who are opposed to a policy but can live with it, to those who are undecided in their opinion about an issue. A shift of policy to satisfy one of the extremes would no doubt alienate some of those in favor of the existing policy and also those, on the other extreme, who could live with it. Moreover, Nixon is not a politician who is concerned about the extremes. He is a compromiser, a man who attempts to occupy the middle position because he believes this is the
best way for government to operate. If he cannot satisfy everyone, the question is, who can he please? Those he potentially can satisfy compose his audience.

In regard to presidential television discourse, to be a member of the persuadable audience is to be a "mediator of change." The public has little control over governmental action. The physical act of voting for or against a particular bill is reserved for legislators. Governmental policy is set by administrators. The only physical kind of action the public can perform is to bring pressure upon those in power to act a particular way in regard to a particular issue. Their pressure will depend upon their acceptance and rejection of alternative policies. The desired change, then, in relation to governmental policy, is individual acceptance of a policy.

Thus, the audience is always an important consideration in the rhetorical critic's attempt to understand a piece of discourse because the audience is being acted upon. In television discourse, the audience is so large, with so many diverse beliefs, that a speaker cannot persuade everyone. If one is engaged in rhetoric he is interested in implementing some change through persuasive discourse. In television presidential messages, the change

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is public acceptance of presidential policy. If one is capable of accepting a particular policy and is a "mediator of change," he is part of the persuadable audience and vice versa.

The concept of constraints has significance to presidential messages because of the many facets of life that a governmental policy affects. For example, governmental action in Vietnam certainly affects industry. Some industries rely almost solely on governmental contracts for their existence. A reduction in the need for jet planes certainly has an effect on Boeing which, in turn, affects employment. If Boeing is producing fewer planes, it receives less income and needs fewer workers. Understanding constraints enables the critic to appreciate why a speaker acts in a certain way.

The primary concern of this study is an analysis of the manner in which Nixon moves to persuade Americans to the correctness of his policies. This examination will be conducted through a consideration of the interaction of the exigence, the audience, and the constraints in the rhetorical situation.
CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

Previously, note was made of the idea that essential to any consideration of factors which bring a rhetorical situation into being is a knowledge of the exigence. Such a descriptive attempt uncovered a twenty-year American involvement trend. An understanding of those pertinent occurrences which led to this Vietnam problem, therefore, appears to be vital. The intent here is not to judge the actions of men concerning Vietnam, but to answer two questions. How and why did the United States get involved in that country?

In resolving these two inquiries, a conflict in American ideology emerges which has spurred the manner of the initial American intervention and still affects the United States' Vietnam policy today. This doctrinal discrepancy exists between the anti-colonial and anti-communist sentiments in the American value system. By tradition, this nation sympathizes with subject people attempting to gain their independence, and since World War II it has also committed itself to halting communist
expansion in the world. The conflict arises when the people seeking their independence are led by communists. Such a condition implies that, should these people gain their independence, they will become a communist state. Additionally, the matter is complicated when the colonial power is an ally of the United States, or is the United States itself. This contrariety was and is the case in Vietnam and it has had a profound effect upon American policy.

By the end of 1946, the cold war with Russia and the attempt to halt communist expansion in Europe had begun. France, the colonial power in Vietnam, was one of our allies in this cold war; we had a great stake in helping the French democrats meet the serious threat of communism inside France. The Truman administration, not desirous of supporting France's reconquest of Asia, faced the polarity of either offending the French or weakening French democrats who were fighting communist expansion in Europe. In order to resolve the dilemma the United States adopted a neutral position in Asia. We neither publicly condemned nor supported the French in Asia, although privately the United States urged the French to grant the Vietnamese

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2Ibid.
their independence. In conjunction with this neutral position the United States gave all possible aid to France in Europe. David Schoenbrun states, "This bifurcated policy had the result of financing France's colonial adventures, because what we gave them in Europe helped divert other funds to their campaign in Vietnam."5

Still, these Truman policies may be considered as a centrist position in that the United States refused to support the colonial power, France, in Asia but did give aid to France's fight against communism in Europe. The effect, as Schoenbrun suggests, may have been one of supporting France in Vietnam. This effect was not, however, obvious and it could easily be rationalized by the position of fighting communist expansion in Europe. A balance was, thereby, maintained between the anti-colonial and anti-communist sentiments.

This policy was changing, however, in 1949 when the United States began active support of the French in their colonial war. Two events of that year precipitated this action: communist rule was established in China; and, communist Chinese armies moved into Korea.6 When we

4Schoenbrun, op. cit.
5Ibid.
6Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., p. 31.
consider that the American mind has always held a certain distrust for the oriental besides disliking communism, the grave effect of a Chinese communist military victory over an American-supported regime can be understood. Schoenbrun notes:

America was startled and badly shaken by the defeat of Chiang and the specter of communist China. The fantasy of the "Yellow Peril," long a nightmare to some American politicians, had now become an even graver "Red-Yellow Peril." It is surely no mere accident that this was the moment when Joseph McCarthy arose and made his first major speech charging that a world wide communist conspiracy penetrated deep into the State Department. It was the easiest way to explain to Americans why we had lost China.  

This increased fear of communist expansion upset the ideological balance between the two previously mentioned concepts. The struggle against communism gained a higher priority. This can be seen in the fact that a policy leading to the containment of China increasingly preoccupied the Truman Administration. Truman coupled his announcement of increased arms shipment to France in Vietnam with his decision to send American combat troops into Korea and his proclamation concerning the intervention of the United States between Communist and Nationalist

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8 Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 31.
China in the Formosa Straits.\footnote{Kahin and Lewis, \textit{op. cit.}} This affected France's position in Vietnam, rendering it no longer a colonial power in Asia, but a nation fighting against communist expansion in that part of the world. George Kahin and John Lewis note:

In accordance with these new American priorities, [those of fighting communism in Asia], France's position in Vietnam was now described in terms of the Free World's stand against Communist expansion . . . . Now linked to the Cold War, Vietnam was regarded as an area of strategic importance to the United States.\footnote{Ibid.}

The United States proceeded to conform its actions to these priorities by extending diplomatic recognition to the government of Bao Dai in South Vietnam and increasing aid to South Vietnam. Kahin and Lewis wrote:

The dollar flow to back up the French military campaign in Vietnam grew rapidly from approximately $150 million per year in 1950 to over $1 billion in the fiscal year of 1954, when the United States was underwriting 80 per cent of the war.\footnote{Ibid., p. 32.}

The one action, however, which neither Truman, nor the subsequent president, Eisenhower, was willing to implement was that of committing American combat troops to Vietnam. This policy was highlighted in 1954 when Eisenhower refused to send American military units to aid the French at Dienbienphu.

The French built, heavily armed, and manned a garrison
at Dienbienphu. They felt that if they could initiate a heavy Vietminh attack on this garrison, they could virtually destroy the Ho Chi Minh-led army. The attack, they were able to cause, but they could not, however, defeat the Vietminh. Therefore, the French appealed to Washington for combat support. After listening to weeks of heated debate, Eisenhower refused to grant the request. In doing so, he believed, first, that the French had to recognize the government of South Vietnam as being in control of a free and sovereign state because the United States feared the repercussions of intervention in a war which was contrary to the nationalistic interests of the Vietnamese people. This reasoning was based on the fact that such intervention would not only turn the people of Vietnam against the United States but it would also discredit the Boa Dai regime. Secondly, Eisenhower felt that he would need Congressional approval in order to commit troops to Vietnam. But Congressional leaders indicated that he could not get this consent. The administration finally concluded that because American Allies were unwilling to join it, such an act would appear as "a brutal example of imperialism." Thus, without

12 Ibid, pp. 36-37.
13 Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 37.
American combat support, the French did not continue the war in Vietnam.

The end to hostilities was realized in the Geneva Treaty of 1954 which contained four primary provisions concerning Vietnam. First, Vietnam was to be partitioned along the 17th Parallel into North and South Vietnam.\textsuperscript{15} This was done to bring about an effective cease fire and political settlement. French troops and the mercenary state of Vietnam soldiers under French control were to regroup south of the 17th Parallel and the Vietminh forces were to regroup to the north of the line. This was, however, intended to be only a provisional line and did not establish separate political entities.\textsuperscript{16} Secondly, regulations were imposed on foreign military bases, personnel, and increased armaments.\textsuperscript{17} This, as the first provision, was designed to facilitate peace until the reunification of the country, which was provided for under the third part of the treaty. In 1956 country-wide elections were to be held in which the Vietnamese people would select between the government of the North and that of the South. Finally, an International Control Commission

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\textsuperscript{16}Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 39.

\textsuperscript{17}Raskin and Fall, op. cit.
was established to supervise the implementation of the treaty.\textsuperscript{18}

The United States, however, did not sign this agreement. Instead the nation issued a unilateral declaration stating: first, it would restrain from the use or threat of force to disturb the treaty; secondly, it would view any renewal of aggression in violation of the treaty as a serious threat to international security and peace; finally, this country stated that it would seek to achieve unity in Vietnam through elections supervised by the United Nations.\textsuperscript{19} The only apparent difference, then, between the Geneva Treaty and the United States' declaration was the agency which would supervise the elections. Both had provisions denouncing the renewal of hostilities. The treaty and the declaration provided for an election to reunite the country. The Geneva Treaty, however, provided for supervision of an International Control Commission and the United States stipulated supervision by the United Nations.

The important point, though, is not the difference in the two documents but the fact that the United States did not sign the treaty. Eisenhower faced a dilemma in regard to the latter agreement due to the existence of

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
Senator Joseph McCarthy's accusations concerning a global communist conspiracy and the prophesied victory of Ho Chi Minh in the 1956 election. By signing the Geneva Treaty, the United States would have been giving tacit approval to a communist government in Vietnam, thereby allowing Democrats in the American presidential election of 1956 to accuse the Republicans of giving Indochina to the communists. Besides these risks, however, there were also perils involved in opposing the Geneva Treaty. First, the American public would not have supported a United States military involvement in Vietnam. Kahin and Lewis stated:

The unpopularity of the Korean War carried over into a general public desire to avoid becoming entangled in another military involvement on the continent of Asia. Only a year after the Korean truce the American people would hardly have welcomed a new war on China's southern flank.

Moreover, the United States could not risk offending the French because we needed the support of that nation's leaders, who were determined to gain a political settlement at Geneva, in order to strengthen the defense of Europe against communism. In resolution of the problem,

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20 Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 43.
21 Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., p. 44.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
therefore, the President remained neutral on the treaty. By adopting this stance, the United States, according to Kahin and Lewis, disassociated itself to the extent possible from the conference proceedings and, in the end, neither gave its full approval to the agreement nor registered outright opposition.  

Secretary of State Dulles then negotiated the South-east Asia Treaty Organization, which was designed to strengthen the Western position in Indochina and provide a major barrier against communism. Signed by the United States, United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines, and Pakistan, this agreement stated that armed aggression against any of the signatories would be met by all the members. The treaty, further, provided that in case of subversion the members were to consult each other on measures to be taken for the common defense. Finally, by unanimous consent, the territories of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam were included under the provisions.

This last step contradicted the Geneva Treaty in that the inclusion of South Vietnam under the protection of SEATO implied that this provisional entity was a sovereign

24 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
25 Ibid., p. 61
26 Ibid., p. 62.
state of political character. Recall, the Geneva Treaty created South Vietnam only as a temporary regroupment zone. The SEATO protection was also inconsistent with the neutral status of the Asian zone.²⁷ Individual nations, apart from the Geneva Treaty, promised protection to South Vietnam, thereby implying partisan concerns. Moreover, those contradictions indicated that the United States did not intend to uphold the peace agreement.

Between 1954 and 1956, America attempted to build up South Vietnam, now under Premier Ngo Dinh Diem, politically, economically, and militarily. Financial assistance was, at this time, given directly to Diem instead of through the French,²⁸ and rose to approximately two billion dollars during the fiscal years 1955 to 1960.²⁹ Militarily, the United States took over the training, equipping, and cost of the South Vietnamese Army. This was done through the Military Assistance Advisory Group which was present in Vietnam before the Geneva Treaty, and for that reason, allowed to stay. Their mission was to streamline the Vietnamese Army to meet a possible attack from the North.³⁰

Despite this aid, however, Diem apparently was unable

²⁷Ibid., p. 63.
²⁸Kaskin and Fall, op. cit., p. 480.
²⁹Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., p. 77.
³⁰Ibid.
to gain enough support to defeat Ho Chi Minh in the 1956 elections.\textsuperscript{31} When in 1955, the government of North Vietnam sought to begin discussions for the reunification elections, Diem refused. He did so on the grounds that, first, his government was not bound by the Geneva Treaty since he had not signed the treaty.\textsuperscript{32} Second, he stated that the people of North Vietnam could not express their will freely and that the falsified votes of North Vietnam would defeat the ballots of the South.\textsuperscript{33} He continued this position in refusing to hold the 1956 elections.

Shortly following the initial refusal to consult with North Vietnam, the Premier, with complete American diplomatic support, declared South Vietnam to be a sovereign state.\textsuperscript{34} This postulate allowed any Northern-supported insurgency in the South to be viewed as external aggression.\textsuperscript{35} Despite this possible interpretation, however, Diem faced a great amount of resistance in the South which by 1959 grew to revolutionary proportions and in 1960 was officially organized as the National Liberation Front.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., pp. 79-81.
\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 80.
\textsuperscript{33}Raskin and Fall, op. cit., p. 480.
\textsuperscript{34}Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., p. 82.
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 127.
\textsuperscript{36}Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 47.
The conflict triggered a debate within the Kennedy administration, for the President and most of his advisors viewed the Southern hostilities as a civil war; however, some in the administration, including Secretary of State Rusk, saw the fighting in South Vietnam as aggression from the North. The resolved attitude was crucial in determining American action in South Vietnam; for, if the fighting in South Vietnam was considered to be aggression from North Vietnam, America was bound by the SEATO alliance to intervene militarily. The United States was granted, however, much more latitude in its choice of policy by considering the opposition to Diem as a Civil War since the SEATO alliance stated that, in the case of insurgency, the member nations would consult with each other on measures to be taken for the common defense. No measures were specified if insurgency occurred in a country.

Kennedy based his Vietnam policies upon the maintenance of a separate state in South Vietnam. He, like Eisenhower, refused to commit combat troops to that area. The President believed that while the United States could provide military aid to Vietnam, the Vietnamese people had to do the fighting themselves. It was their war to win or lose.38

37 Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., p. 127.
38 Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 48.
Under the Kennedy administration, however, military advisors in Vietnam increased from the 800 which Eisenhower sent to about 1800. The President further allowed these advisors to fight alongside the troops which they were counseling. This increase in advisors and military activity agreed with the recommendations given the President by General Maxwell Taylor and White House Aide Walter Rostow following their fact-finding trip to Vietnam in 1961. Taylor and Rostow stated that Vietnam was primarily a military problem which could be solved by a larger commitment of American military power including, if necessary, combat troops. Minimally, they felt that United States troops would fulfill skilled functions such as helicopter air lifts, air reconnaissance, and advisory functions. They also recommended that a 10,000-man task force be sent to Vietnam to serve chiefly for the defense of American property there but occasionally to provide an emergency reserve for the fighting. Kennedy followed the recommendations except for the one concerning the 10,000-man task force. Despite this troop refusal, however, active military participation in the war began by the United States. For not only were advisors occasionally fighting but, according to Kahin and Lewis,

39 Ibid.

40 Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., pp. 128-129.
by mid October 1962 the helicopter crews had begun to take the initiative in firing at insurgents, and less than a year later armed helicopters were often assigned to fly strafing missions. 41

These actions did not constitute a radical shift in the United States' position in Vietnam. The huge American military commitment occurred under President Johnson, who apparently planned the American escalation of the war during the 1964 presidential campaign in which Barry Goldwater was denounced for his warlike tendencies in regard to Vietnam while President Johnson publicly opposed increased American involvement in that war. 42 Two events triggered, however, an escalation, the Tonkin Gulf and Pleiku incidents. 43 On August 2, 1964, the U. S. destroyer Maddox was attacked by a North Vietnamese P.T. boat in Tonkin Gulf. The United States stated that the attack was unprovoked, while the North Vietnamese claimed that it was in retaliation for the bombing of North Vietnamese villages by ships in Tonkin Gulf. Two days after this attack, Johnson announced the beginning of retaliatory bombing in North Vietnam by United States planes. Before this announcement, though, the President met with Congressional leaders and stated that he would call for a Congressional resolution stating the American determination

41 Ibid., p. 137.
42 Schoenbrun, op. cit., pp. 49-50.
43 Ibid., pp. 50-51.
to support freedom and defend the peace in Southeast Asia. Such a measure, authorizing the President to take all actions necessary to repel attacks against United States forces and to prevent further aggression, passed the House by a vote of 466 to 0 and the Senate by an 88 to 2 majority.44

The aggression which allowed the implementation of this resolution occurred at Pleiku. On February 7, 1965, eight American servicemen were killed and sixty-two wounded in an attack by one-hundred Vietcong guerrillas on Pleiku.45 The President ordered retaliatory air strikes on North Vietnam, which began on the day Russian Prime Minister Kosygin arrived there, reportedly on a peace mission.46 In conjunction with these bombings, the American troop commitment in Vietnam increased from 23,000 in early 1965 to 375,000 troops by the end of 1966.47

Johnson faced a dilemma in Vietnam when he became president in 1963. The problem there was only a secondary concern to Kennedy, primarily because of the optimistic view adopted on official announcements concerning

44 Ibid., p. 53.
45 Raskin and Fall, op. cit., p. 498.
46 Schoenbrun, op. cit., pp. 56-57.
Vietnam.  

The idea seemed to be that, "if the Americans expressed enough optimism, Diem would trust them and be more receptive to their suggestions" and that a sensitive Administration back home wanted to hear that it was winning the war.  

Kennedy, then, saw his neutralist policy as a successful one. The Buddhist uprisings and the fall of the Diem regime, however, exposed the social problems in South Vietnam. While there were indications that Kennedy was going to withdraw from Vietnam as a result of intensive study caused by these revelations, he died too soon after to be sure. As a result, Johnson inherited the problem.

The United States was obligated to protect the Saigon government by its past actions and the SEATO alliance. The Buddhist uprisings and the coup of the Diem regime indicated that South Vietnam was politically and socially unstable. This meant that Diem was unable to gain a nationalistic feeling among the people of South Vietnam which Ho Chi Minh had generated in the North. Undoubtedly, therefore, the Viet Cong would take control of the South

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48 Ibid., p. 127.
49 Ibid., p. 141.
50 Ibid., p. 142.
51 Ibid., p. 145.
52 Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 18.
Vietnamese government sooner or later. Coupled with this inevitable Viet Cong victory was the United States' concept of counterinsurgency.

This meant, according to Marcus Raskin and Bernard Fall,

... the American armed forces were now prepared to intervene directly (and not through local proxies) in small wars in local situations of revolution and instability. This new "ability" intensified the illusion that the United States could solve inherently socio-political, economic and diplomatic problems in the underdeveloped world by military means.

Senator Russell Long had stated, after conferring with President Johnson, on November 25, 1964, that the United States had two alternatives in Vietnam; either America should take some action in Vietnam or get out. He further stated that the United States had made a big mistake in going to Vietnam, but he could not see how to get out. This seems to indicate that in 1964 President Johnson was trying to solve a problem which was becoming acute. Let us now consider four alternatives which faced Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam when he became president.

First, Johnson could have continued the Eisenhower-Kennedy method of aid but not permit military intervention. This alternative, however, was failing; South

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53 Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., p. 329.
54 Raskin and Fall, op. cit., p. 5.
55 Schoenbrun, op. cit., p. 55.
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this choice, however, the United States would have deserted a country which was fighting communism. The public, therefore, would have probably disliked this alternative more than the first choice.

Third, the United States could have attacked North Vietnam with nuclear weapons. This, however, would have risked a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, which was materially supporting the North Vietnamese. One of the issues which promoted Goldwater's unpopularity in 1964 was that he favored the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam. Recall that the public indicated in that year's presidential election that it did not want to risk nuclear war with Russia.

Finally, President Johnson could escalate the war by increasing the United States' material and combat troops. This, hopefully, might force the North Vietnamese to the negotiating table where the United States might gain a negotiated peace in Vietnam. But it would be a peace settlement, however, favoring the United States. In this manner the United States could avoid "losing" a country to communism, and going to the brink of war with Russia. It could, also, end or substantially reduce its Vietnam military commitment. The public might have accepted this action had the war not gone on so long and had not the American military gain been so little.
The foregoing analysis has attempted to trace the United States involvement in Vietnam through a consideration of the conflict between the American ideals of anti-colonialism and anti-communism. Each of the president's actions discussed can be explained as an attempt to keep some balance between these ideals of non-military intervention and the protection of the world against communism. The majority of the American populace has been unwilling to accept complete escalation in Vietnam and immediate, complete United States withdrawal from that area. The problem which confronted Richard Nixon in 1968 was to determine how to restore an acceptable balance.
CHAPTER III

A POLICY

On March 14, 1969, President Richard M. Nixon became the fifth commander-in-chief to enter the Vietnam arena; for, on the night of that date, the new president delivered his first major policy statement concerning this much-debated war. In doing so, the new leader dropped a formidable shield against the forces of dissension; that of no announced policy. Consider, prior to this moment, that Nixon had made no proclamation as to the nation's course in Vietnam. He seemed content to declare during the 1968 presidential campaign and all times after that he would end the war. Without an explanation as to method, the chief executive could have meant that he would escalate the American involvement in an attempt to end the war, or immediately withdraw from Vietnam and thereby terminate the United States' presence there, or work for a negotiated peace, or finally, any combination of these possibilities. This vagueness caused the Vietnam status quo of relatively little fighting and attempted peace through negotiation to be the only evidence of a program.

This existing condition, however, was not originated by
Nixon. President Johnson initiated that calm in November, 1968, when he ordered the bombing halt of North Vietnam. At that time, an understanding was established between the United States and the North Vietnamese. In exchange for the air pause, the government of North Vietnam agreed to withdraw all of its troops from the demilitarized zone which separated the South and the North; begin serious negotiations in Paris; and finally, it consented to discontinue the shelling of major South Vietnamese population centers.\(^1\) This reduction of hostilities served to calm public unrest concerning the war.\(^2\)

In consideration of the above, it appears that one wishing to attack this condition would have to argue for either escalation or de-escalation of the war. An escalation advocacy, however, meant that an opponent would have to favor an end to the combat lull as well as the increased deaths resulting from renewed fighting. On the other hand, to argue in favor of de-escalation suggests that at a time of relatively little belligerence a presidential antagonist advocated a unilateral withdrawal by the United States. When we recall, from the last chapter, that a potent anti-communist belief exists among the American populace, it


is doubtful that the people of this country, on the whole, would favor "losing Vietnam to the communists." This concept is supported by the research findings of the University of Michigan Research Center which showed that three out of five McCarthy supporters in New Hampshire believed the Johnson Administration to be wrong in Vietnam because it was not hawkish enough.\(^3\) Apparently, therefore, neither of the previously mentioned alternatives could have gathered mass acceptance. For this reason, Nixon lacked at least a political motivation for describing a policy and, thereby, risking an upset of the equanimity. He had hoped that he could postpone an announcement until midsummer of 1969 and that the intervening time could be used to establish credibility.\(^4\)

This was terminated, however, when in late February of 1969, the North Vietnamese mounted an offensive which made deferment of a presidential statement on Vietnam practically impossible. The attack, designed to strengthen the North Vietnamese position in Paris,\(^5\) consisted of infantry assaults and the shelling, with rockets and mortar fire, of one hundred fifteen South Vietnamese cities and

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United States military bases, resulting in 2,593 Americans wounded and 453 American dead in the first week of fighting. The last figure was higher than the death toll for the first full week of fighting in the major Tet offensive of 1968.\(^6\) This return to fighting served to remind Americans that until a settlement was reached in Paris, combat would continue,\(^7\) and thus jeopardized the climate of calm and unity that Nixon had tried to create.\(^8\) Time noted:

Evidence of mounting pressure on Vietnam poured in [to the Nixon Administration] from almost every quarter. Newspaper editorials exhorted the President to take prompt positive steps to de-escalate the fighting further,--and a few urged him to step it up.\(^9\)

This feeling of discontent was echoed by the New York Times reporting a Gallup poll which concerned American feelings about the Vietnam war. It stated, "Discouragement over the recent hard fighting in Vietnam, as well as the apparently unproductive Paris talks on the war has led many Americans to favor more extreme measures to end the conflict in Southeast Asia."\(^10\)

\(^6\)Ibid.
\(^8\)Ibid.
\(^10\)"Actions to Finish War are Favored," N. Y. Times, March 23, 1969, p. 5.
An examination of Vietnam attitude polls indicates this mood. In March of 1967, 27% of the people Gallup polled indicated that they felt the United States should use atomic weapons and try to win the Vietnam war.\(^\text{11}\) In that same period, 17% of the populace in a Harris Poll, which Scammon and Wattenberg cited, stated that they thought our government should unilaterally withdraw from Vietnam.\(^\text{12}\) These polls indicate that the majority of Americans were either undecided or somewhere in the middle ground concerning the Vietnam question. Of this majority, Scammon and Wattenberg state: "They apparently had no better solution than the commander-in-chief, but this didn't necessarily make them happy about it all."\(^\text{13}\)

After the offensive, however, more people decided what they thought should be done. The March 1969 poll which prompted The Times' statement showed that 32% of the American public favored massive escalation of the war in an attempt to end it; 26% of that same population advocated a unilateral withdrawal by the United States; and, 42% were somewhere in the middle.\(^\text{14}\) The important note here is that


\(^{12}\text{Scammon and Wattenberg, op. cit., p. 94.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Scammon and Wattenberg, op. cit., p. 92.}\)

\(^{14}\text{"Actions to Finish War are Favored," op. cit.}\)
the American public was tending to polarization on the question of American action in Vietnam. This may be seen by the fact that the hawkish extreme increased by 5% and the dovish by 9%. In all, 13% of the United States populace moved to the extremes concerning the war in two years. They were saying, in increasing numbers, that they wanted the Vietnam War to cease as soon as possible.

The problem was, then, that most members of this society, not just students, were in varying degrees upset concerning the existence of this conflict. Moreover, the North Vietnamese offensive, it would appear, was a rude reminder of the war's proximity and meaning. Such knowledge brought from all quarters renewed pressure upon Nixon to take some specific action in regard to the war, which lends credence to the view that the offensive contributed significantly to the development of the President's speech of March 14, 1969. Further, it is instructive to note that this was the only major event in Vietnam prior to the speech. It was, perhaps, the only exigence which could have forced Nixon to speak before he had planned. The fact that the attack upset the public indicated that Nixon's audience was the American people. To know the attitudinal alteration Nixon was forced to bring about, however, it is necessary to discover the roots of the American people's concern about the Vietnam War.
The earlier discussed tendency to polarization was not due to ideological beliefs about the war. Scammon and Wattenberg argued that Americans were not split, ideological dove vs. ideological hawk. In discussing the polls of 1967 they stated that, although the New Hampshire polls are not likely to reflect precisely the national attitude, still, neither are New Hampshire attitudes likely to be far off the national norms on such a major issue. So, then, there are some apparent contradictions. The dove attitude was held by somewhere between 24% [Gallup poll in February of 1967 of the nation] of the people. Yet, as we have seen among New Hampshire men, only 18% voted for the only "peace candidate" in the New Hampshire race, Eugene McCarthy.\textsuperscript{15} Clearly, then, some dovish votes went for Nixon [52.2% of the vote] or Johnson [18.1% of the vote], both non-doves.\textsuperscript{16} And McCarthy's support came from more hawks than doves, according to the Survey Research Center data. Yet Gallup shows that Americans regarded Vietnam as the number one problem, and clearly McCarthy and Kennedy were drawn into an anti-Johnson challenge because of Vietnam Policy.\textsuperscript{17}

This statement exemplifies the non-ideologic basis of American Vietnam beliefs. It seems doubtful that an

\textsuperscript{15} Scammon and Wattenberg derived the percentages in this passage by combining the total vote of both the Republican and Democratic primaries in New Hampshire. They then saw the percentage of that total which each candidate received.

\textsuperscript{16} Eleven and four-tenths per cent of the New Hampshire vote went to other candidates. If all of the doves, who didn't vote for McCarthy voted for "other candidates," and the 42% doves of the nation was the percentage in New Hampshire, then 12.6% of the doves must have voted for either Nixon or Johnson. It seems unlikely, with an avowed peace candidate running, that New Hampshire doves wouldn't have voted.

\textsuperscript{17} Scammon and Wattenberg, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 91-92.
ideologic hawk, one who believes that war and conquest are solutions to international problems, could vote for a candidate vowing a unilateral withdrawal of American forces. For those who believe in military solutions to world problems echo MacArthur's statement that "There is no substitute for victory."

This concept of a non-ideological basis of foreign policy dissent is supported by Gabriel Almond in his book *The American People and Foreign Policy*. He explained American attitudes and opinions concerning foreign policy questions as not only responses to problems and situations but also as conditioned by culturally imposed qualities of character. He paraphrased Alexis De Tocqueville in asserting that the peculiar qualities of the American character are an "extraordinary emphasis on worldly and private values and gratification at the expense of public and spiritual values." Related to foreign policy, these characteristics imply that American attitudes and opinions are conditioned by the desire to gratify private, personal needs. This suggests that Americans opposed Johnson's Vietnam policies, not because they thought war to be morally wrong or that conquest was the solution to international problems, but they had some personal gain involved.

in ending the war. This personal gain appears to be "peace of mind."

It is important to note that since the beginning of the twentieth century, periods of great government action with activist presidents have been followed by the public's desire for a period of calm and non-activist presidents in the United States. The reason for the desired change, according to one group of historians, is a people's capacity for high-tension political life is limited. Just as the first two decades of the twentieth century—the activist decades dominated by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson—produced by 1920 a condition of near national exhaustion, so the thirties and the forties left the American people—or a good many of them—wearied of public commitment and ardently desirous of respite. By 1952 they were frustrated and spent; they wanted to be let off public affairs and resume the private course of life. The pursuit of "normancly," however, was far more difficult in the stormy fifties than it had been thirty years before . . . . Communist competition abroad and the unprecedented rate of population growth at home confronted the nation with problems it could not reject. The people manfully accepted the existence of these problems but tackled them without enthusiasm or urgency or strong sense of purpose.19

We should recall that the activist decades of the 1900's and 1910's produced the desired calm expressed by the Coolidge and Hoover elections. Circumstances, then, dictated two more activist decades, after which the people elected in 1952 a man who might give them a rest. The above group

of historians accentuated this idea when they wrote, "People weary of the men in Washington and yearning for an end to the controversies of the New Deal eras saw in Eisenhower a leader who might heal the Nation's wounds."20

This rest, however, had limitations imposed upon it by international and domestic tensions. The cold war, the threat of nuclear war, the "communist scare" incited by Senator Joseph McCarthy, communist expansion in Europe, and the 1954 recession would appear to provide for an uneasy rest.

Following this period, however, came a decade in which riots, demonstrations and disruption occurred with predictable frequency. Scammon and Wattenberg note:

... in 1964 Harlem had a riot. In 1965 Watts had a riot. By 1966 every major city in America was asking itself, "Would it happen here?"--and major riots did erupt in Hough and Chicago. The apparent peak of a series of long hot summers was reached in 1967 when first Newark and then Detroit exploded in an orgy of violence, disorder, and looting. In April, 1968, on the night of Martin Luther King's assassination, outbreaks were reported in more than 100 cities, with Washington, Chicago, and Baltimore taking particularly heavy damage.21

It is easy to see, therefore, the manner in which Americans were roughly awakened from their uneasy rest of the 1950's.

This concept of mental unrest was amplified by Gallup polls which showed that Americans did not perceive an

20 Ibid.
21 Scammon and Wattenberg, op. cit., p. 42.
improvement in contentment or peace of mind despite their satisfaction with their vocations, incomes and housing. The polls indicated that 88% of the white population was satisfied with its work, compared to 1949 when 69% was content with its occupations. In 1969, 67% of this racial sample was satisfied with its income; this was 17% more than in 1949. In this same year, 80% of white Americans were pleased with their homes compared to 67% in 1949. Materially, then, white Americans were, at least, satisfied. That they had good cause for such contentment is evident from the following statement by Scammon and Wattenberg:

By election day of 1968 American voters could look back at eight years of uninterrupted prosperity... Personal incomes had gone up at a record rate, by far offsetting any inflationary rise, and in 1968 unemployment dropped to an eighteen-year low of 3.6%. Americans were more likely than ever before to be working at skilled and interesting jobs, and more young Americans than ever before were being graduated from high school and going to college. Americans were far less likely to be living in sub-standard housing, and they were much more likely to be living in suburbs, owning their own homes, surrounded by nice lawns.

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25 Scammon and Wattenberg, op. cit., p. 103.
Despite this material progress, however, 67% of the populace felt life was not getting better in terms of happiness and 79% felt that peace of mind was not improving. Why? From an earlier statement, it was suggested that Americans are tired. Another explanation, however, is possible: the satisfaction of material needs no longer motivates Americans. This is suggested by the polls which show that material wants are satisfied but "life is not getting any better." To understand the other possible motivation, therefore, consider the American value system.

By tradition, we have been an optimistic people. To this concept Robert Heilbroner writes, "As an enduring trait of national character it [optimism] could be called almost exclusively American." The reason is that this populace generally has viewed its "golden age" to lie in the future. It historically believed that everything is getting better; standard of living, gross national product, hours of leisure, number of cars.

At the core of this optimism lies a deterministic attitude toward progress. This was well noted by

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Heilbroner when he wrote: "... a philosophy of optimism assumes that the direction in which we seek to venture as the heroic steersmen of our destiny will be compatible with the currents and tides set in motion by history's impersonal forces."\(^2^9\) In other words, progress is inevitable because, as a people, Americans are in tune with certain historic forces. The "American tradition," Clinton Rossiter wrote:

\[\ldots\] assumes that men are rational beings who need a little guidance from the past [the historic forces\] \[\ldots\], that their right to pursue happiness is matched by an ability to catch up with it, and that properly organized and sponsored instruments of education [which teach the historical forces and the way to stay in tune with them] can lift up the most humble man to wisdom and virtue. It assumes, too, that the whole species is on the march, doggedly if not always comfortably, toward an even higher level of dignity and intelligence.\(^3^0\)

The point is that progress is destined because Americans have found "the way" to such advancement. Rossiter highlighted this when he wrote: "While the collective American political mind has been liberal, that is it is hopeful and expansive, it has been conservative about techniques and prospects, that is cautious and traditional about institutions and values."\(^3^1\) The cause for this apparent contradiction may be explained in that there is

\(^2^9\)Heilbroner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37.

\(^3^0\)Rossiter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 71.

\(^3^1\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 70.
no reason to change institutions and values when they produce a fated betterment. In other words, because the United States has found "the way" it can be "hopeful and expansive."

These deterministic forces of history with which we have been concerned are economic powers. The idea of inevitable progress, which is at the core of American optimism, is, therefore, that of an economic, or material improvement.\textsuperscript{32} The theory is that inevitable economic enrichment necessarily produces social progress. Heilbroner notes that the essential factor about the American economic drive

\ldots is its socially revolutionary quality. The drive into abundance is an historic force which, if fully realized, bids fair to change the nature of social organization as radically, and very likely disconcertingly, as the equally revolutionary ascent from the static agricultural world to that of the industrial process. There is no doubt that an environment of great abundance would represent the achievement of an age-old dream of mankind.\textsuperscript{33}

When a populace, therefore, is in a state of economic abundance, it is realizing the American dream. Rossiter points out that Americans believe, "Through reason, experiment, self-improvement, and education, above all through the release of human energy by one hundred and eighty million people, who can be happy if they try, the nation is moving onward and upward to the sunlit plains of freedom

\textsuperscript{32}Heilbroner, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 32-34.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., pp. 128-129.
and abundance."\textsuperscript{34} It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that economic prosperity is the measure of social success. If a people are economically successful, according to the theory, they are socially advancing and the political system which allows these accomplishments must be working well.

It is noteworthy in this regard, that the periods of the twentieth century during which Americans appeared tired and voted for less active administration are the eras which followed tremendous economic growth in the United States. Scammon and Wattenberg pointed out that the Republican Party, the one of social order and stability, does better in national elections when more middle class prosperity exists.\textsuperscript{35}

When translated into the socio-economic-political theory which was discussed, this increased prosperity means that the system allows more people, or more people conceive of the system as permitting them, to realize economic well-being. Such a realization of material progress indicates equal amounts of social improvement, since economic progress is the measure of social betterment. This moves to signify that the socio-economic-political system is congenial with historic forces which are moving the United States toward some ultimate goal. If prosperous economic conditions are

\textsuperscript{34}Rossiter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{35}Scammon and Wattenberg, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 32-35.
prevalent, which they were in 1920, 1952, and 1968, the nation must be careful not to move away from the methods which are leading it, successfully, to the ultimate end. In short, order and stability are the important aspects of government in times of economic plenty.

To be sure, periods in which people either have or seem assured of having, in the near future, material comfort have followed periods of enormous, quick change and movement; it is easy to understand how a society could be weary after periods of stress and change. The American populace's call for stability, via elections, however, coincides with and lasts as long as the periods of middle class prosperity.

Considered then from the vantage point of fatigue, or middle class prosperity, or a combination of them the American populace in 1968 was voting for order and stability. This desire was compounded by the public upset due to a lack of peace of mind. Scammon and Wattenberg stated this when they wrote that in 1968:

Americans were unhappy about criminality and about racial problems. They were unhappy about inflation. They were unhappy about Vietnam. They were unhappy about people who were unhappy about Vietnam. They were unhappy about morality, unhappy with hippies, drug takers, students who took over colleges and, perhaps most of all, unhappy about being unhappy.36

These concerns of the American public threatened or violated the life style of prosperity. Crime terrorized

36Ibid., p. 102.
people personally. Race problems perhaps would bring increased government action and change. Vietnam threatened to bring more dissent and disruption, which might lead to certain changes in government policy elsewhere. Hippies, drug takers, and students challenged the values of the "found way" to prosperity and thereby threatened change. If a person has found the way, he doubtless worries about that which might move him off the path. This produces mental unrest.

In times of national discord, however, the American people feel that a change of administration will probably solve the problems. Heilbroner stated, "We are certain that the blame for the untoward drift of things can be laid at the doorstep of this president or that congress."37 The reason for this easily placed blame, according to Clinton Rossiter, is that Americans believe "The miseries of the past . . . like those of the present, were visited upon men so silly and ignorant as to fail to choose democracy and make it work."38 It is not surprising, therefore, that with the 1968 presidential election this nation's electorate voted a new leader into the presidency.

Nixon had the advantage at this time of limited fighting and low casualty rates in Vietnam and little dissent

37 Heilbroner, op. cit., p. 57.
38 Rossiter, op. cit., p. 73.
and disruption at home. There was reason to believe, therefore, that this prince was coping correctly with and perhaps solving the problem in Vietnam, which conformed to an American presidential certainty. George Reedy notes, "One of the American people's most cherished notions about the presidency is that the office somehow ennobles the occupant and renders him fit to meet any crisis."39 The evidence showed the United States that it could begin its rest and "return to normalcy" after eight years of rapid growth and change because the new leader was solving the problems. The Tet offensive of March, 1969, however, shattered this condition by showing that the problem still existed and indicating that perhaps Mr. Nixon was not solving it. People, therefore, exhausted by this exigence, were demanding action to end it quickly. The attack further served to remind the public that Nixon had never stated his Vietnam policy. These questions were enough to aggravate an already disrupted national mind and, thereby, rob the populace of its desired rest.

The President, in answer to this North Vietnamese offensive, had to instill confidence on the part of the public that he could solve the Vietnam problem. In this manner, the public could return to a mental state of rest.

on the Vietnam question by allowing the President to handle
the situation as he had done before the offensive. To
instill confidence, however, Nixon had to prove to Ameri-
cans that he had a solution, or policy, to end the war in
Vietnam.

The important point is that Nixon's audience, the
American public, wanted Peace, Stability, and Order. The
public was concerned about Vietnam because it denied them
the above three states, both by its existence and the dis-
sent and demonstration which it brought. By March, 1969,
58% of this nation's people were willing to go to extremes
to bring about an end to this conflict and thereby foster
the mental rest they desired. Nixon had to exhibit, there-
fore, that his policies would most quickly and most last-
ingly promote the desired order.

The President, thereby, faced in March of 1969 the
same four alternatives which confronted Lyndon Johnson in
1964. First, he could renew the bombing of North Vietnam
in an attempt to force the North Vietnamese to negotiate
by weakening their military position in the war zone. This
policy, which was upheld by Johnson, proved to be extremely
unpopular. When we recall that, in 1968, 44% of the people
polled were in favor of one of the two extremist actions
in the war and in 1969, this call of extreme measures had
risen to 58%, a 14% rise in a year, it appears that "more
of the same" would have doubtless brought increased
dissent, both from doves and hawks. Such a policy also would have caused a loss of credibility on the part of the Nixon administration; for, a new man had been elected in 1968 partly because of the feeling against Johnson's Vietnam policy. In other words, the public, in part, was voting for a change of action in Vietnam. Since the President is expected to act in accord with the public will, he would lose credibility by adopting a policy in obvious violation of their desires. This act could have given weight to presidential opponents in 1972 and to adversaries of any presidential program in Congress.

Secondly, the President could have adopted one of the extremist methods. The question is, though, which one? For, if 32% of the population favored the use of nuclear weapons in March, 1969, 68% did not favor such a plan and 26% were diametrically opposed to it in that they favored an American unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam. Moreover, the use of nuclear weapons would have risked a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, which was supporting the North Vietnamese. Such a danger might easily have caused the majority of the middle 42% of the population, who were not for a nuclear attack, to adopt the dove extreme. Coupled with this observation is the notion that the non-violence extreme was growing faster than the hawk extreme, since the national tendency was to think in dovish terms. Gallup polls indicated that between February and March,
1968, those who described themselves as doves grew 18%, from 24% in February to 42% in March, and in that same period, those who described themselves as hawks fell 19%, from 60% in February to 41% in March. The policy of nuclear attack, therefore, might easily have brought dissent, particularly when one considers that all of the anti-war demonstrations supported the dovish view. These considerations suggest that this second alternative would not have fostered the desired peace, stability and order, and the peace of mind they bring.

Nixon, then, could have unilaterally withdrawn American military forces from Vietnam. If 26% of the population favored this plan, however, then 74% of Americans did not support it, and of this 74%, 32% was diametrically opposed to it. For, a unilateral withdrawal not only would "lose Vietnam to the Communists" but also it would mean that the United States was militarily defeated by one of the lesser communist military powers. Rossiter wrote, "The American tradition has room for one form of government--democracy." He also stated that as a people we believe, "communism is not our death warrant but God's way of testing our devotion to liberty." In view of this assumption, it appears that


41 Rossiter, op. cit., p. 72.

42 Ibid., p. 73.
a unilateral withdrawal could have opened the fears of "Red-Yellow peril," and, thereby, easily coalesced 74% of the populace around hawkish, anti-communist feelings. This is particularly true when we consider the changeable nature of American attitudes. Charles Lersche noted this in writing,

Americans seem to need periodic emotional indulgences; perhaps they provide an outlet for pent-up frustrations and tensions. But after each of these outbursts of love or hate, there comes a reaction. Often it goes far in the opposite direction, and the new attitude is as emotional as the old.\textsuperscript{43}

With the possibility of a communist take-over in Asia, the dovish tendency of national attitudes could switch. A unilateral withdrawal could, also, cause a loss of credibility in the Nixon administration because creating fears of communist expansion in the world is not the way to foster peace of mind in the United States. Scammon and Wattenberg state:

... to this already combustible mixture [social change and the methods of achieving it], a highly flammable element was added: the Vietnam protest movement. Suddenly American boys and girls were seen burning American flags on television; clergymen were pouring containers of blood on draft records; the President was jeered.

All these elements acted on one another and on the American voter. The Social Issue was in full flower.

It may be defined as a set of public attitudes concerning the more personally frightening aspects of social change.\textsuperscript{44}

Since, according to Rossiter, the average American places patriotism at the top of his catalogue of public virtues,\textsuperscript{45} it appears that following the wishes of those who engage in "unpatriotic" acts to influence foreign policy would only fester the fears of social change and, thereby, inhibit peace for the American mind.

The final alternative for Nixon to follow involved continuing the status quo, that of negotiations and little appreciable fighting in Vietnam. With this program, few would be favorable or unfavorable. This, also, was the policy which produced an atmosphere in which people could begin to "return to normalcy," and, thereby, gain peace of mind. This policy would risk neither nuclear war with Russia nor an American defeat to a communist nation. Since it risked fewer major outbreaks of disruption in the United States, it was the policy which was likely to foster the greatest peace in the most American minds.

This is the policy which Nixon announced on May 14, 1969. He stated that he favored a negotiated peace. In pursuing this, however, he did not say that he was renewing

\textsuperscript{44} Scammon and Wattenberg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{45} Rossiter, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 75.
the bombing of North Vietnam. He merely issued a threat to North Vietnam. He stated:

However, we cannot ignore the fact that immediately after the offer [the National Liberation Front's peace proposal in Paris] the scale of enemy attacks stepped up and American casualties in Vietnam increased.

Let me make one point clear. If the enemy wants peace with the United States, that is not the way to get it.

I have set forth a peace program which is generous in its terms. I have indicated our willingness to consider other proposals. But no greater mistake could be made than to confuse flexibility with weakness or of being reasonable with lack of resolution. I must also make clear, in all candor, that if the needless suffering continues, this will affect other decisions. Nobody has anything to gain by delay.

The "other decisions" which Nixon referred to was the bombing of North Vietnam, a crucial point.

Nixon had to gain the public's confidence that he could end the war in Vietnam in the quickest and best manner. In this way he could restore the calm which existed in the United States before the offensive. If Nixon's Vietnam policy appeared to be solving the war issue, the public could stop worrying about Vietnam and allow the President to complete the solution to the problem, thereby gaining some peace of mind. For Nixon's policies to appear successful, however, peace, order, and stability had to exist in Vietnam. In other words, appreciable fighting had to stop, which was the goal of the President's threat.
Support for this deduction is gathered from Charles Lersche who pointed out that, despite the fact American public opinion is periodically emotional, "ultimately the pendulum tends to come to rest, and most Americans--emotionally purged--take a stand on the dead center of common sense." 46 Because the feeling on the War is not ideological, the 14% move to the extreme may be interpreted as an emotional reaction to the situation in Vietnam. If calm pervades Vietnam, those who moved to the extreme should move back to Nixon's centrist position. This predictable increased support for Nixon would mean less support for the extremes; less pressure or noticeable disruption because a demonstration of a hundred people attracts less attention than that of a thousand; less pressure on the President; and more peace of mind for most.

Notice, also, that Nixon chose what may be termed the dovish-centrist policy of the four alternatives which were discussed. The extreme hawk policy involved the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam, and the extreme dove, a unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam by the United States. The two centrist policies recommended a solution to the problem through negotiation. The hawkish-centrist policy was that of negotiations but accompanied by bombings of North Vietnam, while the dovish-centrist policy involved

46 Lersche, op. cit.
negotiations with no bombings. Aside from the inherent problems previously discussed of the hawkish-centrist position, Nixon had an advantage in adopting the dovish-centrist position.

That Nixon's primary political backing is from the "right" seems clear. Stewart Alsop stated, "Especially among the more conservative Republicans, the admirers of the late Robert A. Taft, any criticism of Nixon is likely to be equated with subversion."47 This wing of the Republican party is now headed by Barry Goldwater who favored winning the war in Vietnam. It can be assumed, therefore, that Senator Goldwater's followers, the Republican "Right," tend to be more hawkish than dovish. Coupled with this hawkish political backing is the fact that Nixon has a reputation for being an anti-communist. He was the young senator who discovered that Alger Hiss was once a member of the communist party and presumably made anti-communist California campaigns against Jerry Vooris and Helen Douglas.48 Nixon, therefore, had the support of those with strong anti-communist feelings who are, by logic, hawks. When we consider that people do not have ideological feelings concerning the manner in which to end the war, it appears logical that those motivated by fears of communist expansion and desirous of an end to the conflict would favor

47 Alsop, op. cit., p. 29.
48 Ibid., pp. 122-124.
bombing North Vietnam either to gain a surrender or a negotiated peace favorable to the United States. Richard Nixon, with a reputation as an anti-communist, had these people's trust because he was not likely to allow communist expansion.

This antecedent support allowed Nixon to adopt a dovish-centrist position. Hawks believed the president would not allow that which they feared, communist expansion, which meant they could have peace of mind even if he went slightly contrary to their solutions. Nixon, who could give some peace of mind in international affairs simply by being president, therefore adopted a policy which might give others more peace of mind because it was similar to their resolution of the war. This course, further, offered less dissent over the war in the United States because doves have been more vocal in dissent than hawks. With a policy similar to their beliefs, doves might cause less dissent, which would promote order and stability in the culture and thereby give many people some peace of mind. Similarly, this would bring more confidence in Nixon as a problem solver who could deal convincingly with the two overriding issues in this country, the war and disruption.

Because the President could not directly control the level of fighting in Vietnam, however, his problem in this speech was to foster as much support as he could for his
policy and, thereby, himself. The remainder of this discussion will be devoted to considering how he attempted to do this.

Nixon embodies his policy in the American value system and sets others as opposed to it. In this manner, he attempts to make his procedure appear as the only reasonable way to peace and, thereby, the best way. Almond notes, "At the level of mass opinion, these 'psycho-cultural' characteristics condition patterns of thought and mood on foreign policy." They do this by influencing perception, selection, and evaluation of political reality. By appealing to these "psycho-cultural" characteristics, which condition patterns of thought, Nixon made his "negotiated peace" appear as the "American Way" to American goals. This alone would dispose the public to be more amenable to his policy because it was consistent with their conditioned patterns of thought. In addition, if progress was accomplished by the "American Way," this would influence the public's perception, selection, and evaluation of future events in Vietnam. Nixon's program, perceived as solving some problems in Vietnam, could be assumed to solve the remaining ones and achieve the desired goal, peace.

49 Almond, op. cit., p. 29.
50 Ibid.
Goal of Peace

Nixon began his speech by stating that his goal in Vietnam was a peace that would not inhibit, and thereby promote, the ultimate goal of world peace. He stated:

I want to end this war. The American people want to end this war. The people of South Vietnam want to end this war. But we want to end it permanently so that the younger brothers of our soldiers in Vietnam will not have to fight in the future in another Vietnam someplace else in the world.

This desire was consistent with an American belief which Lersche identified. He notes, "Americans have based much of their approach to international affairs on the assumption that the ideal of a world without war could some day be achieved."51 Nixon's quoted statement, coupled with a preceding remark which stated that a unilateral withdrawal would be in violation of presidential duty to promote world peace, implied that some solutions to the War, particularly dovish ones, would lead to "another Vietnam." In this manner was accomplished the dual purpose of discrediting the extreme doves as inhibiting world peace and the establishment of Nixon's motivation in favor of this goal.

The passage, further, told those of hawkish tendencies

that Nixon was not going to follow a solution which would promote communist expansion; for the possibility of more Vietnamese would not exist if the United States did not try to halt communist aggression in the world. Moreover, by making it known he was working for a permanent world peace, Nixon appealed to those who desired peace more than they feared communist expansion.

Use of Reason

Nixon proceeded and showed that he was pursuing those actions demanded by reason to solve this international problem. In this regard Charles Lersche states:

Implicitly Americans have seemed to assume that all international problems have a "right" answer, discoverable by men if only they put all their resources of reason and goodwill to work on it. The right answer usually was one that forever settled the problem and removed it to the category of the not-to-be-thought-about-again.52

Because the only visible action in regard to the nation's primary problem had been the Tet offensive, Nixon had to reassure Americans that he had put resources to work on the problem. He stated:

I would like to report to you tonight on some of the things we have been doing in the past four months to bring true peace, and then I would like to make some concrete proposals to speed that day.

Our first step began before my inauguration. This was to launch an intensive review of every aspect of the nation's Vietnam policy. We accepted nothing on faith, we challenged every assumption and every statistic. We made a systematic,

52 Ibid., p. 111.
serious examination of all the alternatives open to us. We carefully considered recommendations offered both by critics and supporters of past policies.

From the review it became clear at once that the new Administration faced a set of operational problems:

The other side was preparing a new offensive. There was a wide gulf of distrust between Washington and Saigon. In eight months of talks in Paris there had been no negotiations directly concerned with a final settlement.

Therefore, we moved on several fronts at once.

We frustrated the attack which was launched in late February. As a result, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong failed to achieve their military objectives.

We restored a close working relationship with Saigon. In the resulting atmosphere of mutual confidence President Thieu and his government have taken important initiatives in the search for a settlement.

We speeded up the strengthening of the South Vietnamese forces. I am glad to report tonight that, as a result, General Abrams told me on Monday that progress in the training program had been excellent, and that apart from any developments that may occur in the negotiations in Paris, the time is approaching when South Vietnamese forces will be able to take over some of the fighting fronts now being manned by Americans.

In the passage, then, the President attempted to show that he pursued actions demanded by reason. The first acts performed were aimed at a definition of the problem in Vietnam which was, in turn, the first step toward a solution by reason. For, in order to understand the reason deemed the way to end the war, the national administration
had to begin by knowing those factors which promoted the fighting and inhibited peace. To define the Vietnam problem, therefore, an intensive study, in which everything was challenged and all points of view considered, was begun, in an attempt to obtain the reason-demanded conclusive facts. The evidence indicated that three problems had to be overcome immediately in order to promote the cause of peace. Two of these, the offensive and the communication gap, were solved. The final problem, that of the lack of progress in Paris, was in the process of being solved.

These solutions implied a rapid movement toward peace. Recall that the improved working relationship between Washington and Saigon caused President Thieu to take initiatives for peace, thereby indicating his willingness to negotiate. Moreover, the foiled offensive meant North Vietnam would not be in a better bargaining position in Paris due to an improved military position and, for that reason, might be more open to peace proposals. Finally, even if the North Vietnamese were not more receptive to peace settlements the amount of American fighting in Vietnam was going to decrease because the improving South Vietnamese troops were to assume some of the American responsibilities in the battle area. In this manner Nixon implied that he was successfully advancing on the course defined by reason to end the war.

Such was Nixon's attempt to bring people from the
extremes back to the center. The reasonable method, the historic "right way," in America is negotiation. By tradition, Americans are expected to demonstrate good will, cooperation, charity, fraternal sympathy, and an ability to compromise. All of these traits facilitate problem solution by negotiation and compromise which produces peace, order and stability in the world. Because nuclear bombing might cause a graver war and a unilateral withdrawal might lead to another war, these policies would not put the Vietnam war into the never-to-be-thought-of-again category. Reason, which produced solutions to some of the major problems of peace, was implied to be capable of resolving the remaining conflicts. The President, by employing reason, was thus moving to the "right answer" in the "right way."

Wrong Answers

Nuclear Bombing

Nixon elaborated this in discussing the three alternatives of nuclear bombing, unilateral withdrawal, and negotiation. In doing so, he did not discuss at length the option of a military solution. He merely pointed out, "We have ruled out attempting to impose a purely military solution on the battlefield." This brevity was permitted by the existence of hawkish support of the President's historic

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53 Rossiter, op. cit., p. 76.
views concerning communism and the previous indication that he would not permit communist expansion, the hawks' great fear. To appeal to them, therefore, Nixon merely had to show that he was progressing in his attempt to end the war. On the other hand, a discussion of the faults of the nuclear bombing theory could have alienated those who already supported him. Moreover, practically, Nixon could not indicate to the North Vietnamese that he was totally opposed to air attack for, if he had, they might have increased the fighting, thereby reducing the credibility of the President's plan. Such an occurrence would have caused a loss of confidence in the President's ability to stop the war, an increase of dissent, and an inhibition of the public's peace of mind.

**Immediate Withdrawal**

People of dovish tendencies, however, did not gain peace of mind concerning the war from the fact that Nixon would halt communist expansion. Doves must dislike war, or at least the Vietnam war, more than they dislike communism because, considering the publicized military strength of the South Vietnamese army, an American withdrawal would certainly mean a communist North Vietnamese military victory over South Vietnam. Those who moved to the dovish extreme indicated that they were willing to allow such a defeat. The President had to show, therefore, some explicit reasons for
not unilaterally withdrawing from Vietnam.

Nixon attempted to do this by setting the extreme
dove position opposed to the American self-image of an al-
truistic people and the concept of ultimate world peace.
He stated:

We have also ruled out either a one-sided with-
drawal from Vietnam or the acceptance in Paris of
terms that would amount to a disguised American de-
feat.

When we assumed the burden of helping defend South
Vietnam, millions of South Vietnamese men, women and
children placed their trust in us. To abandon them
now would risk a massacre that would shock and dis-
may everyone in the world who values human life.

Abandoning the South Vietnamese people, however,
would jeopardize more than lives in South Vietnam.
it would threaten our long-term hopes for peace in
the world. A great nation cannot renege on its
pledges. A great nation must be worthy of trust.

When it comes to maintaining peace, "prestige,"
is not an empty word. I am not speaking of false
pride or bravado—they should have no place in our
policies. I speak, rather, of the respect that one
nation has for another's integrity in defending its
principles and meeting its obligations.

If we simply abandon our effort in Vietnam, the
cause of peace might not survive the damage that
would be done to other nations' confidence in our
reliability.

Another reason for not withdrawing unilaterally
stems from debates within the communist world be-
tween those who argue for a policy of containment or
confrontation with the United States, and those who
argue against it.

If Hanoi were to succeed in taking over South
Vietnam by force—even after the power of the United
States had been engaged—it would greatly strengthen
those leaders who scorn negotiation, who advocate
aggression, who minimize the risks of confrontation
with the United States. It would bring peace now but
it would enormously increase the danger of a bigger war later.

If we are to move successfully from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation, then we have to demonstrate—at the point at which confrontation is being tested—that confrontation with the United States is costly and unrewarding.

Almost without exception, the leaders of non-communist Asia have told me that they would consider a one-sided American withdrawal from Vietnam to be a threat to the security of their own nations.

Charles Lersche noted that Americans are a genuinely altruistic populace who wish everyone well and devote large amounts of money and time to promoting that end.\(^{54}\) Such a humanitarian people is not likely to favor a policy which risks the massacre of the South Vietnamese by North Vietnamese. Apart from this, Nixon explicitly showed the manner in which a one-sided American withdrawal from Vietnam would hinder the cause of world peace. He told of the debate in the communist party concerning confrontation with the United States, and he explained how the extreme dovish policy would strengthen those communists who favored such conflict. If confrontationists prevailed, many countries might then enter a state of war. The chief executive supported this belief with statements from leaders of non-communist Asia. He pointed out that the condition for world peace is a balance of power which included willingness to go to war. Since Nixon was pursuing policies

\(^{54}\) Lersche, op. cit., p. 197.
aimed at ultimate world peace, he also ruled out escalating the war. Doves could gain some peace of mind from these ideas. Non-ideological doves might even revert to the centrist position of negotiation with the fear of escalation dispelled and the goal of world peace pursued.

Right Answer: Negotiation's Ability to Produce Peace

Conditions

Nixon proceeded to state the conditions which the United States required for peace in Vietnam.

In determining what choices would be acceptable, we have to understand our essential objective in Vietnam: what we want is very little, but very fundamental. We seek the opportunity for the South Vietnamese people to determine their own political future without outside interference.

Let me put it plainly: what the United States wants for South Vietnam is not the important thing. What North Vietnam wants for South Vietnam is not the important thing. What is important is what the people of South Vietnam want for South Vietnam.

The United States has suffered over a million casualties in four wars in this century. Whatever faults we may have as a nation, we have asked nothing for ourselves in return for those sacrifices. We have been generous toward those whom we have fought. We have helped our former foes as well as our friends in the task of reconstruction. We are proud of this record, and we bring the same attitude in our search for a settlement in Vietnam.

In this spirit, let me be explicit about several points:

We seek no bases in Vietnam.
We seek no military ties.
We are willing to agree to neutrality for South Vietnam if that is what the South Vietnamese people freely choose.
We believe there should be an opportunity for full participation in the political life of South Vietnam by all political elements that are prepared to do so without the use of force or intimidation.

We are prepared to accept any government in South Vietnam that results from the free choice of the South Vietnamese people themselves.

We have no intention of imposing any form of government upon the people of South Vietnam, nor will we be a party to such coercion.

We have no objection to reunification, if that turns out to be what the people of North Vietnam and the people of South Vietnam want: we ask only that the decision reflect the free choice of the people concerned.

The only American condition for peace in Vietnam, then, was that the South Vietnamese people be able to choose the form of government under which they desired to live. This condition was congruent with democratic ideology and sufficiently flexible that peace in Vietnam might quickly be achieved.

Choice

The plan, therefore, could appeal to both hawks and doves. Clinton Rossiter pointed out:

The American tradition has room for one form of government—democracy, "government of the people, by the people, for the people." It must be of the people because they are the only source of legitimate power, by them because they alone have the right and capacity to judge the rightness of the laws under which they live, for them because their liberties and welfare are the only reason that government exists at all . . . . The basis of government is the consent of the sovereign people; the wisest of political oracles is a clear majority of this people. 55

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55Rossiter, op. cit., p. 72.
Hawks, therefore, could gain satisfaction from the fact that democratic principles would be implemented in the choice of government in South Vietnam. Nixon rationalized this position when he asserted that the United States was fighting in Vietnam to preserve the South Vietnamese people's right to choose their own government. The policy, therefore, was congruent with the American interest in Vietnam.

Flexibility

Doves could gain satisfaction from the flexibility of the proposed condition. Nixon implied that any peace plan which included a provision for a free choice by the South Vietnamese people would be acceptable to the United States. He amplified this point with the following argument:

In pursuing our limited objective, we insist on no rigid diplomatic formula. Peace could be achieved by an informal understanding, provided that the understanding is clear, and that there were adequate assurances that it would be observed. Peace on paper is not as important as peace in fact.

Not only would almost any peace plan be acceptable, but any type of agreement would end the war. With such flexibility, peace might, indeed, be imminent. Doves could take hope from this thought of imminent peace. The flexibility, also, indicated Nixon's eagerness to achieve peace. This zeal could have served to move some of those who had occupied the extreme dove position to the centrist position of a negotiated peace, inasmuch as Nixon indicated the problems
with a unilateral withdrawal by demonstrating that great flexibility in negotiation might bring a quick peace, the extreme doves' goal. If a people could achieve a quick and lasting peace while avoiding the stated problems of a unilateral withdrawal, they might easily follow the peace plan allowing them these advantages, and support the leader who proposed such a plan. This confidence in Nixon would allow doves to stop worrying about the war because the President was eagerly pursuing their goal and had a plan for achieving it.

Existence of a Concrete Plan

In conjunction with this, Nixon described a plan to end the war and implement the one United States objective in Vietnam.

What kind of a settlement will permit the South Vietnamese people to determine freely their own political future? Such a settlement will require the withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces, including our own, from South Vietnam, and procedures for political choice that give each significant group in South Vietnam a real opportunity to participate in the political life of the nation.

To implement these principles, I reaffirm now our willingness to withdraw our forces on a specified timetable. We ask only that North Vietnam withdraw its forces from South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos into North Vietnam, also in accordance with a timetable.

We include Cambodia and Laos to ensure that these countries would not be used as bases for a renewed war. Our offer provides for a simultaneous start on a mutually acceptable timetable; and for the withdrawal to be accomplished quickly ...
Recent statements by President Thieu have gone far toward opening the way to political settlement. He has publicly declared his government's willingness to a political solution with the National Liberation Front, and has offered free elections. This was a dramatic step forward, a reasonable offer that could lead to a settlement. The South Vietnamese government has offered to talk without preconditions. I believe the other side should also be willing to talk without preconditions.

The South Vietnamese government recognizes, as we do, that a settlement must permit all persons and groups that are prepared to renounce the use of force to participate freely in the political life of South Vietnam. To be effective, such a settlement would require two things: first, a process that would allow the South Vietnamese people to express their choice; and, second, a guarantee that this process would be a fair one . . .

This, then, is the outline of the settlement that we seek to negotiate in Paris. Its basic terms are very simple: mutual withdrawal of non-South Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam, and free choice for the people of South Vietnam. I believe that the long-term interests of peace require that we insist on no less, and that the realities of the situation require that we seek no more.

And now, to make very concrete what I have said, I propose the following specific measures, which seem to me consistent with the principles of all parties. These proposals are made on the basis of full consultation with President Thieu.

As soon as agreement can be reached, all non-South Vietnamese forces would begin withdrawals from South Vietnam.

Over a period of twelve months, by agreed-upon stages, the major portions of all U.S., Allied, and other non-Vietnamese forces would be withdrawn. At the end of this twelve-month period the remaining U.S., Allied, and other non-South Vietnamese forces would move into designated base areas and would not engage in combat operations.

The remaining U.S. and Allied forces would complete their withdrawals as the remaining North Vietnamese
forces were withdrawn and returned to North Vietnam.

An international supervisory body, acceptable to both sides, would be created for the purpose of verifying withdrawals, and for any other purposes agreed upon between the two sides.

This international body would begin operating in accordance with an agreed timetable and would participate in arranging supervised cease-fires in Vietnam.

As soon as possible after the international body was functioning, elections would be held under agreed procedures and under the supervision of the international body.

Arrangements would be made for the release of prisoners of war on both sides at the earliest possible time. . . .

I believe this proposal for peace is realistic, and takes account of the legitimate interests of all concerned. It is consistent with President Thieu's Six Points. It can accommodate the various programs put forth by the other side. We and the government of South Vietnam are prepared to discuss its details with the other side.

Here Nixon presented a concrete proposal for peace which involved an end to the fighting before the complete implementation of the political peace. Troop withdrawals would begin as soon as an agreement was reached; the major portion of United States combatants would leave Vietnam inside of a year. This was an optimistic plan for doves in which fighting would be minimal and sudden peace possible. In turn, this condition could mean a return to the conditions which existed in Vietnam and the United States before the Tet Offensive. Moreover, troops would be leaving Vietnam instead of going there.
The concrete proposal also meant that the President had a plan to end the war which was flexible and agreeable to South Vietnam. Moreover, the proposal could be acceptable to North Vietnam. There was, therefore, a reason for Americans to be hopeful about the end of the war. In making this argument Nixon was appealing to the traditional American belief which Rossiter noted in stating:

The miseries of the past . . ., like those of the present, were visited upon men so silly and ignorant as to fail to choose democracy and make it work. Nothing in the past is conclusive proof that men must always be silly and ignorant. 56

The fact, therefore, that there had been no progress in negotiations did not mean that no advance could be made through these means. In addition, as Lersche stated, the ideal that "men were possessed of reason and morality and that they would respond to appeals made in those terms" 57 indicated that Americans might assume that the North Vietnamese would be receptive to the peace proposal through its limited demands and reward of a United States troop withdrawal. This hope for peace could translate into support for the President's policy, which would imply a willingness to let Nixon end the war. Such a condition would also mean fewer willing to engage in anti-war dissent in

56 Ibid., p. 73.

57 Lersche, op. cit., p. 117.
the United States, which would promise less mental unrest
generally for Americans.

Unity

The President attempted to quell dissent directly
in stating the relation between dissent and Communist re-
calcitrance.

Reports from Hanoi indicate that the enemy has given
up hope for a military victory in South Vietnam,
but is counting on a collapse of American will in the
United States. There could be no greater error in
judgment.

Let me be quite blunt. Our fighting men are not
going to be worn down; our mediators are not going to
be talked down; and our allies are not going to be
let down . . . .

Tonight, all I ask is that you consider these
facts, and, whatever our differences, that you sup-
port a program which can lead to a peace we can live
with and a peace we can be proud of. Nothing could
have a greater effect in convincing the enemy that
he should negotiate in good faith than to see the
American people united behind a generous and reasonable
peace offer.

Nixon thus put all those who supported his policy on
the side of peace and all those who dissented against it,
opposed to peace. This would mean less support for anti-
war demonstrations, thereby decreasing this activity and
promoting mental rest due to increased order.

If some demonstrations did occur, however, the dovish
American mind would not have to toil with the question of
the correctness of its cause. It would only have to wonder
about the methods of controlling the destruction and
inconvenience demonstrators might cause. Those of dovish inclinations could rest on the question of how to end American involvement in Vietnam because the President was zealously pursuing peace.

People of hawkish tendencies could take some solace in Nixon's committal to a peace that would not amount to a communist take-over and an American defeat in Vietnam. They could also be comfortable in the knowledge that the plan was proposed by a man with a record of avidly opposing communist expansion and was supported by the leader of South Vietnam. It would seem incongruous that either of these men would support a plan that might aid communist expansion into Vietnam--Nixon by his record, and Thieu by the fact that such expansion might mean an end to his rule in South Vietnam.

Summary

From the last chapter, it may be recalled that only one president did not adopt a centrist position in Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson's actions may have been due to perceived future events in Vietnam but at the time of the escalation they were not supported by circumstance. Johnson was the lone president to encounter extreme public opposition to his Vietnam policy. This would seem to indicate a public willingness to support the centrist policy.
Nixon's was a centrist program which, it would appear, could give the most people the greatest peace of mind.
CHAPTER IV

CONTROL OVER DESTINY

Between March and November no progress occurred in the Paris negotiations, thereby indicating an apparent North Vietnamese rejection of President Nixon's proposed peace program. In the United States, a massive dissent movement was forming under the guidance of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, which had planned events to take place from October through November. For October fifteenth, the Committee scheduled demonstrations and rallies on major college campuses, designed to halt normal activities on these campuses and in surrounding communities. The group further announced that such a program would be implemented in each subsequent month until American involvement in Vietnam was ended. In addition, on November thirteenth a "March on Death" in Washington was to occur. At this time, an estimated forty thousand people, of all ages, were to march from Arlington National Cemetery to the White House and then to the Capital Building. Each participant in the march would carry a card on which would be the name of a person who had died in Vietnam. November fifteenth was to see a "March on Washington," in which a projected hundreds of
thousands of people were to assemble in that city for a parade and rallies.¹

These actions undoubtedly would bring great amounts of pressure on the President to withdraw unilaterally from Vietnam in that they would exemplify public support for a withdrawal program and that by failing to implement such a policy Nixon was violating the public will. In this regard, George Reedy pointed out: "A political leader who ignores the popular will is not a hero but merely a shoddy craftsman who is not entitled to his job."² When we consider a Gallup poll which showed that 54% of Americans were in favor of a withdrawal plan which would extend over a year,³ it appears that Nixon was in danger of an unpopular indictment.

This is especially true because the President was certain to be blamed for the war's continuance. Robert Heilbroner stated:

... while history has made a mock of our plans, it has not weakened our confidence in our ability to shape our destiny. We are certain that the blame for the untoward [ultimate goal] drift of things


can be laid at the doorstep of this President or that Congress.⁴

Since Vietnam was not a declared war, but a police action, the President, alone, had the power to end it, and therefore was responsible for its continued existence. For this reason, Nixon was ignoring the public will, a "shoddy craftsman" or incapable of solving the Vietnam problem. In either case, he was confronted with a loss of credibility for his policies and himself.

Following the President's November speech, however, a poll conducted by Gallup showed that 77% of those surveyed supported Mr. Nixon's Vietnam course.⁵ Moreover, demonstrations began in support of the President's plan of action.⁶ Robert Newman echoed this effect of the speech when he wrote:

The peace movement is in disarray, planning no more massive marches, resigned to campus and campaign activities--until the President slips, or Hanoi trips him. As of the end of December, Richard Starnes of Scripps-Howard put it succinctly: "Peace Marchers Give Round to Nixon."⁷


Such responses raise the question of the manner in which Nixon deflated his opposition.

It is noteworthy, that in opposing the Vietnam course which Nixon described on March 14, the American public showed a disenchchantment with negotiations as a solution to the war. This mediating technique was, however, the "American way" of solving international problems. Moreover, Robert Heilbroner noted that an inertia existed in the mind against a change in established methods of operation. A change of historic policy, such as a switch from a negotiation to a withdrawal must, he stated, "reckon with the reluctance of humankind to relinquish habits not only of a lifetime but of life itself." Most Americans, therefore, should favor negotiation unless some overriding consideration existed. It did exist.

Recall that Americans historically have believed that they had control over their own destinies, and that peace in Vietnam was such a controllable end. Negotiations, however, did not offer the United States complete control over this goal because the North Vietnamese had to agree to the peace before the United States could withdraw. Indicative of the feeling against this situation is the 58% of the American people who said they favored extreme actions be taken in Vietnam, either a unilateral withdrawal or nuclear

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8Heilbroner, op. cit., p. 196.
bombing of the North after the Tet Offensive of February in 1969. Not only did both plans offer an end to the immediate conflict in Vietnam, but also they promised Americans the greatest control over the coveted end. Nuclear bombing of North Vietnam would cripple the North Vietnamese to the extent that they would have to surrender unless they could receive retaliatory support from the Soviet Union in the form of nuclear bombing, at least of South Vietnam. Such was the case because North Vietnam was defenseless against such attack and had no way to meet its devastating effects. With a unilateral withdrawal, the United States would obviously end its involvement, leaving the South Vietnamese to fight the war. In addition, no other nation had any control if the United States decided to use nuclear bombs in Vietnam or withdraw from that area. Significant in this regard, is the Gallup poll which showed that 54% of Americans favored a unilateral withdrawal, the plan which offered the United States the most power to disengage in Vietnam.

This is true because the plan for nuclear bombing of North Vietnam risked retaliatory nuclear bombing by the Russians of South Vietnam, the United States, or both. A withdrawal plan, however, did not offer such a risk. The plan's only deterrent was that if the communists defeated the South Vietnamese, the country could be used for a base of military aggression against other countries such as Laos.
and Cambodia. This would mean continued world disorder. Americans, however, did not appear concerned about this; at least not as concerned about world peace as having complete control over ending their involvement in Vietnam. Moreover, if disruption occurred again in the world, the United States alone could cause its own intervention.

In his speech of November 3, 1969, Nixon offered Americans a withdrawal plan. His plan, however, did not leave South Vietnam defenseless. The President's program was one of a withdrawal while building the military strength of the South Vietnamese. In this manner, the chief executive offered Americans control of communist expansion, through the South Vietnamese army, and total control over ending the United States' involvement in Vietnam. Nixon thereby was fostering world peace, an ultimate American goal, and ending the American military commitment to Vietnam, an immediate American goal, at the same time. Even though the President's proposal could take longer than a year to complete, it offered the United States the greatest control over both of these international desires, and generated a predictable popularity.

The address which encompassed this program may be divided into three sections. In the first section, Nixon attempts to resurrect anti-communist feelings among Americans. The second part is devoted to Nixon's new foreign policy. The President concludes by asking for a unity
among the majority of Americans around his described actions.

Restoration of Balance Between Dislike of Communism and Opposition to War

Anti-Communism

If the President was not immediately going to withdraw American forces from Vietnam, the public supported idea, he not only had to explain his motives but he also had to gain support for these justifications. The public had shown it was willing to accept the expansion danger. Nixon therefore altered his appeal in attempting to raise anti-communist feelings among Americans so that they would be more amenable to a plan which included fighting communism. He attempted to do this by showing that the communist North Vietnamese caused the United States to be involved in Vietnam; that they were inhumane; that communists were expansive minded; and that the North Vietnamese had blocked attempted peace proposals and, thereby, were the cause of the United States' continued military involvement in Vietnam. In doing this Nixon appealed to the American national self-image. Charles Lersche noted, "The American national self-image is of a people tolerant to a fault, slow to anger, but mighty in its wrath when aroused."^9

Blame

According to the President, North Vietnamese caused the United States to become involved in Vietnam by perpetrating an act of aggression against South Vietnam. The United States had, in the American mind, always opposed any state that violated the structure of peaceful, international relations. The reason for this was that a military aggressive state upset an existing peace in the world, thereby disrupting the American goal of a peaceful, stable world.\(^\text{10}\)

By doing so, the aggressors were deserving of American anger. Nixon stated:

Fifteen years ago North Vietnam, with the logistic support of communist China and the Soviet Union, launched a campaign to impose a communist government on South Vietnam by instigating and supporting a revolution.

In response to the request of the government of South Vietnam, President Eisenhower sent economic aid and military equipment to assist the people of South Vietnam in their efforts to prevent a communist takeover. Seven years ago President Kennedy sent sixteen thousand military personnel to Vietnam as combat advisers. Four years ago President Johnson sent American combat forces to South Vietnam.

Now, many believe that President Johnson's decision to send American combat forces to South Vietnam was wrong. And many others—I among them—have been strongly critical of the way the war has been conducted.

Nixon pointed out that three former presidents were sensitive to the South Vietnamese problem. He thereby identified his interest of protecting South Vietnam with

\(^{10}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 140}.\)
the desires of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. In this manner, Nixon attempted to rally their supporters to his notion of halting communist expansion in Vietnam. Those who supported Eisenhower and Kennedy and their ideas should, therefore, support Nixon's concepts if they are the same. The President, further, noted that he had been critical of the manner in which Johnson conducted the war. This was an attempt to gain support from those who might favor American intervention in Vietnam if the war was effective. Addressing this idea, Joe McGinnis pointed out that the war was unpopular among most Americans not because of the suffering it caused but because it was ineffective. 11 The President, in stating that he opposed the ineffectiveness of the war, showed that he agreed with those who disliked that aspect of the United States Vietnam policy. Nixon, therefore, was opposed to an ineffective policy in Vietnam but favored, as did Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, halting communist expansion in this area.

Any contradiction between the President's narrative and historical fact doubtless went unnoticed because Americans, for the most part, are not informed about foreign policy.

In this regard, Lersche noted:

Perhaps the most far-reaching, and the most difficult to contradict, of the asserted weaknesses of American opinion is its uninformed character. Americans have access to greater amounts of information than do any other people in the world. . . . The stark fact remains, however, that mass audiences do not take advantage of the available data to the extent that one might expect and hope.

. . . the "ordinary citizen" does not seem to have enough information at his command to play even his limited public part with full efficiency. Public Opinion polls reveal a startling lack of knowledge about such important matters as the United Nations, NATO, the nature of communism, and so on.12

Kahin and Lewis concurred with Lersche in noting:

For most Americans the word "Vietnam" spells confusion and complexity. It had never been an area of significant interest to them before, and they awoke rather suddenly to its very existence only after their government had made what they were told were irrevocable commitments there.13

To one who had little prior knowledge of the situation, then, the campaign to impose a communist government on South Vietnam would appear as an unprovoked attack.

Nixon's statement further implied that the communist North Vietnamese did not try to gain their goals by reasonable means, those of political compromise or election. Instead, they tried to impose their will by force. This indicated that their ideas were in disagreement with those of the majority of the people in South Vietnam; the communists

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12Lersche, op. cit., p. 121.

could not gain acceptance in an honest election. Because, as Lersche states, "the popular American tendency has been to blame all America's difficulties on the Soviet ideology,"\textsuperscript{14} it is logical to assume that, following Nixon's statement, Americans believed that communists disrupted international peace by the use of force in South Vietnam, thereby causing the United States to intervene in an attempt to restore peace.

Inhumane

Nixon proceeded to state that aside from their aggressive tendencies, Vietnamese were inhumane. He noted:

For the South Vietnamese, our precipitate withdrawal would inevitably allow the communists to repeat the massacres which followed their takeover in the North fifteen years before.

They then murdered more than fifty thousand people, and hundreds of thousands more died in slave labor camps.

We saw a prelude of what would happen in South Vietnam when the communists entered the city of Hué last year. During their brief rule, there was a bloody reign of terror in which three thousand civilians were clubbed, shot to death, and buried in mass graves.

With the sudden collapse of our support these atrocities of Hué would become the nightmare of the entire nation—and particularly for the million and a half Catholic refugees who fled to South Vietnam when the communists took over in the North.

This would appeal to the altruistic in American attitudes. It does not appear congruent for a people who favor peace

\textsuperscript{14}Lersche, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 154.
and stability and wish everyone well to favor policies which might bring about massive suffering.

In addition this statement served as a reminder that communists are atheists who would persecute Catholics. By attacking Catholics, the North Vietnamese would be attacking the God in which most Americans strongly believe. In this regard, Rossiter writes, "most Americans remain publicly convinced that God had much to do with the rise of this Republic, and that democracy must be 'strengthened with the strength of religion.'"\(^\text{15}\) By attacking Catholics, then, the North Vietnamese were attacking one of the strengths of democracy, an act which might easily raise the American wrath.

Inhibit Peace

Nixon proceeded to reiterate his point that an American withdrawal in Vietnam would add to instability in the world. A withdrawal, he noted, would cause a loss of confidence in American leadership. This would be a dangerous consequence to Americans, who according to Lersche, "seem to feel that the alliance of which their government is the leader is (or ought to be) a monolithic entity that opposes

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communist pretensions with a single effort." 16 A loss of confidence in American leadership would leave the "free world" leaderless and, thereby weaker to resist communist expansion. Nixon stated that this weakness would prompt further aggression and, in this manner, continued world disorder. To this last idea, Lersche writes,

... the American view of the Soviet threat assumed that Moscow was committed to a military conquest of the world at the first favorable opportunity. The initial and basic element of containment has been military deterrence of the Kremlin. The initial containment hypothesis was designed to deny the Soviet Union the possibility of exploiting any soft spots on its periphery by guaranteeing that American power would always confront Soviet initiatives. 17

The President used these two American beliefs then to support his reasoning for not immediately withdrawing from Vietnam. He stated,

For the United States, this first defeat in our nation's history would result in a collapse of confidence in America's leadership, not only in Asia but throughout the world.

Three American Presidents have recognized the great stakes involved in Vietnam and understood what had to be done.

In 1963 President Kennedy, with his characteristic eloquence and clarity, said, "We want to see a stable government there carrying on the struggle to maintain its national independence. We believe strongly in that. We're not going to withdraw from that effort. In my opinion, for us to withdraw from the effort would mean a collapse not only of

16 Lersche, op. cit., p. 233.
17 Ibid.
South Vietnam, but Southeast Asia, so we're going to stay there."

President Eisenhower and President Johnson expressed the same conclusion during their terms of office.

A nation cannot remain great if it betrays its allies and lets down its friends.

Our defeat and humiliation in South Vietnam would without question promote recklessness in the councils of those great powers who have not yet abandoned their goals of world conquest.

This would spark violence wherever our commitments help maintain peace—in the Middle East, in Berlin, eventually even in the Western Hemisphere.

Ultimately, this would cost more lives. It would bring not more peace but more war.

For these reasons I rejected the recommendation that I should end the war by immediately withdrawing all our forces. I chose instead to change American policy on both the negotiating front and the battlefront.

Nixon implied here that communist nations were hindering the ultimate American goal of a peaceful world by their expansive tendencies. He supported this view of the importance of Vietnam to the stability of the world with a statement from President Kennedy, which was another attempt by Nixon to support his concerns with the views of past presidents. He also pointed out that Eisenhower and Johnson believed this. Communists were, therefore, deserving of American wrath for inhibiting the ultimate goal of peace.

Nixon further stated that the communists were preventing the much-desired immediate American goal of peace
in Vietnam by their continual refusal of United States peace initiatives. He noted:

    In order to end a war fought on many fronts, I initiated a pursuit for peace on many fronts.

    In a television speech on May 14, in a speech before the United Nations and on a number of other occasions I set forth our peace proposals in great detail.

    We have offered the complete withdrawal of all outside forces within one year.

    We have proposed a cease-fire under international supervision.

    We have offered free elections under international supervision with the communists participating in the organization and conduct of the elections as an organized political force. The Saigon government has pledged to accept the result of the elections.

    We have not put forth our proposals on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We have indicated that we are willing to discuss the proposals that have been put forth by the other side. We have declared that anything is negotiable except the right of the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future. At the Paris peace conference Ambassador Lodge has demonstrated our flexibility and good faith in forty public meetings.

    Hanoi has refused even to discuss our proposals. They demand our unconditional acceptance of their terms, which are that we withdraw all American forces immediately and unconditionally, and that we overthrow the government of South Vietnam as we leave.

    We have not limited our peace initiatives to public forums and public statements. I recognized, in January, that a long and bitter war like this usually cannot be settled in a public forum. That is why in addition to the public statements and negotiations I have explored every possible private avenue that might lead to a settlement.

    Tonight I am taking the unprecedented step of disclosing to you some of our other initiatives for
peace--initiatives we undertook privately and secretly because we thought that we thereby might open a door which publicly would be closed.

I did not wait for my inauguration to begin my quest for peace.

Soon after my election, through an individual who is directly in contact on a personal basis with the leaders of North Vietnam, I made two private offers for a rapid, comprehensive settlement. Hanoi's replies called in effect for our surrender before negotiations.

Since the Soviet Union furnishes most of the military equipment for North Vietnam, Secretary of State Rogers, my Assistant for National Security Affairs Dr. Kissinger, Ambassador Lodge, and I, personally, have met on a number of occasions with representatives of the Soviet government to enlist their assistance in getting meaningful negotiations started. In addition we have had extended discussions directed toward that same end with representatives of other governments which have diplomatic relations with North Vietnam. None of these initiatives have to date produced results.

Nixon then amplified this frustration through the description of correspondence between himself and Ho Chi Minh.

In mid-July, I became convinced that it was necessary to make a major move to break the deadlock in Paris talks. I spoke directly in this office, where I am now sitting, with an individual who had known Ho Chi Minh on a personal basis for twenty-five years. Through him I sent a letter to Ho Chi Minh.

I did this outside of the usual diplomatic channels with the hope that with the necessity of making statements for propaganda removed, there might be constructive progress toward bringing the war to an end. Let me read from that letter:

"Dear Mr. President:

"I release (sic) that it is difficult to communicate meaningfully across the gulf of four years of war. But precisely because of this gulf, I wanted to take this opportunity to reaffirm in all solemnity
my desire to work for a just peace. I deeply believe that the war in Vietnam has gone on too long and de-
lay in bringing it to an end can benefit no one—least of all the people of Vietnam . . . .

"The time has come to move forward at the con-
ference table toward an early resolution of this
tragic war. You will find us forthcoming and open-
minded in a common effort to bring the blessing of
peace to the brave people of Vietnam. Let history
record that at this critical juncture, both sides
turned their faces toward peace rather than toward
conflict and war."

I received Ho Chi Minh's reply on August 30,
three days before his death. It simply reiterated
the public position North Vietnam had taken in the
Paris talks and flatly rejected my initiative.

The full text of both letters is being re-
leased to the press.

In addition to the public meetings I re-
ferred to, Ambassador Lodge has met with Vietnam's
chief negotiator in Paris in eleven private meet-
ings.

We have taken other significant initiatives
which must remain secret to keep open some chan-
nels of communication which may still prove to be
productive.

But the effect of all the public, private, and
secret negotiations which have been undertaken since
the bombing halt a year ago and since this Adminis-
tration came into office on January 20, can be summed
up in one sentence: No progress whatever has been
made except agreement on the shape of the bargaining
table. Now who is at fault?

It has become clear that the obstacle in nego-
tiating an end to the war is not the President of the
United States. And it is not the South Vietnamese.

The obstacle is the other side's absolute refusal
to show the least willingness to join us in seeking
a just peace. It will not do so while it is con-
vincing that all it has to do is to wait for our next
concession and the next, until it gets everything it
wants.
No longer can there be any question that progress in negotiation depends only on Hanoi's deciding to negotiate, to negotiate seriously.

In the last chapter, it was pointed out that Americans believe that all men are reasonable and would respond to reasonable appeals. It was also stated that we think all people should exhibit an ability to compromise. Nixon showed that his initiatives for peace were reasonable and flexible, and that he had exhibited a willingness to compromise: the United States had offered a withdrawal of its forces in a year, a cease-fire, and supervised elections. In addition, this nation had sought the help of the Soviet Union, and a letter had been written to Ho Chi Minh describing the President's anxiety for peace. Private negotiations were held. Through all of these, Nixon indicated his willingness to compromise by offering no proposal on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. In acting thus, the Commander-in-Chief followed the public will in attempting to gain a peace. He acted, therefore, in the best interests of the country.

Nixon stated, however, that the North Vietnamese stubbornly refused all these initiatives. They steadfastly insisted that the United States accept their terms for peace, unilaterally withdraw from Vietnam and overthrow the South Vietnamese government.

This showed that those in control of North Vietnam were unreasonable. Not only did they demand an immediate
American withdrawal, but also they insisted that the United States overthrow a government for them that this nation was defending. Moreover, Nixon stated that the North Vietnamese were unwilling to compromise either of these points, and that due to this uncooperative attitude in negotiations, they were responsible for continued American involvement in Vietnam.

To a nation which strongly desired peace and believed in compromise, this stubborn stance could easily cause resentment toward the North Vietnamese. This resentment could have increased acceptance of Nixon's other points that the North Vietnamese were inhuman expansionists. A nation unwilling to employ peaceful measures to end a war might be very aggressive in occupying a conquered country, particularly when it had been brutal in the past. A government unwilling to compromise might also attempt to further any of its expansionist tendencies, not through negotiation, but by continued aggression. For breaking international peace, for causing the United States to become involved in Vietnam, for being inhumane, for threatening further international unrest, and for causing the continuance of the war, the North Vietnamese, as Nixon depicted them, were deserving of American wrath. This could cause an unwillingness on the part of Americans to allow North Vietnam to achieve its objectives.
New Plan For World Peace

Inhibits Communist Expansion

Following this, Nixon described a new foreign policy direction for the United States.

At the time we launched our search for peace I recognized we might not succeed in bringing an end to the war through negotiation. I, therefore, put into effect another plan to bring peace—a plan which will bring the war to an end regardless of what happens on the negotiating front.

It is in line with a major shift in U.S. foreign policy which I described in my press conference at Guam on July 25. Let me briefly explain what has been described as the Nixon Doctrine—a policy which not only will help end the war in Vietnam, but which is an essential element of our program to prevent future Vietnams.

We Americans are a do-it-yourself people. We are an impatient people. Instead of teaching someone else to do a job, we like to do it ourselves. And this trait has been carried over into our foreign policy.

In Korea and again in Vietnam the United States furnished most of the money, most of the arms, and most of the men to help the people of those countries defend their freedom against the communist aggression.

Before any American troops were committed to Vietnam, a leader of another Asian country expressed this opinion to me when I was traveling in Asia as a private citizen. He said, "When you are trying to assist another nation defend its freedom, U.S. policy should be to help them fight the war but not to fight the war for them."

Well, in accordance with this wise counsel, I laid down in Guam three principles as guidelines for future American policy toward Asia:

First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.
Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.

After I announced this policy I found that the leaders of the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, and other nations which might be threatened by communist aggression welcomed this new direction in American foreign policy.

The defense of freedom is everybody's business—not just America's business. And it is particularly the responsibility of the people whose freedom is threatened. In the previous Administration we Americanized the war in Vietnam. In this Administration we are Vietnamizing the search for peace.

The policy of the previous Administration not only resulted in our assuming the primary responsibility for fighting the war, but even more significantly did not adequately stress the goal of strengthening the South Vietnamese so that they could defend themselves when we left.

The Vietnamization Plan was launched following Secretary Laird's visit to Vietnam in March. Under the plan, I ordered first a substantial increase in the training and equipment of South Vietnamese forces.

In July, on my visit to Vietnam, I changed General Abrams' orders so that they were consistent with the objectives of our new policies. Under the new orders the primary mission of our troops is to enable the South Vietnamese forces to assume the full responsibility for the security of South Vietnam.

This new concept enabled the United States to inhibit communist expansion through material aid and financial support to its allies. At the same time, this program insured that
Americans would not fight in another Vietnam.

The effect of this policy on the American Vietnam involvement would be one of changing the United States' involvement from that of a combatant to one concerned with supplying aid to South Vietnam. The trend of sending American troops to Vietnam, thereby, was reversed to a policy of gradual American combat withdrawal. This action facilitated the progress in limiting American fighting and the speed of training the South Vietnamese.

Nixon followed this by noting,

After five years of Americans going into Vietnam, we are finally bringing American men home. By December 15 over sixty thousand men will have been withdrawn from South Vietnam— including 20 percent of all of our combat forces.

The South Vietnamese have continued to gain in strength. As a result they have been able to take over combat responsibilities from our American troops.

Two other significant developments have occurred since this Administration took office:

Enemy infiltration, infiltration which is essential if they are to launch a major attack, over the last three months is less than 20 percent of what it was over the same period last year.

Most important, United States casualties have declined during the last two months to the lowest point in three years.

Let me now turn to our program for the future.

We have adopted a plan which we have worked out in cooperation with the South Vietnamese for the complete withdrawal of all U.S. combat ground forces, and their replacement by South Vietnamese forces on an orderly scheduled timetable. This withdrawal will be made from strength and not from weakness.
As South Vietnamese forces become stronger, the rate of American withdrawal can become greater.

I have not and do not intend to announce the timetable for our program. There are obvious reasons for this decision which I am sure you will understand. As I have indicated on several occasions, the rate of withdrawal will depend on developments on three fronts.

One of these is the progress which can be or might be made in the Paris talks. An announcement of a fixed timetable for our withdrawal would completely remove any incentive for the enemy to negotiate an agreement.

They would simply wait until our forces had withdrawn and then move in.

The other two factors on which we will base our withdrawal decisions are the level of enemy activity and the progress of the training program of the South Vietnamese forces. I am glad to be able to report tonight progress on both of these fronts has been greater than we anticipated. As a result, our timetable for withdrawal is more optimistic now than when we made our first estimates in June. This clearly demonstrates why it is not wise to be frozen in on a fixed timetable.

We must retain the flexibility to base each withdrawal decision on the situation as it is at that time rather than on estimates that are no longer valid.

Along with this optimistic estimate, I must—in all candor—leave one note of caution.

If the level of enemy activity significantly increases, we might have to adjust our timetable accordingly.

However, I want the record to be completely clear on one point.

At the time of the bombing halt just a year ago, there was some confusion as to whether there was an understanding on the part of the enemy that if we stopped the bombing of North Vietnam, they would stop the shelling of cities in South Vietnam.
I want to be sure that there is no misunderstanding on the part of the enemy with regard to our withdrawal program.

We have noted the reduced level of infiltration, the reduction of our casualties, and are basing our withdrawal decisions partially on those factors.

If the level of infiltration or our casualties increase while we are trying to scale down the fighting, it will be the result of a conscious decision by the enemy.

Hanoi could make no greater mistake than to assume that an increase in violence will be to its advantage. If I conclude that increased enemy action jeopardizes our remaining forces in Vietnam, I shall not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation.

During the withdrawal period, Nixon implied that American combat deaths would be minimal: first, because the South Vietnamese were to assume the combat responsibility; second, because of the decreased fighting in the war. In relation to this, Nixon warned the North Vietnamese that increased hostilities would inhibit American withdrawal and might cause the United States to again begin bombing.

The importance of decreased combat was that a calm war front could produce increased public acceptance for the President's policy because the new program gave the United States a publicly desired control over its goal of peace in Vietnam. Calm in Vietnam would make the public willing to give Nixon's program time to achieve its end and apparent success.

Nixon's statement, however, put any blame for the
failure of his policy on the North Vietnamese. United States troop withdrawals could only be halted by increased aggression by the North Vietnamese. Considering the wrath which the President attempted to create against the communists, increased aggression by the North Vietnamese might have created United States public support for any reprisals Nixon may have taken against them.

Control of Destiny

The President offered, then, the people of the United States a plan in which this nation had control over its immediate goal. The plan, further, fostered world peace by inhibiting communist expansion and guaranteeing that American combat forces would not be engaged in other parts of the world. This implied hope existed for the nation's populace to live in peace. Such aspirations could foster peace of mind among the people because Nixon was solving the problem in a manner they desired, withdrawal, and was also promoting world peace. They therefore could retreat from this national problem by faithfully allowing the President to carry out his announced action.

Unity

Majority Rule

Nixon, then, said that he could not allow the will of a minority of Americans to be imposed on the majority.
I recognize that some of my fellow citizens disagree with the plan for peace I have chosen. Honest and patriotic Americans have reached different conclusions as to how peace should be achieved.

In San Francisco a few weeks ago, I saw demonstrators carrying signs reading: "Lose in Vietnam, bring the boys home."

Well, one of the strengths of our free society is that any American has a right to reach that conclusion and to advocate that point of view. But as President of the United States, I would be untrue to my oath of office if I allowed the policy of this nation to be dictated by the minority who hold that point of view and who try to impose it on the nation by mounting demonstrations in the street.

For almost two hundred years the policy of this nation has been made under our Constitution by those leaders in the Congress and in the White House selected by all the people. If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority this nation has no future as a free society.

The President implied here that he was representing the will of the majority. He tied this to the American belief in constitutionalism. Through being the person selected by the majority of the people of the United States as President, Nixon stated that he is representative of their will. Of this, Rossiter wrote:

The spirit of constitutionalism also pervades our political thinking. When the American proclaims his devotion to political democracy, he is thinking of democracy in which power is diffused by a written Constitution and the wielders of power are held in check by the rule of law. "A government of laws and not of men" is his criterion of good government. In his opinion, there is no incompatibility between democracy and constitutionalism. The latter is simply a method for making the former work through safe, effective, predictable methods. All men, however good they may be, are susceptible to the temptations of
power; all men, however rational they can be, may lose their heads in a tight situation. They must therefore govern themselves under self-imposed restraints that deliver them from temptation and lead them to sober decisions. The spirit of American constitutionalism, needless to say, is made visible in a Constitution that is not just casually admired but actively worshipped.18

Through appealing on the Constitution, Nixon stated that he was respecting that which made and kept this a free society. If the minority will prevails over that of the majority, there would be minority rule in the United States. This would be undemocratic. Nixon stated he was protecting the majority's will and upholding the Constitution.

Cause of Peace

The President concluded with an appeal for unity.

And so tonight—to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans—I ask for your support.

I pledged in my campaign for the Presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. I have initiated a plan of action which will enable me to keep that pledge.

The more support I can have from the American people, the sooner that pledge can be redeemed; for the more divided we are at home, the less likely the enemy is to negotiate at Paris.

Let us be united for peace. Let us also be united against defeat. Because let us understand: North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that.

Fifty years ago, in this room and at this very desk, President Woodrow Wilson spoke words which

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18Rossiter, op. cit., p. 75.
caught the imagination of a war-weary world. He said, "This is the war to end wars." His dream for peace after World War I was shattered on the hard realities of great power politics and Woodrow Wilson died a broken man.

Tonight I do not tell you that the war in Vietnam is the war to end wars. But I do say this:

I have initiated a plan which will end this war in a way that will bring us closer to that great goal to which Woodrow Wilson and every American President in our history has been dedicated—the goal of a just and lasting peace.

Public unity behind his policy, he stated, would greatly help the cause of world peace. Considering the animosity he built among Americans against the communists, the advantages he portrayed of his policy and the fact that by his policy he was upholding the majority will and thereby protecting a free society, it was no wonder that he gained this unity.

In the speech, Nixon did not try to pacify hawks while satisfying doves, for the hawk-dove issue was not the question at this time. The American people indicated that they wanted to take the troops out of Vietnam in the quickest manner, withdrawal. Nixon respected this desire. He, however, put this in such a way as to be consistent with new foreign policy directions. These directions could settle the American mind concerning future American combat in other lands. They could give Americans peace of mind in that future international disturbances would be inhibited by American military aid. Finally, Americans
could have peace of mind because the United States was withdrawing from combat activities in Vietnam. No other nation could prohibit this. In doing this, the President stated he was upholding a free society by not submitting to the will of a minority. His Vietnam policy was consistent with his new foreign policy and did not appear, therefore, contrary to any American international interest. Nixon, after stating the evils of the communists, offered a plan by which Americans could oppose aggression and have combat peace in the United States at the same time. A majority of the United States populace supported this program and provided Nixon with his desired unity.
CHAPTER V

A CONTRADICTION

In April 1970, President Richard Nixon faced the decision of either violating his own foreign policy doctrine, of aid but no military intervention, or allowing Cambodia and Laos to fall to the North Vietnamese. In the first case, he risked the loss of public credibility and support. In the latter instance, he jeopardized the success of his Vietnamization program.

This problem was prompted when the anti-communist Cambodian leaders Premier General Lon Nol and Deputy Premier Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak overthrew the rule of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, in part, due to his allowance of North Vietnamese bases in Cambodia.¹ The new leaders then pledged to drive the North Vietnamese from their country,² a vow which was doomed from its inception to meet with resistance because of the strategic importance of Cambodia.

²Henry Kamm, "Cambodia: Trying to 'Keep the Wolf From the Door,'" New York Times, April 12, 1970, sec. IV, p. 4E.
and Laos to the North Vietnamese campaign against South Vietnam.

The communists had used Cambodia as a base area and supply foray into South Vietnam. An estimated 25,000 North Vietnamese troops were stationed in that nation. Moreover, an approximate 1,000 tons of hard goods passed through the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville each month on their way to North Vietnamese sanctuaries. If this flow was restricted, officials believed that it would have a crippling effect on communist operations in the Mekong Delta.\(^3\) It was predictable, therefore, that the North Vietnamese would fight to retain or improve their position. The results of such combat would be disastrous for the new Cambodian regime. In this regard, Henry Kamm wrote, "They [Cambodian leaders] can be in little doubt that if the battle tried, well supplied communist armies turn westward and march on Phnom Penh, the Cambodian Army, whose weakness they know better than anyone else, will need heavy support from the outside to keep from crumbling and being overrun."\(^4\) This was the same effect of fighting in Laos, where the North Vietnamese and


\(^4\)Kamm, "Cambodia: Trying to 'Keep the Wolf From the Door,'", *op. cit.*
the Pathet Lao routed the Laotians across the Plaines des Jarres.  

Nixon faced, therefore, the decision of whether to send aid in support of the two Asian nations. In addition, if aid was to be given, the President had to decide upon the type to send. If the President did not send any aid to these attacked countries, the North Vietnamese apparently would defeat them. This would provide the United States' Vietnam enemy with increased ground from which to attack South Vietnam and thereby threaten to hinder an American withdrawal. A slowed withdrawal and increased fighting in Vietnam might cause public disenchantedment with Nixon's policy. It is instructive to recall that the American public was upset about the Vietnam war in 1968 because American action there was ineffective. Another negative result could easily produce the same disenchantedment. If the President, however, provided only material aid, as stated in the Nixon Doctrine, the Laotians and the Cambodians might easily be defeated through the inexperience of their army. This would have the same effect as no action at all; except, in this case public doubt would be cast on the effectiveness of the new foreign policy. The final alternative Nixon faced involved a violation of the Nixon Doctrine. This

meant sending United States troops into Cambodia, a move which would cause some adverse public reaction. If the endeavor succeeded, however, Americans might forget the fact that Nixon violated his new foreign policy. Scammon and Wattenberg stated that if fighting in Vietnam or Cambodia led to high American casualties and draft calls, Nixon would be in trouble at home. They indicated, however, that if this failed to occur the President would not suffer in popularity. 6

If any of the three alternatives did not succeed, the public opinion consequences would be grave. On the other hand, the public would, no doubt, accept any action which succeeded. Nixon, therefore, chose the alternative which involved the highest probability of success: that of sending American combat troops into Cambodia and Laos.

In announcing this action, however, the President had to conceal the fact that he was violating the Nixon Doctrine. If he did not do this, he would suffer a credibility problem. For, after announcing that American combat troops would not fight in other countries, a combat committal could leave the President open to the attack that he had raised false expectations, as Johnson did, and thereby lied to the American people. This could cost Nixon support for his politics and himself.

The Commander-in-Chief clothed this action, therefore, under the guise of furthering peace in Vietnam. In stating that the Cambodian action was part of the Vietnam peace effort, he justified his move in Cambodia, because he was not sending troops strictly to protect Cambodians, but to prevent the North Vietnamese from gaining bases of attack against South Vietnamese. He thus entered Cambodia to extend the Vietnam peace effort.

Consistency

The President began his speech by reminding Americans that he had consistently said that he would retaliate against increased enemy activity.

... I warned that if I concluded that increased enemy activity in any of these areas endangered the lives of Americans remaining in Vietnam, I would not hesitate to take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation.

Despite that warning, North Vietnam has increased its military aggression in all these areas, and particularly in Cambodia.

After full consultation with the National Security Council, Ambassador Bunker, General Abrams and my other advisers, I have concluded that the actions of the enemy in the last 10 days clearly endanger the lives of Americans who are in Vietnam now and would constitute an unacceptable risk to those who will be there after withdrawal of another 150,000.

To protect our men who are in Vietnam, and to guarantee the continued success of our withdrawal and Vietnamization program, I have concluded that the time has come for action.

Nixon thereby protected himself from the possibility that Americans might feel he raised false expectations,
and the ensuing credibility loss for himself and his policy. His action, in sum, was consistent with his past statements.

In doing this, he also reminded the United States populace that the North Vietnamese would be the cause of any increased American fighting. This was an initial attempt to kindle anger against the North Vietnamese in the American people, in that communist belligerence caused the action which the President was announcing this night. Nixon viewed himself, therefore, as one who was merely trying to protect the lives of American soldiers.

Anti-Communist

Nixon elaborated on the evils of the communists by stating they broke an international agreement by invading another nation.

Cambodia—a small country of seven million people—has been a neutral nation since the Geneva Agreement of 1954, an agreement incidentally, which was signed by the Government of North Vietnam.

American policy since then has been to scrupulously respect the neutrality of the Cambodian people. We have maintained a skeleton diplomatic session of fewer than 15 in Cambodia's capital, and that only since last August.

For the previous four years, from 1965 to 1969 we did not have any diplomatic mission whatever in Cambodia, and for the past five years we have provided no military assistance whatever and no economic assistance to Cambodia.

North Vietnam, however, has not respected that neutrality. For the past five years, as indicated on this map, as you see here, North Vietnam has occupied military sanctuaries all along the Cambodian frontier with South Vietnam. Some of these extend up to 20 miles into Cambodia...
They are used for hit-and-run attacks on American and South Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam. These Communists occupied territories contain major base camps, training sites, logistics facilities, weapons and ammunition factories, airstrips and prisoner of war compounds.

Even after the Vietnamese Communists began to expand these sanctuaries four weeks ago, we counseled patience to our South Vietnamese allies and imposed restraints on our own commanders.

In contrast to our policy the enemy in the past two weeks has stepped up his guerrilla actions and he is concentrating his main force in these sanctuaries that you see in this map, where they are building up to launch massive attacks on our forces and those of South Vietnam.

North Vietnam in the last two weeks has stripped away all pretence of respecting the sovereignty or the neutrality of Cambodia. Thousands of their soldiers are invading the country from the sanctuaries. They are encircling the capital, Phnom Penh. Coming from these sanctuaries . . ., they have moved into Cambodia and are encircling the capital.

Historically, according to Rossiter, Americans have believed strongly in law because it prevents the evils of men from destroying the nation. In this regard, Lersche noted: "To Americans, social relations sanctioned by juristic norms are always preferable to extralegal ones; a 'world of law' would be better on all counts than a 'lawless' one." When Nixon stated, then, that the North Vietnamese violated an international agreement, he showed

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they violated that which provided for peace and stability in the world. In doing so, the President stated that the government of North Vietnam was hindering the much desired goal of a peaceful world. This might indeed anger a populace which strongly desired peace and stability.

By showing that the North Vietnamese invaded another country Nixon strengthened his contention that North Vietnam did not act in the way of reasonable men. Instead of attempting to negotiate their desires in Cambodia, they tried to impose their will by force. In this manner Nixon again showed them to violate that which would facilitate a peaceful world. For if all nations tried to negotiate their grievances, the "American way," war would cease. By continuing the war, then, North Vietnam propagated instability in the world.

Nixon also stated that the United States made attempts to respect international law. His administration, in other words, was following the "American way" in foreign affairs. He was thus congruent with the desires of Americans. Moreover, he was attempting to bring world stability by refusing to escalate the fighting to Cambodia and by exercising patience, that which prevents fighting. In this manner Nixon identified himself with the cause of peace and set the North Vietnamese opposed to it. The communist Vietnamese, in short, were responsible for the instability in Southeast Asia.
Non-Aggression

Nixon, then, stated that the new Cambodian government requested American assistance in its attempt to repeal the attack.

Cambodia, as a result of this, has sent out a call to the United States, to a number of other nations, for assistance. Because if this enemy effort succeeds, Cambodia would become a vast enemy staging area and a springboard for attacks on South Vietnam along 600 miles of frontier: a refuge where enemy troops could return from combat without fear of retaliation.

North Vietnamese men and supplies could then be poured into that country, jeopardizing not only the lives of our men but the people of South Vietnam as well.

Any American action in Cambodia therefore would be at the request of the Cambodian government, and would not be a result of the United States imperialistic action. Nixon thereby guarded himself against such criticism.

The President began also to set the stage for his conclusion. He showed that the Cambodian government felt that it needed help. The action which he would announce, therefore, was designed to aid a people defending themselves against an aggressor. In doing so Nixon would prevent the communist victory in that country and the serious repercussions which would accompany it.

Alternatives

The President proceeded to discuss three alternatives he had in relation to Cambodia.
Now confronted with this situation we had three options:

First, we can do nothing. Now, the ultimate result of that course of action is clear. Unless we indulge in wishful thinking, the lives of Americans remaining in Vietnam after our next withdrawal of 150,000 would be gravely threatened.

Let us go to the map again.

Here is South Vietnam. Here is North Vietnam. North Vietnam already occupies this part of Laos. If North Vietnam also occupied this whole band in Cambodia or the entire country, it would mean that South Vietnam was completely outflanked and the forces of Americans in this area as well as the South Vietnamese could be in an untenable military position.

Our second choice is to provide massive military assistance to Cambodia itself and, unfortunately, while we deeply sympathize with the plight of seven million Cambodians whose country has been invaded, massive amounts of military assistance could not be rapidly and effectively utilized by this small Cambodian Army against the immediate trap.

With other nations we shall do our best to provide the small arms and other equipment which the Cambodian Army of 40,000 needs and can use for its defense.

But the aid we will provide will be limited for the purpose of enabling Cambodia to defend its neutrality and not for the purpose of making it an active belligerent on one side or the other.

Our third choice is to go to the heart of the trouble.

And that means cleaning out major North Vietnamese--and Viet Cong--occupied territories, these sanctuaries which serve as bases for attacks on both Cambodia and American and South Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam.

Here it is important to recall that Americans believe that the correct solution to a problem removes the problem
to the "never-to-be-thought-about-again" category. To this point Lersche wrote:

The popular attitude toward foreign policy, once the United States has actively entered the international arena, has usually been an urge to "set things right." Americans disapprove of purposeless action; they have sought an affirmative goal of improvement, of reflection, or of organization.\(^9\)

Nixon presented the first two options as opposed to this belief.

By stating that Cambodia requested assistance, the President implied that the Cambodian government felt it could not defeat the North Vietnamese alone. If the United States refused to send aid, therefore, the Cambodians would be defeated, a situation which would seriously jeopardize the American position in South Vietnam. Nixon thereby related the Cambodian situation to the Vietnam war. A plan which allowed the defeat of Cambodia would, therefore, hinder America's attempt to remove its Vietnam problem to the never-to-be-thought-of-again category, because such a plan would allow the North Vietnamese greatly to improve their military position in relation to South Vietnam and, according to Mr. Nixon, give them a base from which to mount an offensive on South Vietnam. This would mean increased fighting which would seriously inhibit the withdrawal program.

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 182.
The second option, Nixon stated, would produce the same result as the first because the Cambodian Army could not utilize American aid quickly enough. This plan, therefore, hindered the American solution of the Vietnam problem. The President stated that he would send aid to Cambodia but it would not be enough, and therefore, would be a purposeless action. The first two options violated, then, the American belief of proper problem solution.

The final option struck at "the heart of the trouble." In this manner, it promised to end any threatened attack from Cambodia on American or South Vietnamese forces in Vietnam. The plan would resolve the military problem of attacks from Cambodia. In doing this, the final option would promote the American solution to the Vietnam problem. Moreover, the plan promised the possibility of a faster withdrawal due to a decrease in sanctuaries from which the enemy could attack. The final option, then, was a purposeful action that provided for a solution to the problem.

In discussing these alternatives, Nixon created an inequality among them due to their solution capabilities. In this manner, the President led the audience to see the correctness of the proposed method, because it appeared to be the only action which would solve the problem.

It is also noteworthy that the President led the audience to his conclusion prior to announcing the action he would take in Cambodia. In this regard, Fotheringham
has noted that if a speaker's proposal is opposed to audience beliefs or wishes, the audience will reject and refute the proposal in its mind.\textsuperscript{10} This would eliminate any chance that the speaker might direct the audience to see the rightness of his cause because it is not trying to understand his point of view but is refuting it.\textsuperscript{11} An announcement by the President therefore that he was sending American troops to do combat in Cambodia would violate the wishes of a people who so greatly desired peace. Because this violated the public will, Nixon would go contrary to the belief that the President is supposed to act in accord with the public will, and in that manner become a shoddy craftsman in the public mind. In such a case, he could not lead the audience to the rightness of his conclusion because they would be concentrating on refuting his ideas. By discussing his alternatives before his conclusion, however, Nixon avoided this problem.

Announcement

The President proceeded to announce his decision to send American combat troops into Cambodia.

Now faced with these three options, this is the decision I have made. In cooperation with the armed forces of South Vietnam, attacks are being launched

\textsuperscript{10}Wallace Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion (Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966), p. 85.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 38.
this week to clean out major enemy sanctuaries on the Cambodian-Vietnam border. A major responsibility for the ground operation is being assumed by South Vietnamese forces.

For example, the attacks in several areas, including the parrot's beak, . . . , are exclusively South Vietnamese ground operations, under South Vietnamese command, with the United States providing air and logistic support.

There is one area, however, immediately above the parrot's beak where I have concluded that a combined American and South Vietnamese operation is necessary.

Tonight, American and South Vietnamese units will attack the headquarters of the entire communist military operation in South Vietnam. This key control center has been occupied by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong for five years in blatant violation of Cambodia's neutrality.

This is not an invasion of Cambodia. The areas in which these attacks will be launched are completely occupied and controlled by North Vietnamese forces.

Our purpose is not to occupy the areas. Once enemy forces are driven out of these sanctuaries and once their military supply are destroyed, we will withdraw.

These actions are in no way directed to security interests of any nation. Any government that chooses to hire these actions as a pretext for harming relations with the United States will be doing so on its own responsibility and on its own initiative and we will draw the appropriate conclusions.

By pointing out that this venture was a joint South Vietnamese and American operation, Nixon showed that this action was in accord with his Vietnamization program. From the cited examples, the South Vietnamese forces appeared to be scheduled for most of the combat. This indicated that American casualties would be comparatively small
because Americans would do less fighting in this step to solve the Vietnam war problem.

Nixon also emphasized that Allied forces were not going to occupy Cambodia. This meant that the intent of the action was not to extend the war but to facilitate the withdrawal. Nixon was not, therefore, violating the public will. Instead, he was responding, as he had warned, to increased communist activity, and thereby was pursuing the American goal in a warned way.

In this manner Nixon attempted to give Americans peace of mind in relation to the action. He tried to do this by leading Americans to the conclusion that his decision was correct, and by assuring them that even though the action had to be taken, it was temporary. Moreover, fighting would be limited after this confrontation because the North Vietnamese would be in a weaker military position for attack.

Peace

Nixon expanded on the correctness of his decision by stating that the action was necessary to facilitate peace.

A majority of the American people, a majority of you listening to me are for the withdrawal of our forces from Vietnam. The action I have taken tonight is indispensable for the continuing success of that withdrawal program.

A majority of the American people want to end this war rather than to have it drag on interminably.

The action I have taken tonight will serve that purpose.
A majority of the American people want to keep the casualties of our brave men in Vietnam at an absolute minimum.

The action I take tonight is essential if we are to accomplish that goal.

We take this action not for the purpose of expanding the war into Cambodia but for the purpose of ending the war in Vietnam, and winning the just peace we all desire.

We have made and will continue to make every possible effort to end this war through negotiation at the conference table rather than through more fighting in the battlefield.

Let's look again at the record.

We stopped the bombing of North Vietnam. We have cut air operations by over 20 percent. We've announced the withdrawal of over 250,000 of our men. We've offered to withdraw all of our men if they will withdraw theirs. We've offered to negotiate all issues with only one condition: and that is that the future of South Vietnam be determined, not by North Vietnam, and not by the United States, but by the people of South Vietnam themselves.

In this passage, the President summarized his contention that his announced action would help bring peace. In support of this contention he mentioned the initiatives he had taken to promote peace in Vietnam. Because Nixon had worked for peace, the public desire, in the past, he was deserving of the public trust and support in this action.

Anti-Peace

Nixon continued by trying to show that the North Vietnamese did not act for peace in Vietnam, and thereby associated their actions in Cambodia with their violence in Vietnam. They therefore were deserving of the American wrath
because of their apparent desire to prevent peace. In this manner, Nixon strengthened his contention that Cambodia would be used as a base of operations against South Vietnam. He stated:

The answer of the enemy has been intransigence at the conference table, beligerence at Hanoi, massive military aggression in Laos and Cambodia and stepped-up attacks in South Vietnam designed to increase American casualties.

This attitude has become intolerable.

We will not react to this threat to American lives merely by plaintive diplomatic reports.

If we did, credibility of the United States would be destroyed in every area of the world where only the power of the United States deters aggression.

A nation which reacted to peace initiatives in this aggressive manner might, indeed, use Cambodia as an attack base against Vietnam, and thereby hinder American withdrawals. Nixon therefore showed that his action was necessary because reasons existed to fear communist control of Cambodia. By association, then, the communist Vietnamese attacks in Cambodia were designed to increase the war in Vietnam. Nixon's actions were therefore necessary for peace.

Warning

Nixon next issued a warning to Hanoi. At this time, he indicated that the United States was serious in this message. The American populace, therefore, could take hope from the idea that the show of American military power
might cause the North Vietnamese to negotiate due to the United States' willingness to fight if pushed too far. The North Vietnamese, then, could not gain their goals by combat and, therefore, might negotiate for their ends. In such a case, the United States could end its Vietnam involvement.

Tonight, I again warn the North Vietnamese that if they continue to escalate the fighting when the United States is withdrawing its forces, I shall meet my responsibility as commander-in-chief of our armed forces to take the action I consider necessary to defend the security of our American men.

The action I have announced tonight puts the leaders of North Vietnam on notice that we will be patient in working for peace. We will be conciliatory at the conference table, but we will not be humiliated. We will not be defeated.

We will not allow American men by the thousands to be killed by an enemy from privileged sanctuary.

The time came long ago to end this war through peaceful negotiations. We stand ready for those negotiations. We've made major efforts many of which must remain secret.

I say tonight all the offers and approaches made previously remain on the conference table whenever Hanoi is ready to negotiate seriously.

But if the enemy response to our most conciliatory offers for peaceful negotiation continues to be to increase its attacks and humiliate and defeat us, we shall react accordingly.

Nixon showed here that reasons existed for hope in a negotiated peace in that the United States would continue to be conciliatory in Paris and would not allow North Vietnam to achieve its goals by military conquest. Since Americans
believe that all men possess reason, the United States could promote negotiations in the American mind by indicating that the North Vietnamese could not achieve their goals on the battlefield; for if combat was unproductive, reason would dictate that they should try to attain their goals by negotiation, the only other method.

In this passage, also, Nixon attempted to incite American anger against North Vietnam, in that the communists were responsible for this increased instability by trying to improve their position to kill Americans. A people which is altruistic would oppose increased suffering of their own soldiers. Nixon thereby added credibility to his stance by fighting against this suffering in promoting peace.

Opponents

In this next passage, Nixon associated this international instability provoked by the North Vietnamese with the social instability in the United States and the disruptions in other countries of the world. He stated:

My fellow Americans, we live in an age of anarchy, both abroad and at home. We see mindless attacks on all great institutions which have been created by free civilizations in the last 500 years. Even here in the United States, great universities are being systematically destroyed.

Small nations all over the world find themselves under attack from within and from without. If when the chips are down the world's most powerful nation--the United States of America--acts like a
pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world.

It is not our power but our will and character that is being tested tonight.

The question all Americans must ask and answer tonight is this:

Does the richest and strongest nation in the history of the world have the character to meet a direct challenge by a group which rejects every effort to win a just peace, ignores our warning, tramples on solemn agreements, violates the neutrality of an unarmed people and uses our prisoners as hostages.

If we fail to meet this challenge all other nations will be on notice that despite its overwhelming power the United States when a real crises comes will be found wanting.

Nixon observed that he was fighting against the forces of anarchy and totalitarianism, both of which are contrary to the American way. Americans believe in a government of laws. These agreed-upon ways of acting prevent the evils of men from destroying a country. Americans do not believe this is contradictory to government by the people. Government by law was merely a safeguard which provided for the success of government by the people.\(^\text{12}\) Americans totally reject, then, forms of government without law, anarchy, and forms of government where power is only in the hands of a few. By associating the North Vietnamese with these forms of government, Nixon attempted to create a desire in Americans to fight them. Nixon also erected here

\(^{12}\text{Rossiter, op. cit., p. 76.}\)
a dichotomy. Those who favored the President's plan were supporting freedom in the world, and those who opposed the program were supporting the forces of anarchy and totalitarianism. This was an appeal to the Americans' deep belief in the democratic system of government.

This dichotomy protected Nixon from possible opposition. Should disruption, which most Americans disliked, erupt in response to his announcement, the unrest would only serve to prove his contention concerning the forces of anarchy which he stated were operating in the United States. Disruption would therefore only strengthen the majority's belief that anarchy must be fought, and most of those who publicly opposed the President's policy would be associated with anarchy. This would cause the President's opposition to lose public support.

Support

Nixon concluded by stating that he was not concerned about the political consequences of his action.

I have noted . . . that a Republican Senator has said that this action I have taken means that my party has lost all chance of winning the November elections, and others are saying today that this move against enemy sanctuaries will make me a one-term President.

No one is more aware than I am of the political consequences of the action I've taken. It is tempting to take the easy political path, to blame this war on previous Administrations, and to bring all of our men home immediately--regardless of the consequences, even though that would mean defeat for the United States; to desert 18 million South Vietnamese
people who have put their trust in us; to expose them to the same slaughter and savagery which the leaders of North Vietnam inflicted on hundreds of thousands of North Vietnamese who chose freedom when the Communists took over North Vietnam in 1954; to get peace at any price now, even though I know that a peace of humiliation for the United States would lead to a bigger war or surrender later.

I have rejected all political considerations in making this decision. Whether my party gains in November is nothing compared to the lives of 400,000 brave Americans fighting for our country and for the cause of peace and freedom in Vietnam.

Whether I may be a one-term President is insignificant compared to whether by our failure to act in this crisis the United States proves itself too unworthy to lead the forces of freedom in this critical period in world history.

I realize in this war there are honest, deep differences in this country about whether we should have become involved, that there are differences as to how the war should have been conducted.

But the decision I announce tonight transcends those differences, for the lives of American men are involved. The opportunity for a 150,000 Americans to come home in the next 12 months is involved. The future of 18 million people in South Vietnam and 7 million people in Cambodia is involved, the possibility of winning a just peace in Vietnam and in the Pacific is at stake.

In this passage, Nixon conformed to the bi-partisan aspect of the presidential image. Theoretically, the commander-in-chief owes no allegiance to any political party or group. This indicates that the President is not supposed to be motivated by political factors. Instead he

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should be concerned with only the "good" of the country. By stating that he was not motivated by political factors, Nixon conformed to this part of the image. In that manner, he showed that his concern was the well being of the United States. In doing this he appealed for the trust of the populace of the United States, and thereby their support. If Nixon was acting in the best interest of America, as he attempted to prove, he deserved public trust and approval.

Nixon stated that his concerns were the lives of American soldiers, the lives of South Vietnamese and Cambodian citizens, and the cause of peace in Vietnam and the world. In these stated concerns, he was congruous with Americans' self-image. He was not violating the public will, therefore, by his action because he was attempting to promote that in which Americans believed and desired. He appealed then to the discussed altruistic American attitude and the great American desire for peace and stability in the world. Although extending fighting to Cambodia may not have seemed the way to promote peace in the world and save lives, if Nixon aroused the public trust his conclusions would be supported, for the reason that he was acting to achieve American goals and to preserve American ideals.

It is doubtful that a nation which desired peace would happily receive an escalation of combat. If Nixon gained, however, the public trust, the American people would accept his policy because loyalty is at the top of the list of
American priorities and it would demand support of the President's policies if they were to provide for the best interests of the nation.

Nixon attempted to show that his action was in the best interest of the nation. He did this by stating that the North Vietnamese hindered the cause of peace in the world. This supported his idea that, should they gain control of Cambodia, they would attack South Vietnam. Nixon showed that he worked continually for peace in Vietnam. He therefore could be trusted to act for this American goal in assaulting North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia. In this manner, the President attempted to gain public support for this action.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At this point, it is useful to review and draw implications from the previously discussed speeches in an attempt to gain an overall understanding of Richard Nixon's Vietnam rhetoric by identifying those elements which pervade his speeches. For while it is true that Nixon answered these situations by following the dictates of each, it is also true that he adapted a group of select messages to each circumstance with the goal of promoting a single end. For the President, by the nature of his role as a democratic prince, had to govern, theoretically, through the assent of his constituency, the American people. This meant that he had to persuade the populace of the correctness of his Vietnam policies.¹

Through such suasive efforts the democratic prince could, at the same time, govern in accord with the will of the people and keep optimum power of action unto himself. To this point Machiavelli wrote that a prince should rule by those means which allowed him the greatest control over

his ends. It is instructive to note that Nixon did precisely this. He used the quality already attributed to him, that of an anti-communist, to calm one faction of belief concerning the Vietnam question and employed his policies to calm those of the other specific belief. By using his antecedent support and his power as commander-in-chief to govern the programs to be followed in Vietnam, then, Nixon attempted to gain public support for his actions.

Nixon further attempted to gain the public trust that he could and would end the Vietnam War. Such action accomplished the dual purpose of granting the commander-in-chief yet greater flexibility of action and provided the public with its much desired peace of mind. Increased mobility sprang from the fact that if the public believed Nixon was desirous of an end to the Vietnam engagement and that he was capable of accomplishing this end, they would attempt less to influence his action. Evidence to this was noted in the effect of the President's November 3, 1969 speech. In addition, if the people could believe that the one individual with the direct power to end the Vietnam conflict for the American forces was trying to implement this goal and they had proof as to his success,

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they could cease to worry about Vietnam because of their faith and thereby gain peace of mind.

To produce this public trust, therefore, Nixon began his speeches by stating that his desire for Vietnam and the world were the same as those of the American people—peace. This was especially significant because not only was it an indication that, in desire, Nixon was representative of the public will, but also such a statement moved to convince the populace that the President possessed the requisite motivation to implement their desires. For once the President is elected, the public has practically no control over his actions. Moreover, because he, under his powers as commander-in-chief, is the only one who can govern the United States' Vietnam war policies, the Congress has no power to change directly the President's programs. It is understandable, therefore, that if the public was to be convinced that Nixon's actions would end the American Vietnam involvement, they first had to be reassured as to the President's sincerity in desiring to end the conflict. To support his contention, therefore, Nixon continually reiterated those actions which he had taken to end the war and stated the results of these actions. In this manner Nixon tried to establish the belief that he wanted to terminate the American presence in Vietnam and that he

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3Reedy, op. cit., p. 20.
was capable of doing it.

To further this encouragement of faith, Nixon demonstrated the manner in which his action was the best in regard to necessity and principle. He did this by showing the disadvantage inherent in opposing proposals. In this task, it was not necessary for the President to expound on the problems involved with nuclear bombing because from the time that the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb, nuclear war has concerned Americans. 4 They were, therefore, cognizant of the conflict which nuclear bombing of North Vietnam might cause. Because no such problem was apparent in a communist victory in Vietnam, the President attempted to establish the disadvantage of such an occurrence. He did this by attempting to incite American anger against the North Vietnamese, noting that the communists promoted and would continue to cause world instability; were inhumane; and prevented peace in Vietnam. In this manner, Nixon attempted to reestablish the balance between anti-communism and the dislike of war which made the centrist policies of Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy acceptable. The renewed belief in the "Red-Yellow Peril" would have made action which involved stopping communist expansion not only favorable but also necessary. To such a tactic, Wallace Fotheringham wrote, "when a persuader's

goal is deterrence, building avoidance strength is preferred." Nixon therefore attempted to limit belief in either of these proposals by showing that they should be avoided because of the dangers they presented.

By accounting the evils of communism and then presenting his solution to the problem, the President created unequal values as to the solution capabilities of the various methods of disengagement. For if the President's policies could produce the desired goals and avoid the dangers of the other methods, Nixon's solution would appear as the best of the three and, therefore, should be supported. The President, then, showed the manner in which his plans worked to achieve the American goals of world peace and peace in Vietnam. His programs, he indicated, provided for world peace by halting communist expansion. Further, Nixon tried to establish the manner in which his action aided an American withdrawal from Vietnam.

The President supported his plans with the American value system, showing that his actions were congruent with American beliefs. In this way, he indicated that he represented the public will and was, therefore, worthy of the public trust and support that patriotism would require. For if the public believed in these culturally

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5Wallace Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion (Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.), p. 85.
ingrained values and if Nixon's policies were a product of those beliefs, the President's actions were worthy of support. In addition, with his withdrawal statements, the commander-in-chief continually reinforced the inequality of solution capabilities after he gained mass public support for a program. To this tactic Fotheringham wrote, "when the persuader's goal is continuance, change is avoided by maintaining the perception of unequal values and preventing the rise of conflict."\(^6\) The reduction proclamations, then, served to continue the inequality of methods by showing that Nixon's policy was solving the problem. Moreover, because this was true the President could be trusted to bring peace.

Nixon then concluded his speeches by appealing for American unity in support of his policies. He made this appeal in the name of peace in Vietnam. For, he told Americans how their support of his program would help make their desired goal a reality. After implying the problems of a unilateral withdrawal, the American public could choose between a plan that might conclude in nuclear war; a plan which might produce slaughter and increased world stability; and the President's action which would promote world peace, avoid the risk of nuclear war and end American involvement in Vietnam. The last plan would

\(^6\) Ibid.
apparently be the most acceptable. Nixon stated that the populace could aid this last method by supporting him. To a people who greatly desire peace, an appeal to help the effort would be a productive one.

Richard Nixon's continual attempts to convince the American populace of the correctness of his Vietnam actions, then, were designed to produce public trust in his ability to end the Vietnam war. In this belief, the American people could gain the peace of mind they desired and the President could acquire the flexibility of action in power over public opinion concerning future actions. For if the people trusted the commander-in-chief to end our Vietnam involvement, they would believe the actions he took were to promote the desired end. In this manner, the public desired peace of mind by ceasing to be concerned about the war's existence.

Evaluation

Evidence to Nixon's success in his endeavor is given by Gallup polls which show that war is not the primary issue of the 1972 presidential election. This is particularly significant because since August of 1965 the Vietnam war was considered to be the nation's most important issue in ten of thirteen polls which Gallup conducted on this question. In addition, since 1958, the prevention of war or international tension has been the most important problem
in twenty-seven of thirty-four polls. It is strange, indeed, for the public to hold war as a secondary concern. Rhetoric's role in this accomplishment is seen in the Reedy statement, "The basis of power is persuasion." To have power over public opinion, therefore, Nixon had to persuade the public that he could solve the war problem.

The President should be commended in his goal of establishing public trust by convincing the populace of the correctness of his problem solutions. For this is a governmental system which operated on trust. The people of this nation have little control over their chief administrator. Trust, therefore, is an important aspect of government because it lies at the roots of the entire democratic process. Power only resides in the people when their beliefs are in accord with those of their elected officials. Nixon, therefore, in establishing public belief in himself, reaffirmed the mass trust of this governmental system.

In one particular appeal, however, Nixon must be questioned. The renewal of "Red-Yellow Peril" in the American mind seems not the way in which to promote permanent peace of mind. Moreover, in a world which depends

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7George Gallup, "Most Important Problem," Gallup Opinion Index, Oct., 1971, pp. 3-4
8Reedy, op. cit., p. 46.
increasingly on the cooperation of nations, raising distrust for another people is not the way in which to promote world peace. This observation causes a quandary as to the permanent success of Nixon's rhetoric. For if the President accomplished his end of gaining public trust in relation to Vietnam by violating the American value of the promotion of world peace, the commander-in-chief cannot be applauded as to effect.

Implications and Suggestions

This thesis, in concluding, suggests four implications for rhetoric. First among these is the value of the tactic or ambiguity on effect and ethical levels. This was particularly exemplified in Nixon's speech of November 3, 1969. On this occasion, Nixon announced his Vietnamization withdrawal program, but in doing so was vague as to the details of the disengagement; he mentioned no specific timetable. Instead the President stated that withdrawals would be dependent upon the level of combat activity in Vietnam and the ability of the South Vietnamese to defend themselves. This vagueness allowed Nixon the opportunity periodically to reinforce public opinion concerning the success of his program with announced troop withdrawals. For a reduction in American forces in Vietnam indicated not only that the United States was, indeed, disengaging militarily in that nation but also that the level of
fighting in Vietnam was limited and that the South Vietnameses were achieving the ability to defend themselves. This is because these were the two conditions for a withdrawal. Nixon's announcements, then, showed Americans that he was ending the American involvement in Vietnam and halting communist expansion, thereby promoting the goals of world peace and peace in Vietnam.

The above suggests that ambiguity may, also, have implications on an ethical level. As evidenced, the tactic is useful in aiding a president to promote public faith in himself; thereby, it aids the commander-in-chief in furthering the national well-being. For this is a governmental system which operates on the populace's faith that their elected leaders will act in accord with their will and toward the good of the nation. But once a person is elected the people of this country have very little control over his actions until the next election: this is particularly true of the president. It is understandable, therefore, that for this nation which believes power should reside with the people, the public belief in an official's congeniality with the populace's desires lies at the roots of the system. That which promotes this belief, therefore, furthers faith in this type of government and should be condoned as in the national well-being. In that ambiguity can be a tactic to this end it may be commended on ethical grounds.
This, however, is not always the case. For in the 1964 presidential election Lyndon Johnson promoted belief in himself by stating that Senator Goldwater would take this country to war and in that manner suggested that he himself would not. This occurred in a period when that president was planning this nation's Vietnam involvement; under such circumstances this use of ambiguity cannot be commended ethically as in the national well-being.

The foregoing takes issue, then, with Richard Weaver's statement that "All men argue alike when they argue validly." For, in a given instance ambiguity may be condoned or condemned depending on the requirements of the national interest. This indicates that further study in this regard could center around resolving the question of whether or not an absolute standard exists by which to judge the ethics of presidential rhetoric or whether the national well-being is and of itself an adequate standard.

In addition to the above, Nixon's persuasive efforts stand as a model for a "Rhetoric of the Middle." It has been suggested that despite the fact that this stance is emotionally diluted by its attempt to encompass as many people as possible, it is nevertheless the greatest yielder of public support in appeals to a mass audience. This advantage seems to generate from the idea that the mass

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public opinion is usually located in the middle. The rhetor of the middle must, however, show that his centrist action can produce the desired end while avoiding the disadvantages of the polar positions. The Rhetoric of the Middle, as evidenced in Nixon's speeches, appears to be geared to establishing these concepts in the audience's mind. In this manner the proposed centrist position appears not only as a satisfactory solution in that it accomplishes the goal, but also the best answer because of its avoidance of danger. The rhetor, however, must convince the audience of the undesired effects of the polar actions and show or imply the manner in which his method avoids these dangers. In this way, he moves to offset the middle position's normal disadvantage of a cautious pace to the goal.

In evaluating political rhetoric aimed at a mass audience then, the critic should establish the actual centrist position. This study suggests that this stance is defined by the circumstance which evolves the speech and this situation further reveals only a few alternatives for action. This study indicates that to have the greatest effect on the largest number of people, the orator should choose that position which is closest to the center and meets the above-mentioned criterion. This is exemplified by the adverse reaction to Nixon's speech of March 14, 1969. For the speech did present a centrist position which
avoided the ramifications of nuclear bombing and immediate withdrawal, but it did not guarantee the desired end.

It is further hypothesized that should the political rhetor's speech meet the two criteria and be the most centrist in stance that it will receive the greatest mass acceptance. Proof of this hypothesis, however, was beyond the purpose of this thesis but would provide the basis for future research.

Also suggested in these pages has been the effectiveness of appeals to public values when a speaker is addressing a national audience. In this manner the orator can appeal to all sections of Americans without risking alienation. As it was noted, however, mass values sometimes come into conflict. It would be a great value to rhetoric, therefore, to have a tool by which to judge those mass values which will prevail when such circumstances occur. In this manner, at the initial sight of a conflict the critic may identify the trend of public opinion. Such a construct would be a description of the American mind. This attempt should take the values herein noted and arrange them in a psychological framework, for example, a hierarchy. Moreover, note should be made as to the type of circumstance which might cause a change in value placement, the movement caused and the reason for that movement.

Finally, this thesis suggests the advantages to the
descriptive approach to rhetorical criticism as opposed to the evaluative orientation in some instances involving presidential rhetoric. This principle is exemplified in the discrepancy which exists between the descriptive account of Nixon's speech of November 3, 1969 presented in these pages and the evaluative analysis which Robert Newman made in his article, "Under the Veneer, Nixon's Speech of November 3, 1969." In this evaluation, Newman stated that because the President's conditions for a withdrawal offered the North Vietnamese control over the American goal, through combat activity, Nixon had not presented the American people with a plan for disengagement but was merely disguising his own hawkish tendencies. This argument, however, seems to have missed the important point of the oration, a presidential committal to a withdrawal program. For once Nixon proclaimed a plan to end the American presence in Vietnam over which he had control, he was bound to carry it out or face the credibility gap which Lyndon Johnson encountered due to raising false expectations; and, it is doubtful that the President would have risked such a danger. Moreover, Newman's belief is apparently negated by the previously discussed advantages to not announcing a timetable. There is no reason to believe, therefore, that Nixon's announcement was anything less than a notice that
the United States was going to withdraw from Vietnam.

In consideration of the above, it would appear that the reader receives a clearer understanding of a speech through an analysis which attempts to explain why certain appeals are or are not successful rather than criticism which merely supports judgment. This is not to condemn evaluative criticism or to indicate that description is a better mode of analysis. The above is included to point out that rhetorical critics should strive for objectivity in analysis and then make not of their judgments in order to allow the reader the ability to judge, to some degree, for himself a speaker, a speech, and an audience.
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