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ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE DEAN RUSK  
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AT THE FOUNDERS' DAY BANQUET  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,  
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 1966, AT 8:30 P.M., E.S.T.

It is a pleasure and privilege to be with you on this occasion, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the journalism program of your School of Public Communication.

As a public official, I am unavoidably aware of the immensity, the range and variety, the power, and the insatiable curiosity of American journalism and journalists. I am aware of these every waking hour, and sometimes in my sleep. I am accustomed to reading, or hearing, many things that I already knew, many that I didn't know but prove to be true, and a few that were not and never become true -- that remain "exclusive" forever. Now and then I read, or hear, predictions or comments about myself--some critical, some favorable -- with which I am not always able to concur.

From time to time I have been invited to deliver a lecture on the press and its role in foreign affairs, but I have steadfastly refused to engage in that task. I prefer to take my crises one at a time. Perhaps, if you will invite me to your 75th anniversary, I might be willing to oblige.

As a matter of fact, I know of no people better served by our media of information than are the American people. And I must confess my complete respect for the intelligence, the energy and the breadth and depth of information which mark the extraordinary press corps assembled in our National Capital. Among the journalists I would place high in that company is your distinguished alumnus who introduced me tonight, John Scali. He has made his mark in both written and spoken journalism.

And

And he has also served, on one notable occasion, as what might be called a "covert Ambassador-Extraordinary" -- in October 1962 during the Cuban missile crisis.

We in government share with the media of information the broadest common interest in informing the public. I sometimes regret that the available space and time -- and indeed the time of the reader or listener -- do not permit as wide a coverage of important matters as some of them might deserve. I particularly have in mind the unsung 80 percent of our work which has to do with the quiet, persistent, constructive and deeply satisfying process of building a decent world order and a decent life for man.

It is also true that there is an inevitable tension between officials and reporters about that tiny fraction of our business -- some one or two percent -- which is or ought to be secret, at least temporarily. I do not suggest that there should be a treaty between officials and reporters on this subject because the very tension itself is wholesome, over time, in the public interest. Without the inquiring reporter, some in government would be tempted to be quiet about matters that ought to be known. So I would expect the reporter to seek information and I would expect officials to keep their mouths shut about those matters on which they ought not to talk. Actually, secrets are not secret for very long -- at least in the United States. And I can tell you quite honestly that I do not know of any secrets which could have a significant effect upon the judgments which citizens or commentators are able to make upon matters of policy or public interest.

I wish

I wish to talk to you quietly this evening about Viet-Nam. Some of you may feel that enough has been said on that subject -- but it remains dangerous and overshadows many other relationships in the present world scene. One hears a good deal about the word "confusion" these days. Let me say, I hope without too much presumption, that I am not confused -- and President Johnson is not confused -- about the facts, the issues, United States policy and the present attitude of Hanoi and Peiping. We are concerned, as any rational man would be, but we are not confused. It is my impression that there are some who, when they say "I am confused", really mean "I do not agree". It is important that all who debate these issues declare, and not conceal, their major premises -- otherwise we are not able to understand what else they are saying.

II

It is altogether clear from irrefutable evidence that the assault on South Viet-Nam was organized and has been directed by the Communist regime of North Viet-Nam. It has involved not only ordering into action Communist cadres left behind for that purpose when Viet-Nam was divided in 1954, but the infiltration from the North of tens of thousands of trained men and increasing quantities of arms. For well over a year, the forces infiltrated from the North have included organized units of regimental or larger strength of the regular army of North Viet-Nam.

And it is not just South Viet-Nam and the United States which hold that view. At Manila, in April 1964, the SEATO Council of Ministers declared that the attack on South Viet-Nam was a "communist aggression... an organized campaign...directed, supplied and supported by the Communist

regime

regime in North Viet-Nam, in flagrant violation of the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962." They declared "that the defeat of the Communist campaign is essential not only to the security of the Republic of Viet-Nam, but to that of Southeast Asia."

The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan, as well as the United States, subscribed to those declarations. Similar -- but generally stronger -- declarations were made by the SEATO Council of Ministers in London in April 1965 and by the ANZUS Council of Ministers in 1964 and 1965. And these views have been endorsed by many other governments.

### III

I have mentioned SEATO -- the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Organization. Recently I have read some curious comments about it and our other defensive alliances.

I have read that I said that the obligation of the United States to oppose an armed attack against the territory covered by the Southeast Asia treaty "did not depend on all other members agreeing to oppose it." That is neither novel nor remarkable. It is based on the plain language of the Treaty and the official explanations which accompanied the consideration of the Treaty by the Senate. If action under the Treaty required a unanimous vote then one or more members -- the smallest or the most distant -- could veto action by the rest. This impediment was not written into SEATO, nor was it written into NATO.

Let me pause for a few moments to reflect upon the events of the past four decades. I graduated from college in the year when Japanese militarists seized Manchuria. It seemed a long way away -- and little was done

was done by the nations of the world to defend the peace against a flagrant aggression. In 1935 Mussolini launched his aggression against Ethiopia and it was not even possible to organize an oil embargo against him. Then Hitler moved into the Rhineland, unopposed, and went on to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and World War II erupted with its frightful costs.

Before the guns were silent in that war, the nations of the world thought long and hard about how such a war had come about and how, in the words of the UN Charter, we can "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which thrice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind." The lesson of World War II was that it was necessary to organize and defend a peace -- not merely to wish for it -- and to "unite our strength to maintain international peace and security."

Article 1 of the United Nations Charter is utterly fundamental and, although some may think it old-fashioned to speak of it, I should like to remind you of what it says:

"To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;"

Unhappily

Unhappily and tragically, the ink was not dry on the United Nations Charter before it became fully apparent that Joseph Stalin had turned to world revolution and a policy of aggressive militancy. The first major issue before the Security Council was his attempt to keep Russian forces in Iran. Then came guerrilla operations against Greece, pressure on Turkey, the Berlin blockade and the Korean aggression. These moves led to defensive action by the free world and a number of mutual defense treaties -- the Rio Pact, NATO, the ANZUS Treaty with Australia and New Zealand, and bilateral treaties with the Philippines and Japan.

Under President Eisenhower we concluded the Southeast Asia Treaty, which, by a protocol, committed us to help the three non-Communist states of former French Indo-China -- South Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia -- to repel armed attacks, if they asked for help. Under Eisenhower we also entered mutual defense pacts with the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China on Formosa.

All of those commitments to oppose aggression -- through the United Nations and through our various defensive alliances -- were approved by the Senate by overwhelming majorities of both parties. And these and related obligations have been sustained over the years by authorizations, appropriations, and other supporting measures enacted by bipartisan votes in both Houses of Congress.

I have read that I have drawn "no distinction between powerful industrial democratic states in Europe and weak and undemocratic states in Asia." The answer is that, for the Secretary of State, our treaty commitments are a part of the supreme law of the land and I do not believe that we can be honorable in Europe and dishonorable in Asia.

I do

I do believe that the United States must keep its pledged word. That is not only a matter of national honor but an essential to the preservation of peace. For the backbone of world peace is the integrity of the commitment of the United States.

There would be no possibility of preserving peace if our allies -- or, even more important, our adversaries -- should come to believe that the United States will not do what it says it will do. Doubt about that could lead to catastrophic miscalculations by our adversaries. Let me illustrate by two examples. It was necessary for both President Eisenhower and President Kennedy to inform Mr. Khrushchev that the United States would not yield to an ultimatum concerning Berlin. Had Mr. Khrushchev not believed that, there would have been war. Again, in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, had not Mr. Khrushchev believed it when President Kennedy said those missiles must go, there might have been war.

I am honored to have my name associated with the doctrine that the United States must honor its pledged word. But I am convinced that the American people subscribe to that doctrine.

Yet I read recently that the SEATO Treaty is just a scrap of paper. There were no quotation marks around "a scrap of paper" and no other indication of any sort that that is an historic phrase: That for more than half a century it has been associated with black infamy -- that it was what the Kaiser's Chancellor called the solemn pledge of Germany and others to observe the neutrality of Belgium.

God help

God help us -- and the cause of freedom and peace -- if our government should ever agree with those who regard our commitments as "scraps of paper".

I read lately that I had suddenly rediscovered the SEATO Treaty -- that I had shifted my explanation of the legal basis of the American commitment in Viet-Nam because somebody thought the Administration was relying too much on the Congressional resolution of August 1964.

The fact is that I have always treated the SEATO Treaty -- which the Senate approved with only one dissenting vote -- as an important part of our commitment to defend South Viet-Nam.

That Treaty was carefully considered by the Foreign Relations Committee. And its report, urging that the Senate "give its advice and consent" to ratification, said:

"The Committee is not impervious to the risks which this treaty entails. It fully appreciates that acceptance of these additional obligations commits the United States to a course of action over a vast expanse of the Pacific. Yet these risks are consistent with our own highest interests. There are greater hazards in not advising a potential enemy of what he can expect of us, and in failing to disabuse him of assumptions which might lead to a miscalculation of our intentions."

Now, I have never asserted that the Southeast Asia Treaty comprises all of our commitment to the defense of South Viet-Nam. I have cited the statements of three successive Presidents, the various aid bills approved by Congress against the background of those statements and the SEATO Treaty,

SEATO Treaty, as well as the Congressional resolution of August 1964.

When the President asked Congress to pass such a resolution he specifically cited "the obligations of the United States under the Southeast Asia Treaty." And that resolution -- adopted by a combined vote of 504 to 2 in the two Houses -- contained this language:

"Sec. 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in Southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom."

So, the assertion that the Administration has suddenly rediscovered the SEATO Treaty is not based on fact. If I have talked about that Treaty a little more lately it is partly because North Viet-Nam has been escalating its aggression into a full-scale armed attack directly and unequivocally raising the solemn commitment which the Senate had approved -- by an overwhelming vote.

I do not regard our policy in Viet-Nam as based only on past commitments. I believe that it is now just as much in our interest -- and that of the free world -- to repel Communist aggression there as it was when we made those earlier commitments.

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## IV

Now, I turn to the attitudes of other Free World nations toward the struggle in Viet-Nam and our support of South Viet-Nam. Assertions to the effect that we stand alone, that most of our allies disapprove, et cetera, are incorrect.

Let me quote from a speech made in London a year ago by the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Paul Hasluck:

"Twice in this generation, without hesitation, Australians have come to fight against aggression in Europe because we saw a war started in Europe was a danger, not only to Europe, but to the whole world. Today, we see aggression in Asia as being just as much a danger to the whole world as it is to those of us who live in or near Asia. Indeed, today the risk of a world war starting is more immediate in Asia than in any other continent. Southeast Asia is today the front line in the struggle for world security."

Recalling that Australia had contributed air forces to help break the blockade of Berlin, Mr. Hasluck said:

"Vietnam today is no less fateful to the future of the world than was the Berlin crisis, and Western Europe is as closely concerned there in Vietnam as we ourselves were concerned with Berlin.

"Taking this view ... Australia sees the actions of the United States in Asia as an acceptance by that great power of the world-wide responsibilities which came to it simply because it is great. We honor them for what they are doing in Vietnam and we support them in it."

Australia

no Bruno?

Australia has had some 1,400 combat troops in Viet-Nam, fighting valiantly at the side of the Vietnamese and ourselves. They have contributed to the security of Southeast Asia in other respects including the deployment of troops for the defense of Malaysia. And they have been training Vietnamese officers in Australia, and supplying surgical teams and cash aid. Last week Prime Minister Harold Holt announced that Australia was trebling its combat forces in Viet-Nam. We warmly welcome this additional effort by our staunch allies in Australia. New Zealand has contributed an artillery company. The Australians, the New Zealanders, and we are bound together not only by treaty commitments but by common interests, institutions, and ideals. And we know from previous wars that they are courageous allies -- very good people to have at your side when the going is tough.

And here is a quotation from the distinguished Foreign Minister of Thailand, Thanat Khoman:

"We profoundly realize that nowadays, as in the past, no 'peace in our time' can be bought by sacrificing a free nation, be it South Viet-Nam or Southeast Asia or, for that matter, any other nation in the world. On the contrary, the chances for an enduring peace will become greater if we can see to it that aggression against free nations, either in overt or covert form, shall not be profitable..."

Thailand has already been designated by Peiping as the next target. And I would emphasize that Thailand is contributing much more than eloquent words to the security of Southeast Asia. Its military forces help to guard the heart of the Southeast Asian peninsula -- and the flank of Viet-Nam. It is helping to train South Vietnamese aviators and is cooperating generally in the defense of Southeast Asia.

The vital significance of the struggle in Viet-Nam is well understood in the Philippines. President Marcos has requested the Philippine

Congress

Congress to approve the dispatch to Viet-Nam of military engineers with their own security forces -- some 2,000 men.

The Prime Minister of Malaysia has publicly declared that "countries which subscribe to the United Nations Charter must help" South Viet-Nam to repel the "aggression" from the North.

The Republic of China on Formosa is contributing technicians and commodities.

The Republic of Korea has sent a full division plus a regiment of military engineers with their own security forces. The Koreans have fought with great gallantry and professional skill. Recently President Pak asked the South Korean legislature to approve the dispatch of a second division. This would make Korea's troop contribution, in ratio to population, greater than our own.

But, of course, the main burden of the fighting has been carried by the South Vietnamese, and will continue to be. They have nearly 700,000 men under arms. And, every day, they are engaged in many more ground actions than are the troops of the United States and their other allies.

Contrary to some assertions I have read, the Government of Japan has understood our policy in regard to South Viet-Nam, and is deeply conscious of how it relates to peace in Southeast Asia, in which Japan has a vital national interest. Japan has consistently supported efforts to bring Hanoi to the conference table and has extended for many years now valuable economic and strong political support to the Government of South Viet-Nam. Anybody who thinks that Japanese confidence in us would be increased by a failure to repel the aggression against South Viet-Nam is seriously mistaken.

And the same is true of most of the Asian nations which are trying to adhere to "non-alignment". They know that they have a vital interest in the outcome of the struggle in Viet-Nam.

The head

The head of one non-aligned government recently said privately to a representative of the United States that success in repelling the aggression against South Viet-Nam would assure the peace of Southeast Asia for a generation.

Contrary to some assertions, our role in Viet-Nam is not opposed by most of our allies in other parts of the world. With very few exceptions, the governments of Free Europe understand and support our position. The United Kingdom has done so, under both its Labor Government and the Conservative Government which preceded it. Although it has no troops in Viet-Nam, it has substantial military forces in the area, most of them committed to the defense of Malaysia.

We have the support of the Federal Republic of Germany. For example, a statement from the office of the Federal Chancellor in January said: "The German Government has always maintained the view that the defense of the freedom and independence of Viet-Nam by the United States of America is of the greatest importance for the entire Free World." The Federal Republic has made substantial non-military contributions to South Viet-Nam and recently announced that it would send a hospital ship.

Some of our NATO allies have feared that the struggle in Viet-Nam might compel us to reduce our forces in Europe.

Manlio Brosio, the distinguished Secretary-General of NATO, has correctly said:

"... a setback for the United States in Asia, for example, in Vietnam, would also be a grave setback for the whole of the West. Not only this, but an American retreat or a humiliating compromise in Vietnam, far from ending United States commitments in Asia, would extend them on an even greater scale to all sorts of other areas, from Thailand to the Philippines."

In a recent

In a recent article, the former Italian Minister of Defense, Giulio Andreotti, said:

"America could have left its Viet-Nam ally to its own destiny, but it would have been a morally criminal act, without mentioning the psychological consequences in Asia and elsewhere. ... the Communists ... would do well to remember that Americans did not give in to isolationism when, 25 years ago, they decided to come to fight and die on our continent..."

A week ago tonight, in a speech in Brussels, one of the most eminent statesmen of Europe, Paul Henri Spaak, Foreign Minister of Belgium, referred to the Soviet menace to Europe following the second World War and said: "At that time ... nearly all of us were delighted to see the United States come to our help ... Is there anyone who would dare suggest that the free peoples of Asia are not menaced by Chinese imperialism? How can we fail to understand that ... the world role of the United States 'obliges it to take in Asia a position identical to that taken previously in Europe'."

Mr. Spaak emphasized the importance of the argument that if the United States does not observe one of its commitments, how can the rest of the world believe that it will respect other engagements? He said he thought that argument was "essential" and that the leaders of the United States were right.

He said also: "I do not know why people cannot understand that much more is at stake in the Viet-Nam conflict than simply the independence or the servitude of South Viet-Nam." And he went on to say: "I am astonished and stupified when I receive ... petitions asking the United States to make peace in Viet-Nam ... It was not the Americans who wanted war ... Today it is they who offer to take peace under reasonable conditions and it is their adversaries who refuse to do so ...

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"The truth

"The truth is that there should be ... a broad movement of people from all of Europe and of all parties and beliefs to affirm that the conditions proposed by the United States are reasonable and that those who should be pilloried are those who refuse to examine those conditions and to enter upon a policy of peace."

I think most Americans would wish to join their Government in thanking that great Belgian champion of freedom for his outspoken support.

No -- the United States does not stand alone assisting the Republic of Viet-Nam to repel an aggression. The facts about the cause and nature of the struggle there, and the vital stakes involved, are increasingly realized throughout the Free World. I know from my own contacts that a great majority of non-Communist governments understand and support what we are doing, even though some, for various reasons, have not yet said so publicly. And I think you will see more and more governments of the Free World offering, or increasing, tangible assistance to South Viet-Nam.

Nearly all the governments of the Free World -- and I venture to say, some in the Communist world -- understand that the United States has made persistent and extraordinary efforts to obtain a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam -- that it is Hanoi and Peiping which have barred the road to peace. We continue to seek a peaceful settlement. It must, of course, assure to the people of South Viet-Nam their right to choose their own government and order their own affairs in their own way.

Quite frankly, I cannot understand those who say that when somebody is shooting at you, and you ask him to stop, you are asking for "unconditional surrender". That seems to me to be an abuse of language. We are not asking the other side to change their regime, or to surrender a single acre or single individual. All we are asking them to do is to stop shooting at South Viet-Nam.

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It is not true that we believe that the United States should become involved in every crisis or disturbance. On the contrary, we don't go around looking for business. We much prefer to see disputes settled by regional organizations or the United Nations or mediation or negotiation between the parties. There have been many, many disputes in the last five years, in which the United States has not been involved.

But when major aggression occurs, or is threatened, against those to whom we have commitments, and the intended victims lack the power to defend themselves and seek our help, we become involved. Had we not done so -- from the assault on Greece and threat to Turkey through the Berlin blockade and the Korean War, and now the threat to Southeast Asia -- vast areas and populations would have fallen under the domination of the Communist world revolution.

And, to go on to a related point: I can see no possibility of a stable peace through spheres of influence. Who is to determine which are to be the "master" nations -- and which their vassals? And what happens when the "master" nations engage in struggles among themselves about spheres of influence? I cannot imagine a surer path to war -- and much more devastating wars than the world has ever known. I would think that the United Nations Charter is right -- that every nation, large or small, has a right to live in independence and peace, even though it is next door to a great power. I would think that, in the age of intercontinental rockets and thermonuclear warheads, the prospects for the survival of the human race are dismal unless that fundamental proposition is upheld. And, I submit, no other policy is consistent with the principles for which the United States has long stood and to which we are solemnly committed through the United Nations Charter and many other international agreements, including those which govern the relations of the Western Hemisphere.

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