

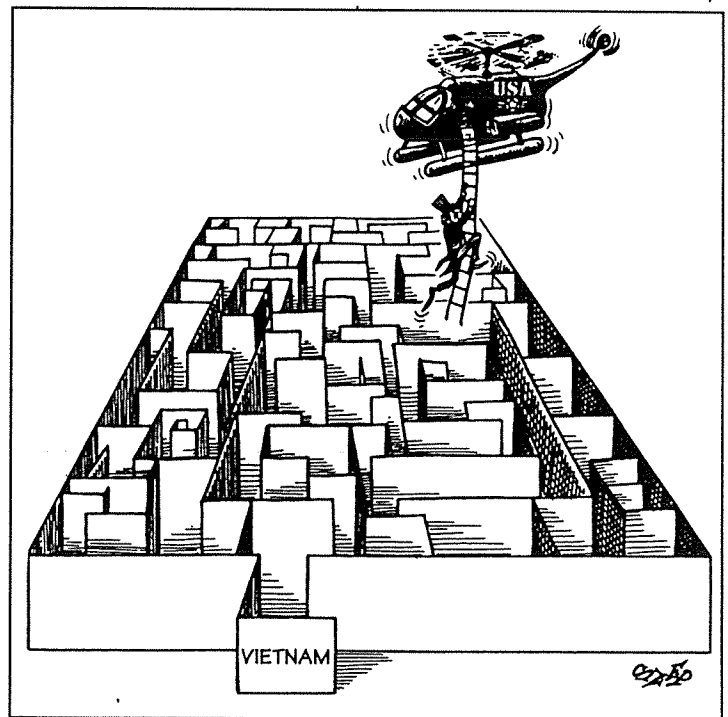
## UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL — PULL OUT NOW!

The present involvement of the United States in the Vietnamese civil war is contrary to American values and interests. Originally motivated by high ideals, we now find ourselves spending American lives and resources to keep in power an unpopular, undemocratic, military dictatorship. We have no right to impose upon the people of Vietnam a government of our choosing. The present government in Saigon is kept in power only by the support of the United States. The Vietnamese must be allowed to decide their own destiny. We have no strategic interests in Vietnam which would require even minimal American military involvement. To assume that we know what is best for a people halfway across the world having completely different traditions and values, and to employ our overwhelming military might to impose our solution on them, is unjustified, arrogant, and immoral. The United States cannot preserve its democratic values at home while it is betraying them abroad. Continued involvement in this mistaken effort will demonstrate to the world and to the American people the folly of this policy.

One of the fundamental principles upon which this nation was built was the determination to avoid involvement in the internal disputes of other nations, even when parties to these disputes were invoking the cause of freedom and liberty. Our stature in the world has been built upon our example, not our standing armies. An examination of the history of Indochina reveals that the current conflict is the continuation of the national struggle which began against the French in 1946. In assuming the role that the French abandoned in 1954, we are seen by the Vietnamese as another white, imperialistic power seeking to impose its will. Just as the French were forced to accept a humiliating defeat after a long and costly struggle, so we run a terrible risk if our present policy is not reversed. By ignoring its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, the United States is undermining the principle of rule by law, which forms the cornerstone of the United Nations system erected by the United States and its allies after World War II. The United States, as well as North Vietnam, is guilty of violating this principle. The terrible costs of international lawlessness were tragically revealed in World War II and in the Korean War. If we continue on this misguided course, the world will hold us to blame for the tragedy that will follow. Three times this century, American boys have been called upon to fight and die under the banner of freedom and world peace. We cannot ask them to die in the jungles of Asia for a corrupt dictatorship that even the Vietnamese people are unwilling to fight for.

The U.S. government should immediately halt the deployment of additional American troops to Vietnam, and should begin withdrawing those forces currently there. The responsibility for resolving the conflict in Vietnam should be brought before the United Nations, where it belongs. Our economic and military aid to the Saigon government, which feeds the continued carnage in this unhappy country, should also be reduced.

The U.S. government should explain to the American people that our values, security concerns, and responsibility to world peace and order do not permit the continued support of what has become an increasingly repressive government. Americans will understand that the principles which have guided this nation from its birth are more important than a poorly conceived policy based on an incomplete understanding of a complex situation thousands of miles away.



Paul Szep in *The Boston Globe*. Reprinted courtesy of *The Boston Globe*.

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## FROM THE RECORD

*Speech by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, July 4, 1821:*

"Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions, and her prayers. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and by the sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under

other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standards of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force....She might become the dictatress of the world. She would no longer be the ruler of her own spirit."

*Speech by Senator John Kennedy regarding the French war in Indochina, April 6, 1954:*

"Despite any wishful thinking to the contrary, it should be apparent that the popularity and prevalence of Ho Chi Minh and his following throughout Indochina would [in the case of a negotiated peace] cause either partition or a coalition government to result in eventual domination by the Communists....To pour money, material, and men into the jungles of

Indochina without at least a remote prospect of victory would be dangerously futile and self-destructive....I am frankly of the belief that no amount of American military assistance in Indochina can conquer an enemy which is everywhere and at the same time nowhere, 'an enemy of the people' which has the sympathy and covert support of the people."

*Recollections by General Matthew Ridgway, written in 1956, regarding the proposed U.S. intervention in Indochina in 1954:*

"I felt it was essential therefore that all who had any influence in making the decision on this grave matter should be fully aware of all the factors involved....The area they found [Indochina] was practically devoid of those facilities which modern forces such as ours find essential to the waging of war....We could afford an Indochina, we could have one, if we had been willing to pay the tremendous cost in men and money that such intervention would have required, a cost that, in my opinion, would have eventually been as great as or greater than that we paid in Korea. In Korea we had learned that air and naval power alone could not win

a war and that inadequate ground forces cannot win one either. It was incredible to me that we had forgotten the bitter lesson so soon. We were on the verge of making that same tragic error. That error, thank God, was not repeated....[W]hen the day comes for me to face my Maker and account for my actions, the thing I would be most humbly proud of was the fact that I fought against, and perhaps contributed to preventing, the carry out of some hare-brained tactical schemes which would have cost the lives of thousands of men. To that list of tragic accidents that fortunately never happened I would add the Indo-China intervention."

*Speech by Senator Wayne Morse, August 5, 1964:*

"In our time a great struggle...is going on in the world between freedom on the one hand and the totalitarianism of communism on the other. However, I am satisfied that that struggle can never be settled by war. I am satisfied that if the hope of anyone is that the struggle between freedom and communism can be settled by war, and that course is followed, both freedom and communism will lose, for there will be no victory in that war. Because of our own deep interest in the struggle against communism, we in the United States are inclined to overlook some of the other struggles which are occupying others. We try to force every issue into the context of freedom versus communism. That is one of our great mistakes in Asia...We say we are opposing communism there, but that does not mean we are advancing freedom, because we are not...

"There is no hope for permanent peace in the world until all the nations...are willing to establish a system of international justice through law, to the procedures of which will be submitted each and every international dispute that threatens the peace of the world....For ten years the role of the United States in South Vietnam has been that of a provocateur, every bit as much as North Vietnam has been a provocateur. For ten years the United States, in South Vietnam, has violated the Geneva agreement of 1954....The American effort to impose by force of arms a government of our own choosing upon a segment of the old colony of Indochina has caught up with us....[We have] marched in the opposite direction from fulfilling our obligations under the United Nations Charter. . .

"Our charges of aggression against North

*Speech by Senator Ernest Gruening, August 6, 1964:*

"[I urge] that the United States get out of South Vietnam....American security is not involved, the allegation that we are supporting freedom in South Vietnam has a hollow sound....I do not consider this is

Vietnam will be greeted by considerable snickering abroad. So too will the pious phrases of the resolution about defending freedom in South Vietnam. There is no freedom in South Vietnam....We are defending a clique of military generals and their merchant friends who live well in Saigon, and who need a constantly increasing American military force to protect their privileged position....We have threatened war where no direct threat to American security is at stake...A war in Asia should be recognized as unthinkable....We cannot justify the shedding of American blood in that kind of war in Southeast Asia. France learned that lesson. France tried to fight it for eight years and with 240,000 casualties. The French people finally pulled down the French government and said they had had enough. I do not believe that any number of American conventional forces in South Vietnam, or in Asia generally, can win a war:..

"Our moral position, which we claim as leader of the free world, will be undermined and our capacity for calling others to account for breaches of the peace will be seriously compromised....The 'fight now, negotiate later' line is based on the wholly illusory assumption that Red China and North Vietnam will do what we refuse to do — negotiate when they are losing....We need the world with us....Whoever fights a war without taking the matter to the United Nations is in violation of the charter, whether that party started the fighting or not....The day of the Westerner is finished in Asia, just as much as in Africa. And it no longer matters whether the Westerner is French, Dutch, British, or American. The pressure will always be against us and against our front in South Vietnam."

our war and I feel that all Vietnam is not worth the life of a single American boy. We inherited this putrid mess from past administrations, and we should make every effort to disengage ourselves."

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## **THE UNITED STATES SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:**

1. Halt any further deployment of U.S. military forces to South Vietnam.
2. Begin to withdraw those U.S. military forces already in South Vietnam.
3. Reduce our economic and military assistance to the military dictatorship in Saigon.
4. Call on the United Nations to take responsibility for resolving the conflict in Vietnam.

## **LESSONS FROM HISTORY**

- The decision of U.S. leaders before World War II to avoid involvement in the internal disputes of other nations was a foundation of our country's peace and prosperity.
- As the national revolutions that have taken place in Asia since the end of World War II have indicated, attempts by Western countries to impose their power in the region inevitably triggers a fierce backlash.
- Violation of the rule of law by resorting to force, regardless of provocation, has led to increased international lawlessness and threats to world peace.
- The defeat of the French in 1954 indicated that a white, Western army, even with numerical superiority, cannot defeat insurgents supported by the people in Southeast Asia.

## **ARGUMENTS FOR OPTION 4**

- Withdrawing from Vietnam immediately means that no more American lives or resources will be lost.
- A U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam will lessen the chances of confrontation with China and the Soviet Union.
- It is immoral for the United States to use its military power to impose its values on an unreceptive people halfway across the globe.
- The rule of law will be strengthened internationally if the United States ceases its military actions in Vietnam and refers the problem to the United Nations.
- It is impossible for the United States to achieve through any means its current objectives in Vietnam.