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T-539-69  
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West Point

SCUSA

December 3, 1965

Foreign Policy on a Disorderly Planet  
New Dimensions of Foreign Policy

The multi-polar distribution of power has given new dimensions to our foreign policy. Whereas during the years following World War II our primary concern was for the political and military threat of the Sino-Soviet Bloc, today we have no single great competitor but rather several of varying dimensions consisting primarily of the USSR, Red China, DRV and Cuba but we might add to these such countries as the United Arab Republic, Indonesia, Cambodia and France. Even our Communist adversaries are divided among themselves over many important subjects affecting the foreign policy of the U.S. and hence they must be dealt with on their own merits rather than as members of a homogeneous hostile bloc. Of these countries, I would say that only the USSR and China have objectives which are world-wide in scope. The others are interested primarily in relatively local objectives and recognize the limitations upon their ability to influence events outside of their immediate neighborhood. Nevertheless, all display competitive tendencies which affect U.S. foreign policy in varying degrees.

We encounter these competitive forces in the many quarters of the globe where our adversaries concentrate their efforts, for example, France in Western Europe, DRV in South Viet-Nam, the USSR and Red China throughout Latin America and Africa. We can not afford to neglect entirely any of these challenges yet at the same time we can not disperse our resources heedlessly without regard to the dangers of their attrition. I hope that you have all

given heed to Lin Piao in his statement of the blueprint of Chinese policies enunciated on 3 September 1965. Among other things, he reminds us that: "Everything is divisible. And so is the colossus of U.S. imperialism. It can be split and defeated." In choosing where to allocate our resources, we must keep a sharp eye on the Soviet Union and China because of their past record of aggression and the clear statement of their intention to use the so-called War of Liberation for subversive aggression in the future. President Kennedy recognized and accepted the challenge in the areas primarily threatened by Wars of Liberation when he wrote: "The great battleground for the defense and expansion of freedom today is the southern half of the globe: Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East - the lands of the people who harbor the greatest hopes. The enemies of freedom think they can destroy the hopes of the newer nations, and they aim to do it before the end of this decade. This is a struggle of will and determination, as much as one of force and violence. It is a battle for the conquest of the minds and souls, as much as for the conquest of lives and territory. In such a struggle, we can not fail to take sides." From the conflict which results from our taking sides emerge the conditions of the "disorderly planet" - to use President Johnson's phrase - to which we must adjust the dimensions of our foreign policy.

We are sampling the problems of adjustment to this situation in our frustrating experience in South Viet-Nam. Here we see the War of Liberation in action and are learning the cost of suppressing this expansive technique when encountered in an advanced stage of development. We begin to understand why this technique recommends itself to the Communist leaders in Hanoi,

Peking and Moscow. It is cheap in relation to the heavy expenditures in men and equipment by the government under attack. It is disavowable at least for a long time as Hanoi has demonstrated in attempting to deny complicity in South Viet-Nam until the mass of the accumulated evidence of direction and support in men, units and equipment forced silence on even the brassiest of Communist apologists. It is a relatively safe technique for as Lin Piao has reminded us: "There have been Wars of Liberation for 20 years since World War II. But, he asks, "Has any single one developed into a world war?" One may wonder, parenthetically, whether this doctrinal point of faith may not serve as a brake on Chinese acts of escalating aggression. It won't do for the doctrine to be proved wrong.

Let me use the situation in South Viet-Nam for a few minutes to illustrate the growing complexities of the implementation of foreign policy. The War of Liberation being waged there poses an interesting case study of the difficulties of focussing the combined resources of many departments of our government on a complex foreign problem requiring an integrated effort both in Washington and in the country under attack. It also illustrates the process of calculated limited escalation which is inherent in the resistance to a War of Liberation.

We are now in what I would call the third phase of our involvement in South Viet-Nam if we take as our point of departure in time the partition of the country in 1954 under the terms of the Geneva Accords.

Conflict of objectives. Theirs. Ours. LBJ. 9

Phase I Partition Phase II Saigon 11, 12

4 point programs. Problems of implementation. Saigon. Washington.

Focussing attention. VNCC

Review of procedures. Must do better.

Meaning of SVN. K. Giap 5. Ike 8. Congress 4.

Lessons - a few

Need to anticipate. Watch Communists. Eliminate causes.

Tighten government procedures. Few ad hoc procedures. Need  
for cool nerves. Reasonably secure not wholly safe.

Inevitable risks. Max. hedges.

Use of military force. Polybius 3.

Such lessons as these, derived from South Viet-Nam are, I believe,  
applicable to the broad spectrum of new problems which are foreign policy  
will encounter in expanding to the new dimensions required by the com-  
petition we can expect to meet in marshalling the forces for order on  
a politically disorderly planet.