

6157 Kellogg Drive,
McLean, Va.
Sept. 28, 1965

General Maxwell D. Taylor
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear General Taylor:

Your statement to The West Point Society of D.C. put very clearly and persuasively the Administration position on the war in Vietnam. Nevertheless, it seemed to me that you did not touch the most basic aspect of the struggle and the cause of our persistent failure in the past six years.

War is a clash of national purpose. If one contestant has overwhelming power and the will to use it, and if his purpose is reasonable, he can make his purpose prevail.

This is the position of the United States in South Viet Nam. Its purpose is reasonable - to assist a free nation in repelling aggression. If however the United States accepts terms of struggle which protect the aggressor from destruction, its superior power is emasculated and the aggressor is invited to press his purpose.

There is no deterrent to Communist aggression today except the consequences of failure. The Communist leaders are prepared to pay a heavy price for victory. Only decisive defeat and a threatened overthrow of their regimes by free governments will deter them.

To make war in the country attacked rather than in the aggressor country is to accept the terms of the aggressor. The correct response to the Communist war of liberation is the liberation of the peoples already enslaved by the aggressor. This is the only consequence which will deter the Communist wars of liberation.

Our present strategy gives no cause for North Viet Nam to abandon its purpose of conquering South Viet Nam. If U.S. power is too great at this time for N. Viet Nam to defeat it, Ho will take a step backward to Phase II and wait to see how long the U.S. will be willing to maintain such power in S. Viet Nam. What do you think? Shall we maintain 200,000 men there for five years when the fighting has been reduced to minor actions which the S. Vietnamese can handle? Or shall we withdraw and then return to Viet Nam when Ho renews the aggression?

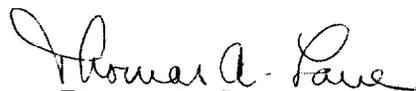
It should be apparent that our defensive response to the war of liberation gives the aggressor such odds as to assure his ultimate triumph. Certainly that is the way he reads our response today.

The quality of purpose is not established over a long period of time, though it may be changed in such time. When you hold the decisive power, purpose should be established quickly and clearly, at the first signs of aggression. When President Eisenhower allowed Soviet planes to violate Laotian sovereignty by flying men and supplies to the Pathet Lao in the Plaines des Jarres, he signalled to the Communists that his purpose was not equal to the task of securing the independence of Laos from Communist aggression. If he had shot down those Soviet planes, the aggression would have ended then and there.

When we deny these realities and submit to the terms of conflict proposed by the aggressor, when we believe that peace is served by withholding our power from decisive employment, we are telling the aggressor that our psychology is favorable to the accomplishment of his objectives.

As you may know, I have no interest in partisan politics but I am deeply concerned about our national policies. I am especially concerned about the serious errors of military strategy which have wasted our strength and weakened our posture ever since President Truman so abjectly accepted the Chinese aggression in Korea without counterattacking.

Sincerely yours,


Thomas A. Lane
Maj Gen, USA, Retd



Washington, D. C.
24 September 1965

Dear General Taylor:

All of the Alumni in the West Point Society of Washington join me in thanking you for taking time from your very demanding duties to talk to us at our recent luncheon.

As some of the brokendown cavalrymen expressed it, "it came straight from the oat-box." It gave us insights into the Southeast Asia problem and the American involvement there which were uniquely those of a soldier-diplomat and were therefore of particular interest to an alumni group.

Sincerely,

W. H. S. WRIGHT
Lieutenant General, USA
(Vice President of the
West Point Society of D. C.)

General Maxwell D. Taylor
Room 300
Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C.

August 16, 1965

Dear Mr. King:

Many thanks for your recent letter of invitation to address the alumni of the West Point Society on Tuesday, September 21, at Patton Hall. I am very glad to accept and, barring a major crisis beyond my control, I shall appear at the appointed spot at the appointed time.

I am assuming that no working press will attend the meeting, and that the address will not be reported.

Sincerely,

Maxwell D. Taylor

Mr. Ludlow King,
President,
West Point Society
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D.C.



WEST POINT SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON, D. C.

August 10, 1965

General Maxwell Taylor
4000 Massachusetts Avenue
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Taylor:

The Board of Directors of the West Point Society of the District of Columbia has requested that I invite you to be our first luncheon speaker for the 1965-1966 season. We would like for you to give us your views about Vietnam, but you may choose another subject if you prefer.

Time: The luncheon will begin with refreshments at 11:45 a. m. We would like you to address our group for approximately 40 minutes beginning about 12:45.

Date: Tuesday, September 21, 1965

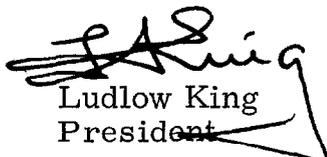
Place: Patton Hall, Ft. Myer, Virginia

Attendance: 300 to 400

In the past few years, our Society has grown quite strong and has increased its capacity to promote our alma mater in such ways as helping attract more qualified applicants and projecting a more favorable and accurate image of West Point to the public and student bodies. The principal reason we have been able to muster this cohesive effort of our alumni has been our good fortune in obtaining distinguished speakers such as yourself. We are hoping to continue this trend and, thus, are most anxious to have you speak to our Society again on September 21.

Hoping to receive an early affirmative reply.

Sincerely yours,


Ludlow King
President