

the world wherever the existing governments are weak and the social structures fragmented. If Communist armed aggression is not stopped in Vietnam, as it was in Korea, the confidence of small nations in America's pledge of support will be weakened and many of them, in widely separated areas of the world, will feel unsafe.

Thus, the stakes in South Vietnam are far greater than the loss of one small country to communism. Its loss would be a most serious setback to the cause of freedom and would greatly complicate the task of preventing the further spread of militant Asian communism. And, if that spread is not halted, our strategic position in the world will be weakened and our national security directly endangered.

It was in recognition of this fundamental issue that the United States, under three Presidents, firmly committed itself to help the people of South Vietnam defend their freedom. That is why President Eisenhower warned at the time of the Geneva Conference in July 1954 that "* * * any renewal of Communist aggression would be viewed by us as a matter of grave concern." That is why President Johnson in his statement last Wednesday made it clear to all the world that we are determined to stand by our commitment and provide whatever help is required to fulfill it.

CONDITIONS LEADING TO THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Essential to a proper understanding of the present situation in South Vietnam is a recognition of the fact that the so-called insurgency there is planned, directed, controlled, and supported from Hanoi. True, there is a small dissident minority in South Vietnam, but the Government could cope with it if it were not directed and supplied from the outside. As early as 1960, at the Third Congress of the North Vietnamese Communist Party, both Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap, the commander in chief of the North Vietnamese armed forces, spoke of the need to "step up" the "revolution in the South." In March 1963 the party organ *Hoc Tap* stated that the authorities in South Vietnam "are well aware that North Vietnam is the firm base for the southern revolution and the point on which it leans, and that our party is the steady and experienced vanguard unit of the working class and people and is the brain and factor that decides all victories of the revolution."

Yet through most of these years the North Vietnamese Government denied and went to great efforts to conceal the scale of its personnel and materiel support, in addition to direction and encouragement, to the Vietcong. It had strong reasons to do so.

First of all, in 1954 the authorities in Hanoi had pledged to "respect the territory under the military control of the other party"—South Vietnam—"and engage in no hostile act against the other party." In 1962 those same authorities pledged that they would "not use the territory of the Kingdom of Laos for interference in the internal affairs of other countries."

The North Vietnamese regime had no wish to force upon the attention of the world its massive and persistent violations of those pledges. Nor was it anxious for its own citizens to dwell upon the ultimate risks of committing, unequivocally, aggression across international