

WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
Background Information	Background on Buddhists and Peace (attached to Cooper memo to Bundy 3/11/65) <i>Released in part 11/2/12 (one page still sanitized)</i> <i>Open 10/23/13 per NLJ 13-21</i>	3/10/65	A

FILE LOCATION

White House Press Office Files

Back-up Material on the President's Press Conferences
March 13, 1965 #38

RESTRICTION CODES

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5/86 *SR*

This March Week has brought a deep and painful challenge to the unending search for American freedom. That challenge is not yet over. But before it is ended every resource of this government will be directed to ensuring justice for men of all races -- in Alabama and everywhere in this land. That is the meaning of the oath I swore ^{before} to Almighty God when I took ^{this} office. That is what I believe in with all my heart. That is what this people demand.

Last Sunday a group of Negro Americans in Selma, Alabama attempted peacefully to protest the denial of the most basic political right of all -- the right to vote. They were attacked, and ~~many~~ ^{Some} were brutally beaten, ~~by officers of the state.~~

From that moment, until this, we have acted effectively to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of Selma, and to prevent further violence and lawlessness.

More than ^(including FBI Agents, Justice Dept lawyers and Gov Collins) seventy federal officials ^{they have all been} have been continuously present in Selma working to keep the peace and enforce the law.

At all times the full power of the federal government, ^{including} ~~troops, if necessary~~ has been ready to protect the people of Selma against further lawlessness.

But the final answer to this problem will be found, not in armed confrontation, but in the process of law. We have acted to bring this conflict from the streets to the courtroom. Your government has asked the federal court to order the law officials of Alabama not to interfere with American citizens who are peacefully demonstrating for their constitutional rights.

When the court has made its order, it ^{must} ~~will~~ be enforced.

~~I do not intend to permit~~ The events of last Sunday ^{cannot and will not} ~~to be~~ repeated.

Justice Dept lawyers and Gov Collins whom I asked keep to believe.

But the demonstrations in Selma have a larger meaning. They are a protest against a deep and unjust flaw in American democracy itself.

Ninety-five years ago our Constitution was amended to require that no American be denied the right to vote because of race or color. Almost a century later many Americans are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes.

plus
~~I will not detail the many ways in which Negroes are kept from voting. False tests and technical requirements are used as a device to arbitrarily deny the right to vote. Experience has plainly shown that the existing process of law is not adequate to guarantee the right.~~

Therefore, this Monday, I will send to the Congress a request for legislation to carry out the command of the Constitution. Wherever there is discrimination this law will strike down all restrictions used to deny the right to vote. It will establish a simple uniform standard which cannot be used, however ingenious the effort, to flaunt the Constitution. And if state officials refuse to cooperate, then citizens will be registered by federal officials.

This law is not an effort to punish or coerce. Its object is one which no American in his heart can truly reject. It is to give all our people the right to choose their leaders. To deny this right is to deny democracy itself.

What happened
~~Last Sunday~~ in Selma was an American tragedy. The blows that were received, the blood that was shed, the life that was lost, must strengthen our determination to bring justice to all our people.

This is not just the policy of your government or your President. It is the heart and the purpose and the meaning of America.

We all know how complex and difficult it is to bring about basic social change in a democracy. But ~~we must not let this difficulty~~ ^{complexity} obscure the clear and simple moral issues. It is wrong to do violence to peaceful citizens in the streets of their town. It is wrong to deny Americans the right to vote. It is wrong to deny any person full equality because of the color of his skin.

~~It is the command of our Constitution, and the intention of this government, that these wrongs will be righted.~~

The promise of America is a simple promise. Every person shall share in the blessings of this land on the basis of his merits as a person. He shall not be judged by his color or his beliefs, by ^{or his religion} where he was born or the neighborhood in which he lives.

All my life I have seen America move closer toward that goal.

And every step of the way has brought enlarged opportunity for all our people.

Those who do injustice are as surely the victims of their own acts as the people they wrong. They scar their own lives and the communities in which they live. By turning from hatred to understanding they can ensure a richer and fuller life for themselves as well as for their fellows.

For if we put aside disorder and violence, hatred and lawlessness, we can provide, for all our people, opportunity almost beyond imagination.

We will continue the battle for human dignity. We will apply all the resources of government to the task. We will not be moved from the path of justice.

And in this task we will seek the help of that ~~which~~ Divine Power

which surpasses the petty barriers between man and man, people and people. Under ~~his~~ guidance we can seek the Biblical promise "I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart which shall not be put out." And we will follow that light until all of us have bowed to the command "let there be no strife... between men and thee... for we be brethren."

(THE FOLLOWING IS FOR BACKGROUND ONLY:)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is on a BACKGROUND basis.

Has television been cut on this?

QUESTION: Yes.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Can we have it cut on this?

THE PRESIDENT: Please, folks, let's don't take up time; cut off your cameras and television, please. Let Mr. Katzenbach go ahead. Some of the reporters are very anxious to meet a deadline. We try to be cooperative with you. Would NBC cameras cut over there, and let's move out of the way.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let me run -- yes, they are all off.

Let me run very quickly for you through the principal provisions that are going to be in the legislation which the President is going to propose. First of all, it is going to be based on the Fifteenth Amendment. The Fifteenth Amendment provides that Congress has the power to legislate in order to implement its provisions which forbid any State or the Federal Government to discriminate in voting on the basis of race or color. It is going to affect all of those States and all of those voting districts where there has been discrimination in the past, and it is going to be triggered by an automatic formula which we have devised which will cover all of those areas where there have been complaints about discrimination.

Within those areas, it is going to abolish all restrictions except age and residence, conviction of a crime, mental problems, and requiring nothing more than the filling out of a very simple form; name and address, and length of residence and so forth.

It is going to cover all elections, Federal, State and local. It is going to provide that ~~the~~ State officials don't register people, Federal officials will, wherever that occurs, and it is going to set up a system that is not going to require every single person to go and be turned down before he comes to a Federal official.

It is going to establish a system which gets all of the names of those people who come to Federal officials, if that is necessary, registered on the State books. The Federal officials will be run under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission.

It is going to set up a system not only to get those people registered, but to get those people voted whenever they are certified by the appropriate Federal official as being eligible to vote. It is going to be automatic and quick. It is not going to provide for delaying lawsuits or permit that each person's right to vote be

proved with great evidence in the courts. It is going to include broader and more severe penalties on State officials or anyone else who interferes with the rights of anyone to register and vote.

Now, those are the principal provisions. Are there any questions?

QUESTION: On that provision regarding the conviction for a crime --

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Felonies.

QUESTION: Not any crime, but felonies.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

QUESTION: Can you give us any idea what sort of bipartisan support, if any, you have for this legislation:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This legislation is going to have bipartisan support and I have no question that it will get bipartisan support.

QUESTION: Where will the action come first, in the House or the Senate?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I can't answer that at this point. The bill is not there at this point.

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on the House percentage.

QUESTION: Will the registrars be appointed by officials here in Washington or by Federal District Courts?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The officials will be appointed simply under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission on which is a bipartisan commission and will have the power to appoint those people. They will be people local in the area.

MORE

QUESTION: Can you describe in more detail this simple formula that will apply to all the states?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. We believe that wherever 50 per cent of the people have not been registered in the past, all people, or 50 per cent voted in the general election in the past, that that would automatically invoke the provisions of this Act, and where there is a literacy or other test.

QUESTION: Will that go down to the level of voting districts?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

QUESTION: Sir, how many voters do you think it will add to the rolls?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: As many as are eligible.

THE PRESIDENT: Substantial.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A substantial number.

QUESTION: Will the penalty be imprisonment?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There will be broader penalties on people who attempt to interfere, coerce, interfere with or otherwise attempt to coerce people from registering or voting. Those will be criminal penalties.

QUESTION: Will there be any provision in the event that votes are not counted for Federal District Courts to hold up the results of an election?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, there will be a power in the courts to impound all ballots in any such district where people are not permitted to vote, and give them time to vote.

QUESTION: Mr. Attorney General, I may have missed this point, but on the literacy test, are there to be any literacy tests, or what kind of literacy tests, and if they are some of the kind of tests they have been, would that be considered a violation?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, the type of tests there have been. I think the simple ability to read and write is demonstrated by being able to fill out your name and address, and state how long you have been a resident of the state where you live.

QUESTION: Sir, can you tell us what states would come under this automatic triggering device that you have worked out? What states would be eligible?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The states that would come

under it would be Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. It would include a lot of voting districts elsewhere.

QUESTION: Do I understand you correctly, Mr. Attorney General, that upon passage of this law, just to take an example, the registration procedure in Selma would automatically go under the Federal Government?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, it would not automatically go under the Federal Government, but this law would provide what the state could do. If the state registrars then declined to comply with it, a federal official would be appointed to see that the people had a place to register in Selma.

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MORE

(THE FOLLOWING IS ON THE RECORD:)

THE PRESIDENT: I should like to observe that the 15 minutes is about up, but at 9:00 o'clock, in Mr. Reedy's office on Monday morning, we plan, and hope, and pray that we will have the message ready for you. If you will be ready for it, there will be a briefing there.

Over the past few weeks, I have determined that we would have a voting rights law this year on about November 15th, and so informed certain members of the Congress and certain Governors of the States. Since that time, I have talked to the Majority and Minority Leader, the chairmen of various committees, the Speaker of the House, and have reviewed with them the highlights of my viewpoint and have asked the Attorney General to go into some detail in connection with the principles that we would have in this bill.

We are very anxious to have Democratic and Republican support. As you know, President Kennedy in the Kennedy-Johnson Administration in 1963, in the civil rights measure that I counseled on and worked on and approved, submitted to the Congress a voting rights section that provided, however, for voting only in Federal elections. That section was deleted in the legislation that finally came to me and, as a result of that deletion, I have felt that we should again approach that subject, but to extend it from Federal elections to both State and local elections. I have talked to the leaders of the Negro organizations in this country and asked for their suggestions, and asked for their counsel. I have talked to various Southern Senators and Southern leaders, including Governors, and generally reviewed with them what I hope to have encompassed in this legislation. Of course, there will be amendments and changes, and extensions and deletions. But I think that our message will go to the Congress Monday. Perhaps the bill will accompany it. If not, it will go there very shortly. We will not only expect the Congress to give fair and just consideration to the Administration bill, which they have been asking for for several days now, but to give consideration to any one suggestion, as they always do. So if you will be back at 9:00 o'clock Monday, we will have a briefing on the details of the message.

We thank you for enduring us this afternoon.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

END

(At 4:30 p.m. EST)

Complete Set

March 11, 1965

NOTE FOR MR. BUNDY

SUBJECT: President's Press Conference

1. Attached are:
 - a. A summary of yesterday's session with the Overseas Writers;
 - b. Some material on the Buddhists and peace;
 - c. A brief run-down on the state of play with respect to negotiations;
 - d. A statement on our position with respect to the French role in negotiations;
 - P* e. A rack-up of U. S. tactical aircraft losses to ground fire (this has been cleared with OSD and JCS).
2. Two or three points I think should be hit pretty hard:
 - a. Our readiness to stay the course in Vietnam, and our confidence that the Vietnamese people want us to do so.
 - b. Pressure for a settlement of the Vietnam situation should be directed at Hanoi, not Washington. Peace is within reach there, but the key to it lies in Hanoi's calling off its subversion and aggression.
 - c. Our readiness to participate in a political settlement of the Vietnamese problem whenever we are convinced that such a settlement is not tantamount to the surrender of South Vietnam to the North.

Classified atchments

- d. Our readiness to participate, or even initiate, economic and political steps which would create region-wide stability and prosperity in Southeast Asia.
- e. A restatement of our earnest desire and intent not to escalate or "widen" the war.

Chester L. Cooper

March 11, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Mr. McGeorge Bundy's Appearance at the Overseas
Press Club Luncheon, March 10, 1965

In his opening remarks, Mr. Bundy made three specific points:

A. The center of the problem in Vietnam is related to the will and purpose of Hanoi.

B. Our present course of action in Vietnam, which includes the use of U. S. planes in both bombing Viet Cong concentrations in the South and Viet Minh installations in the North, is a continuation of our present policy in this area, rather than a major modification of this policy.

C. Speaking "personally" the recent actions in Vietnam are not indicative of President Johnson's moving toward a stance reminiscent of Goldwater. The key elements in our present policy are the measured and restrained use of force. The issue during the election campaign was the personalities of the two men who might be confronted with the problem of employing force.

Some key questions and answers in Bundy's presentation were:

Q. - Can the U. S. actually provide the answers to meet all the needs of Asia?

A. - Obviously not, if one takes the question literally. But the U. S. can provide the missing essential ingredient in a situation of instability there. In this connection, the analogy between the French experience and the U. S. experience in Vietnam is not a good one - the French were a colonial power, hated and mistrusted at the time they were fighting the Viet Minh, and by and large they are still unpopular in Vietnam.

2.

Q. - Do we have a carrot in mind to go with a stick in connection with our future policy toward Hanoi?

A. - The prospects for the regime in Hanoi would be very much improved if it halted its acts toward the South.

Q. - Has the bombing of North Vietnam resulted in increasing or decreasing the tensions between Moscow and Peiking?

A. It is too early to say definitely, although it is our impression at this point that the difficulties have been increased. In any case, Moscow, and probably even Peiking, regard the Vietnam problem as something of a sideshow. Their differences are too fundamental to be more than marginally affected by the Vietnam situation. Obviously, there are situations that could arise in which the Sino-Soviet Treaty could come into play; but the U. S. at this time has no intention of taking any action which would result in this.

Q. Isn't the bombing of the North too modest to force Hanoi to leave the South alone?

A. I don't think so. But this is a very delicate measurement problem. There are some who think we are not doing enough; some, too much. The President, who makes the decision, feels that it's just about right.

Q. Do the American people and the American Government have enough stamina to hang on in Vietnam for as long as it will take - eight to ten years?

A. The President is determined to stay the course, and we are confident that the American people will back him up. The Vietnamese are obviously and justifiably war weary, but they have an amazing resiliency; and we are confident that with some prospect of success, they too will fight for their freedom.

In this connection, Mr. Bundy made some comments on negotiations:

At the moment negotiations are tantamount to quitting. Many of the people who are advocating negotiations (DeGaulle as an example) have in mind a kind of neutralism which will remove

all vestiges and elements of anti-Communism. The U. S. will be ready to talk when aggression from Hanoi stops, and they who call for negotiations should be addressing their pleas and pressures, not to Washington, but to Hanoi.

Q. Doesn't our experience with divided countries necessarily result in a large American military presence, which in itself creates friction and tensions?

A. Korea is a good example of the problem. We do have a large American presence and at the request, indeed the insistence, of the Government of Korea. We must resign ourselves to continued U. S. presence in such situations. Any settlement of the Vietnam problem would have to involve a sustained U. S. presence in the area in some form.

Q. What leads us to believe that Hanoi is in a position to call off the Viet Cong and why should they do so?

A. Hanoi has substantial control over the units in the South, and their communications are excellent, as evidenced by the cease-fire at Thet. We think that Hanoi will at some point turn this off, simply because it will be in its interests to do so.

Q. Why did we change our minds that we could end the war through bombing of the North?

A. No one thinks that the war can be won by concentrating on the North, but this action permits us to move against the source of infiltration, which is a very serious problem in the South. The No. 1 priority is pacification; and the war cannot be won until the country is pacified in the South.

Chester L. Cooper

BACKGROUND ON BUDDHISTS AND PEACE

1. Despite his apparent promise to Buddhist leaders to cease his activities on behalf of peace which could be subjected to Communist exploitation, monk Quang Lien reiterated his proposals for ending the war at a public meeting on 8 March. Although his references to the Viet Cong were harsher and earlier criticisms of "foreign" influences were deleted, the presence of another official of the Buddhist Institute gave the meeting an aura of official Buddhist sanction. However, Tam Chau has since issued a public statement disavowing Lien's movement and indicating that the latter broke discipline.
2. Tam Chau's own earlier statements on peace were attacked during the week by the Viet Cong's clandestine Liberation radio as a "sell-out to US imperialism." However, a possibly genuine Communist document provides the first tangible indication that a now-banned peace movement, organized by certain Saigon intellectuals and believed distinct from Quang Lien's movement, may be a Communist front as charged by the Quat government.

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By jc NARA, Date 11-8-12

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7. The current uneasiness may have sparked a clash reported by the press to have occurred near Saigon on 7 March between Buddhist villagers and Catholic refugees being resettled from the hard-pressed northern provinces. The same day, Catholic refugee leader Father Hoang Quynh organized a rally in Saigon designed to unify various religious sects and groups behind a strong anti-Communist policy, and told the press that his group was "not opposed to the government, but there is little sympathy for it."

BACKGROUND ON BUDDHIST AND PEACE

8. Despite his apparent promise to Buddhist leaders to cease his activities on behalf of peace which could be subjected to Communist exploitation, monk Quang Lien reiterated his proposals for ending the war at a public meeting on 8 March. Although his references to the Viet Cong were harsher and earlier criticisms of "foreign" influences were deleted, the presence of another official of the Buddhist Institute gave the meeting an aura of official Buddhist sanction. However, Tam Chau has since issued a public statement disavowing Lien's movement and indicating that the latter broke discipline.

9. Tam Chau's own earlier statements on peace were attacked during the week by the Viet Cong's clandestine Liberation radio as a "sell-out to US imperialism." However, a possibly genuine Communist document provides the first tangible indication that a now-banned peace movement, organized by certain Saigon intellectuals and believed distinct from Quang Lien's movement, may be a Communist front as charged by the Quat government.

10. Vietnamese contacts of the US mission continue to voice approval of both the air strikes against North Vietnam, and US jet strikes in South Vietnam. Some have even claimed that a resultant morale boost among troops is already being translated into greater willingness to resist the Viet Cong. In general, the strikes are identified as US rather than Vietnamese actions and as indicative of a deeper US commitment. Most of the Vietnamese expressing these views have

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NLJ 13-21

By UHH NARA, Date 09-03-2013

*From CIA Weekly Sit Rpt
dtg 3/10/65*

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

C

BUNDY-SMITH
BATOR
BOWMAN
CHASE
COOPER
HAYNES
JESSUP
JOHNSON
KEENE
KLIEN
KOMER
KODY
KREEDY
SAUNDERS
SAYRE
THOMSON

6

Action

SS

Info

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SUMMARY

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1965 MAR 11 AM 4 44

PRIORITY

PP RUEHCR
DE RUMJIR 579A 11/0911Z
P R 110855Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUMJDH/AMEMBASSY HKONG
RUHLHQ/CINCPAC
STATE GRNC
BT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ACTION PRIORITY DEPT 2934 INFO HUE 363
HKONG 431 CINCPAC POLAD 1762 (110855Z) FROM SAIGON MARCH 11 - 5PM

HONG KONG FOR GARD

L I M D I S

EMBOFF CALLED ON VENERABLE THICH QUANG LIEN AT LATTER'S REQUEST
YESTERDAY AFTERNOON FOR EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ON PEACE MOVEMENT.

QUANG LIEN EXPLAINED HIS PROGRAM DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO BOLSTER
ANTI-COMMUNIST SPIRIT OF PEOPLE AND ARMY BY FIXING BLAME FOR WAR
CLEARLY ON COMMUNISTS AND NORTH VIETNAM AND THEREBY TURNING
WIDESPREAD DESIRE FOR PEACE IN SOUTH DIRECTLY AGAINST CONTINUED
COMMUNIST AGGRESSION AND VIOLATIONS OF SOUTH'S SECURITY.
IF COMMUNISTS ACCEPT PROPOSALS FOR WITHDRAWAL, THEN WHOLE
CVN 2934 363 431 1762 110855 11 5 THICH QUANG LIEN

PAGE TWO RUMJIR 579A ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WILL BENEFIT. IF THEY DO NOT ACCEPT, THEN PEOPLE
IN SOUTH WILL KNOW THE ENEMY CLEARLY AND WILL FIGHT HARDER TO
EXPULSE THEM.

RE WITHDRAWAL FOREIGN TROOPS AS CALLED FOR IN PROGRAM, QUANG LIEN
SAID TIMING DEFINITELY SHOULD BE WITHDRAWAL OF COMMUNIST FORCES
FIRST, AMERICANS LATER. COMMUNISTS WOULD HAVE TO PROVE THEIR WITH-
DRAWAL AND/OR DISARMING BEFORE AMERICANS, WHOSE PRESENCE MUCH MORE
OBVIOUSLY APPARENT, COULD BE EXPECTED TO LEAVE.

ASKED WHAT MOVEMENT WOULD DO IF COMMUNISTS REFUSED APPEAL, QUANG
LIEN SAID MOVEMENT WOULD CALL FOR STEPPED-UP MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST
THEM. WOULD ALSO EXPECT FURTHER BOMBINGS OF NORTH, ALTHOUGH MIGHT
NOT FEEL ITSELF ABLE TO CALL FOR THIS PUBLICLY. HE COULD GIVE NO
REPEAT NO TIME LIMIT AT PRESENT BY WHICH MOVEMENT WOULD CONSIDER
VC MUST COMPLY.

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By NARA, Date 11-8-72

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-2- 2934, March 11, 5 p.m., from Saigon

IN RESPONSE QUESTION WHETHER NORTH VIETNAM WOULD ACCEPT BUT WOULD CLAIM THEY NOT REPEAT NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LIBERATION FRONT IN SOUTH, QUANG LIEN STATED MOVEMENT MADE NO RPT NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN TWO AND REFUSED TO CONSIDER FRONT AS INDEPENDENT OF HANOI. SAID IF FRONT CONTINUED FIGHTING "INDEPENDENTLY", MOVEMENT WOULD STILL CONSIDER AS NECESSARY A RENEWED MILITARY CAMPAIGN INCLUDING BOMBINGS OF NORTH.

CFN NOT QUANG LIEN NOT NO VC NOT NO

PAGE THREE RUMJIR 579A ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

ASKED ABOUT FURTHER ACTIVITIES OF MOVEMENT, QUANG LIEN REPLIED HE IS SENDING SEPARATE LETTERS TO GVN CHIEF OF STATE, PRIMIN, PRESIDENT JOHNSON, AND HO CHI MINH EXPLAINING HIS PROGRAM. ALSO HAD INTENTION OF GOING TO HANOI, ALTHOUGH DOUBTED THAT TRIP WOULD ACTUALLY MATERIALIZE. WAS THINKING ALSO OF TRAVELING TO OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES, BUT WAS NOT SURE OF DETAILS OR TIMING.

MOVEMENT WILL ALSO TRAIN CADRES AND DISPATCH THEM THROUGHOUT COUNTRY TO EXPLAIN PROGRAM. EMBOFF EMPHASIZED NEED FOR CLOSE CONTROL OF ACTIVITIES, WHICH QUANG LIEN AGREED WITH AND ASSURED WOULD BE DONE. HE INTENDED TO START FAIRLY SMALL USING ONLY STUDENTS AND SOME YOUNGER BONZES THAT HE KNEW WELL PERSONALLY. THEY WOULD BE THOROUGHLY TRAINED IN HANDLING COMMUNIST OR NEUTRALIST HECKLING AND CLAIMED HE HAD ALREADY STARTED SUCH TRAINING SESSIONS IN WHICH CADRES WERE INSTRUCTED TO STICK CLOSE TO MAIN THEME OF PLACING BLAME ON COMMUNISTS FOR STARTING CONFLICT AND SIMPLY ASKING THEM TO LEAVE SO THAT PEACE COULD BE RESTORED TO PEOPLE. EMBOFF ASKED ABOUT COMMUNIST TURNING MOVEMENT'S STAND ON AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL AND CESSATION OF STRIKES ON DRV TO OWN ADVANTAGE, AND QUANG LIEN REPLIED CADRES CFN QUANG LIEN GVN PRIM HO CHI MINH NOT DRV

PAGE FOUR RUMJIR 579A ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
WOULD ANSWER US PRESENCE NECESSARY BECAUSE AGGRESSION CAME FROM NORTH AND AMERICANS HAVE ALREADY PROMISED TO LEAVE IF THIS AGGRESSION STOPPED. ALSO WOULD NOTE AMERICANS HAVE NO REPEAT NO COLONIALIST DESIGNS BECAUSE VIETNAM HAS NOTHING THEY NEED.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3- 2934, March 11, 5 p.m., from Saigon

EMBOFF INQUIRED WHETHER MOVEMENT HAD OFFICIAL BACKING OF BUDDHIST INSTITUTE. QUANG LIEN REPLIED ALL LEADERS APPROVED OF MOVEMENT'S AIMS BUT DID NOT YET FEEL INSTITUTE SHOULD PUBLICLY SUPPORT IT. SO FAR HIS PARTICIPATION WAS PERSONAL, ALTHOUGH HE INTENDED TO PRESENT PROGRAM TO FORTHCOMING BUDDHIST CONFERENCE FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE OFFICIAL APPROVAL. SAID GVN HAD NOT APPROVED MOVEMENT OFFICIALLY EITHER BUT APPEARED FAVORABLE TO IT.

QUANG LIEN SAID HE WISHED EMB TO UNDERSTAND CLEARLY HIS AIMS, WHICH HE CONSIDERED WERE COMPLETELY IN SUPPORT OF US POLICY IN VIETNAM. HE HOPED EMB REALIZED THAT AT TIMES MOVEMENT MIGHT HAVE TO SAY THINGS FOR TACTICAL REASONS THAT MIGHT NOT BE ENTIRELY FAVORABLE TO US, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE CREDIBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE. HE HAD ALREADY BEEN DENOUNCED BY HANOI RADIO, AND HE WAS IN FACT NOT ENTIRELY UNHAPPY ABOUT UNFAVORABLE US PRESS TREATMENT OF MOVEMENT EITHER, SINCE THIS ENHANCED HIS STANDING AS FREE AGENT AND BELIED SLANDERS THAT HE HAD BEEN BOUGHT OFF BY AMERICANS AND GVN. SAID HE CFN USNO QUANG LIEN NOT GVN NOT US NOT US NOT US GVN

PAGE FIVE RUMJIR 579A ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
WOULD LIKE TO MEET AMB TAYLOR SOON TO EXPLAIN MOVEMENT FURTHER.

EMBOFF REPLIED THAT EMB UNDERSTOOD HIS POSITION AND AS FAR AS PROGRAM WAS CONCERNED, IN PRINCIPLE WE SAW NOTHING BASICALLY INCONSISTENT WITH STATED US/GVN POLICY OBJECTIVES. WE WERE STILL UNCERTAIN REGARDING PRACTICAL APPLICATION AND WOULD BE WATCHING ACTIVITIES WITH INTEREST. QUANG LIEN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO HEAR SUGGESTIONS AND CRITICISM FROM EMB, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING INTERNATIONAL FIELD WHERE HE HAD LITTLE INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCE.

COMMENT: QUANG LIEN OBVIOUSLY PUT BEST FOOT FORWARD FOR EMBASSY'S BENEFIT. FURTHERMORE, GIVEN HIS SOMEWHAT LIMITED ABILITIES, DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE HIM PERSONALLY HANDLING MOVEMENT WITH SUCH SKILL AND CONTROL AS APPEARS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES HE CLAIMS. NEVERTHELESS, AS STATEMENT OF INTENTIONS HIS REMARKS COULD SCARCELY BE MORE FAVORABLE TO US POSITION. GRANTED THAT MOVEMENT ITSELF CONTAINS INHERENT WEAKNESSES AND CARRIES SEEDS OF POSSIBLE SERIOUS DANGERS QUANG LIEN'S ATTITUDE AT MOMENT SEEMS ENCOURAGING AND RELATIVELY CONSTRUCTIVE. TAYLOR.

BT

CFNUS/GVN QUANG LIEN

NOTE: Advance copy to S/S-0 at 5:06 a.m., March 11.

Passed White House, DOD, CIA at 5:25 a.m., March 11.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

BUNDY-SMITH
BATOR
BOWMAN
CHASE
COOPER
HAYNES
JESSUP
JOHNSON
KEENE
KLIEN
KOMER
MOODY
REEDY
SAUNDERS
SAYRE
THOMSON

2

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Action

FE

Info

SS

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PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ACTION PRIORITY DEPT 2838 INFO HUE 346
HKONG 413 FROM SAIGON MAR 4, 12NOON

HONG KONG FOR GARD

EMBTel 2813 RPTD INFO HUE 342 HONG KONG 406

TAM CHAU'S COMMUNIQUE QUOTED REFTel SEEMS DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO
WARD OFF OFFICIAL BUDDHIST INSTITUTE RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUANG
LIEN'S PEACE PROGRAM CURRENTLY BEING TOUTED, BY FOREIGN PRESS
PARTICULARLY, AS APPROVED BUDDHIST PROJECT. CHAU NOTED AS MUCH TO
EMBOFFS TUESDAY (SEE EMBTEL 2824). AT SAME TIME, A COMMUNIQUE
CFN 2838 346 413 4 12NOON 2813 341 406 TAM CHAU'S QUANG LIEN'S
CHAU 2824

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 172A

REASSERTS CHAU'S OWN GENERAL AND PURPOSELY VAGUE APPEAL FOR
PEACE AS THE OFFICIAL INSTITUTE LINE AND OF COURSE PROVIDES
OFFICIAL UMBRELLA UNDER WHICH INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS
QUANG LIEN'S CAN SHADE THEMSELVES. IN THIS RESPECT, CHAU'S CALL
FOR RETURN TO 1955 CONDITIONS AND GIVING PEOPLE OPPORTUNITY TO
CHOOSE BETWEEN COMMUNIST AND NATIONALIST ZONES DOVETAILS QUITE
NEATLY WITH QUANG LIEN'S MORE DETAILED PROPOSALS.

APPEARS THAT QUANG LIEN'S PROGRAM DOES IN FACT HAVE PERSONAL IF
UNOFFICIAL APPROVAL OF CHAU AND PROBABLY SEVERAL OTHER
INSTITUTE LEADERS IN SAIGON NOW. DURING WEEKEND TRI QUANG IN HUE
DISMISSED PLAN AS "IMPRACTICAL" AND "UNOFFICIAL", BUT THERE ARE
NO RPT NO INDICATIONS YET HE IS PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT
BEING CIRCULATED BY QUANG LIEN, WHO OBVIOUSLY USING HIS RELIGIOUS

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-2- 2838, MARCH 4, NOON, FROM SAIGON

POSITION TO PUSH PROJECT. (QUANG LIEN HAS CLAIMED TRI QUANG APPROVAL IN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH AMERICAN JOURNALIST, THOUGH THIS APPEARS BELIED BY QUANG'S WEEKEND STATEMENTS.)

IN EFFECT, AT MOMENT INSTITUTE SEEMS TO BE SMILING BENIGNLY ON QUANG LIEN'S PROGRAM WITHOUT ANY FORMAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT. IF PROGRAM SHOWS PROMISE, INSTITUTE MAY COMMIT RESOURCES MORE FORMALLY TO PROJECT.

TAYLOR

BT

CFN CHAU'S QUANG LIEN'S 1955 SAIGON NOW TRI QUANG

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O AT 1:55 A.M., MARCH 4.

PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA AT 2:11 A.M., MARCH 4.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

3/11/65

Negotiations

France }
USSR }

Concerting to convene an international conference ^{of France} & pressuring U.S. to agree.

France recommends neutralization, no pre-conditions to conference.

USSR (Kosygin 2/20) says first need an end to U.S. air strikes.

NVN - 3/8 - Rep. to IPC listed four conditions for a cease fire.

1. U.S. stop aggression
2. U.S. withdraw troops and arms
3. SVN people free to solve own problems and be given sovereignty
4. U.S. stop activities against NVN

3/4 - DRV rep. in Paris said negotiations no longer a matter for consideration now.

VC - 3/8 Rep. Chief SVNFL - at press conference said
NLF they (VC) rejected negotiated settlement in
SVN while American forces remain there.

3/5 - A "protected source" ^{was told} in interview with leader
NLF delegation to IPC - Americans would
have to make some kind of gesture before
negotiations, e.g. a cease-fire for 3 or 4 weeks.

C.C. - 2/12 (INR) Snow interview - Mas - Interested
in Conference, Conditions - Possibly withdrawal
first, possibly conf. first, possibly U.S.
troops remain as in Korea.

India - $\frac{3}{6}$ Prefer General type Conference
Case first pre-condition.

Canada - $\frac{3}{8}$ General type Conference with idea
of U.N. enforcement of result

UK - $\frac{3}{9}$ - Proper observance of 1954 General
Agreement. Cessation of hostilities, then
conference.

Yugoslavia $\frac{3}{4}$ Peaceful and negotiated settlements
Non Aligned - Tito sent letter to P.
Nations
Favor international conference of
all great powers.

U N - 7/50. Thant. submitted proposals for
Negotiations. Not advocating withdrawal.

G. Germany - 3/4. Does not favor conference now.
Follows U.S. line.

Belgium - 3/4. Prefer some kind of negotiations,
with resulting cessation of hostilities.

Italy - 3/5 Supports U.S. position.

Poland - 7/17 - Maintain ICC as useful in future
developments; vague about developments,
but referred to "negotiations."

FRENCH ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS

While, obviously, every country has a right to address itself to any aspect of the international situation, there is a basic difference in our view between abstract and pious statements and meaningful, helpful proposals. There are, of course, several countries which have specific responsibilities with respect to Vietnam. These include the two Co-Chairmen (the UK and the USSR) and the members of the ICC (India, Poland and Canada). There are others which, because they border the area of Vietnam, have a stake in the peace of the area (Cambodia, Laos and China). There is the U. S. which is heavily committed, militarily and economically, to assist South Vietnam cope with subversion and aggression. And finally, and most importantly, there are the Governments of South and North Vietnam which are directly and immediately involved. We are naturally interested in the views of any other government which may have something constructive to contribute, but we cannot see how the direct participation of such governments in any negotiating arrangements, or in any direct participation in negotiation, when and if they take place, can have any more than a marginal significance.

U. S. TACTICAL AIRCRAFT LOSSES TO GROUND FIRE
(Since first operations in spring of 1964)

Loss rates are considerably less than for similar type actions in World War II, or in the early phases of the Korean War.

	<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Pilots Lost</u>
Reconnaissance Missions	4	1
Interdiction of Supply Routes	3	1
Reprisals	9	3
	<u>16</u>	<u>5</u>

These figures include Laos, and North and South Vietnam. They do not include helicopters, light aircraft, or Vietnamese Air Force losses.

This Copy For

Ms Dorothy Ferris

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON'S NEWS CONFERENCE #38

Held in the Rose Garden
At the White House
Washington, D. C.

March 13, 1965
At 3:45 P.M. EST (Saturday)

In Attendance: 181

Official White House Transcript

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

This March week has brought a very deep and painful challenge to the unending search for American freedom. That challenge is not yet over, but before it is ended, every resource of this Government will be directed to insuring justice for all men of all races, in Alabama and everywhere in this land. That is the meaning of the oath that I swore before Almighty God when I took the office of the Presidency. That is what I believe in with all of my heart. That is what the people of this country demand.

Last Sunday a group of Negro Americans in Selma, Alabama, attempted peacefully to protest the denial of the most basic political right of all -- the right to vote. They were attacked and some were brutally beaten. From that moment until this, we have acted effectively to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of Selma, and to prevent further violence and lawlessness in this country wherever it occurred. More than 70 United States Government officials, including FBI agents, including Justice Department lawyers, Governor Collins, the Assistant Attorney General, Mr. John Doar, whom I asked to go to Selma, have been continuously present in Selma. They have all been working to keep the peace and to enforce the law.

At all times the full power of the Federal Government has been ready to protect the people of Selma against further lawlessness, but the final answer to this problem will be found not in armed confrontation, but in the process of law. We have

acted to bring this conflict from the streets to the court room. Your Government, at my direction, asked the Federal Court in Alabama to order the law officials of Alabama not to interfere with American citizens who are peacefully demonstrating for their constitutional rights. When the court has made its order, it must be obeyed.

The events of last Sunday cannot and will not be repeated, but the demonstrations in Selma have a much larger meaning. They are a protest against a deep and very unjust flaw in American democracy itself. Ninety-five years ago our Constitution was amended to require that no American be denied the right to vote because of race, or color. Almost a century later, many Americans are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes. Therefore, this Monday I will send to the Congress a request for legislation to carry out the amendment of the Constitution.

Wherever there is discrimination, this law will strike down all restrictions used to deny the people the right to vote. It will establish a simple, uniform standard which cannot be used, however ingenious the effort, to flaunt our Constitution. If State officials refuse to cooperate, then citizens will be registered by Federal officials.

This law is not an effort to punish or coerce anyone. Its object is one which no American in his heart can truly reject. It is to give all our people the right to choose their leaders; to deny this right, I think, is to deny democracy itself. What happened in Selma was an American tragedy. The blows that were received, the blood that was shed, the life of the good man that was lost, must strengthen the determination of each of us to bring full and equal and exact justice to all of our people.

This is not just the policy of your Government or your President. It is in the heart and the purpose and the meaning of America itself. We all know how complex and how difficult it is to bring about basic social change in a democracy, but this complexity must not obscure the clear and simple moral issues.

It is wrong to do violence to peaceful citizens in the streets of their town. It is wrong to deny Americans the right to vote. It is wrong to deny any person full equality

because of the color of his skin. The promise of America is a simple promise: Every person shall share in the blessings of this land, and they shall share on the basis of their merits as a person. They shall not be judged by their color or by their beliefs, or by their religion, or by where they were born, or the neighborhood in which they live.

All my life I have seen America move closer toward that goal, and every step of the way has brought enlarged opportunity and more happiness for all of our people. Those who do injustice are as surely the victims of their own acts as the people that they wrong. They scar their own lives and they scar the communities in which they live. By turning from hatred to understanding they can insure a richer and fuller life for themselves, as well as for their fellows, for if we put aside disorder and violence, if we put aside hatred and lawlessness, we can provide for all our people great opportunity almost beyond our imagination.

We will continue this battle of human dignity. We will apply all the resources of this great and powerful government to this task. We ask that all of our citizens unite in this hour of trial. We will not be moved by anyone or anything from the path of justice, and in this task we will seek the help of the Divine Power which surpasses the petty barriers between man and man, and people and people. Under His guidance, we can seek the biblical promise: "I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart which shall not be put out." And we will follow that light until all of us have bowed to the command: Let there be no strife between me and thee, for we be brethren.

I met today with Governor Wallace of Alabama to discuss very thoroughly the situation that exists in that State. The Governor expressed his concern that the demonstrations which have taken place are a threat to the peace and security of the people of Alabama. I expressed my own concern about the need for remedying those grievances which lead to the demonstrations by people who feel their rights have been denied. I said that those Negro citizens of Alabama who have systematically been denied the right to register and to participate in the choice of those who govern them should be provided the opportunity of directing national attention to their plight. They feel that they are being denied a very precious right, and I understand their concern.

In his telegram last night to me, Governor Wallace expressed his belief that all eligible citizens are entitled to exercise their right to vote. He repeated that belief today, and he stated that he is against any discrimination in that regard. I am firmly convinced, as I said to the Governor a few moments ago, that when all of the eligible Negroes of Alabama have been registered, the economic and the social injustices they have experienced throughout will be righted, and the demonstrations, I believe, will stop. I advised the Governor of my intention to press with all the vigor at my command to assure that every citizen of this country is given the right to participate in his Government at every level through the complete voting process.

The Governor's expressed interest in law and order met with a warm response. We are a Nation that is governed by laws, and our procedures for enacting and amending and repealing these laws must prevail. I told the Governor that we believe in maintaining law and order in every county and in every precinct in this land. If State and local authorities are unable to function, the Federal Government will completely meet its responsibilities.

I told the Governor that the brutality in Selma last Sunday just must not be repeated. He agreed that he abhorred brutality and regretted any instance in which any American citizen met with violence. As the Governor had indicated his desire to take actions to remedy the existing situation in Alabama which caused people to demonstrate, I respectfully suggested to him that he consider the following actions which I believed and the Attorney General and others familiar with the matter, and associated with me, believed would be highly constructive at this stage of the game.

First, I urged that the Governor publicly declare his support for universal suffrage in the State of Alabama, and the United States of America.

Second, I urged him to assure that the right of peaceful assembly will be permitted in Alabama so long as law and order is maintained.

Third, I expressed the hope that the Governor would call a bi-racial meeting when he returns to Alabama, to seek greater cooperation and to ask for greater unity among Americans of both races.

I asked the Governor for his cooperation and I express my appreciation for his coming to Washington to discuss this problem.

QUESTION: Mr. President, against the background of what you said, and aside from the situation in Selma, I wonder if you could tell us your general philosophy, your belief in how demonstrators in other parts of the country should conduct themselves? For example, how do you feel about the demonstrations that are going on outside of the White House right now, or in other parts, in other cities of the United States, and in front of Federal buildings?

THE PRESIDENT: I tried to cover that in my statement, but I believe in the right of peaceful assembly. I believe that people have the right to demonstrate. I think you must be concerned with the rights of others, and I do not think a person, as has been said, has the right to holler "Fire" in a crowded theater. But I think that people should have the right to peacefully assemble, to picket, to demonstrate their views, and to do anything they can to bring those views to the attention of people, provided they do not violate laws themselves, and provided they conduct themselves as they should.

QUESTION: Mr. President, did Governor Wallace indicate, sir, at all, an area of understanding and cooperation and acceptance of some of your suggestions to solve this violence there?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to let the Governor speak for himself. He is going to appear tomorrow. We spoke very frankly and very forthrightly, and we exchanged views, and we are not in agreement on a good many things. I am hopeful that the visit will be helpful and I did my best to make my viewpoint clear. Mr. Cormier?

QUESTION: Mr. President, I was going to ask you how the Governor reacted.

THE PRESIDENT: The Governor had his share of the conversation. He told me of the problems that he had in Alabama, the fears that he entertained and he expressed the hope that I could do something to help bring the demonstrations to an end. I told him very frankly that I thought our problem, which I had been working on for several weeks now, was to face up to the cause of the demonstration and remove the cause of

the demonstration, and that I hoped if he would give assurance that people would be protected in their demonstrations in Alabama, he would give assurance that he would try to improve the voting situation in Alabama, if I could submit my message to the Congress and get prompt action on it that would insure the right of the people of Alabama to vote, that I thought that we could improve the demonstration situation.

QUESTION: Mr. President, a two-part question on the same subject:

Can you tell us what your thinking is if Governor Wallace would not accept any or all of your suggestions; and secondly, in announcing from Montgomery that he had asked to see you, he indicated that he was concerned about a threat throughout the country. Do you share that concern?

THE PRESIDENT: I am deeply concerned that our citizens anywhere should be discriminated against and should be denied their constitutional rights. I have plotted my course. I have stated my views. I have made clear, whether the Governor agrees or not, that law and order will prevail in Alabama, that people will be -- their rights to peacefully assemble will be preserved, and that their constitutional rights will be protected. Mr. Roberts?

QUESTION: Mr. President, some of the clergymen who came out yesterday reported that you had detected a resurgence of moderate spirit among the whites in the South. Can you tell us what evidence you have seen of that, and perhaps anything that is being done to encourage it?

THE PRESIDENT: The presence of a good many people from the South in Selma, the presence of some of the ministers from the South here, the messages that I have received from the citizens of that area, the support that the businessmen and the clergy and the labor people have given the Civil Rights Act and its enforcement, have all given me strength and comfort and encouragement.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I would like to turn to the other problem that has occupied so much of your hours in Viet Nam. About five weeks ago, when you felt it necessary to give an order that our wives and children of our men in Viet Nam be withdrawn, a high officer said to me, "Give us a year and they will be back." I have two questions:

First, would you like to see the wives and children of our civilian and military officers in Viet Nam go back; and secondly, do you think that a year is a good prognostication?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think that I can be much of a prophet in either respect. First, I do not think that Saigon is the place for our wives and children of our military people at the moment, or else I wouldn't ask for them to come out. If the situation changes, and conditions are different, I will pass on them in the light of those changes. I think that anyone that makes a prophecy now as to what the situation will be a year from now would have to be a big guesser.

QUESTION: Mr. President, sir, I would like to change the subject to another matter. Mr. Otto Otepka, a top security officer in the State Department, faces dismissal for answering the questions of some Members of Congress who were investigating the security of the United States. I would like to know if you can't stop this dismissal.

THE PRESIDENT: I have had some conversations with Secretary Rusk concerning that case, and I have complete confidence in the manner in which he will handle it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in the last five weeks the American participation in the situation in South Viet Nam has undergone certain changes. Could you give us your view of any benefits that have accrued to us, or your view of the situation over the past five weeks in South Viet Nam?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have a very difficult situation there as a result of the instability of the governments and the frequent changes of them. I would not say it has improved in the last five weeks. I would say that our policy there is the policy that was established by President Eisenhower, as I have stated, since I have been President, 46 different times, the policy carried on by President Kennedy, and the policy that we are now carrying on. I have stated it as recently as February 17th in some detail, and prior to that, in my last press conference, on February 4th. Although the incidents have changed, in some instances the equipment has changed, in some instances the tactics and perhaps the strategy, in a decision or two, has changed.

Our policy is still the same, and that is to any armed attack, our forces will reply. To any in Southeast Asia who ask our help in defending their freedom, we are going to give it, and that means we are going to continue to give it. In that region, there is nothing that we covet, there is nothing we seek, there is no territory or no military position or no political ambition. Our one desire and our one determination is that the people of Southeast Asia be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there was a report published this morning that some Federal troops had already been alerted at your direction for a possible move into Alabama. Will you confirm this report?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say that the FBI officials, the Marshals in the general area, the United States forces, including the Armed Forces, were ready to carry out any instructions that the President gave them, and the President was prepared to give them any instructions that were necessary and justified and wise.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I wonder if you could tell us your reaction to the pressures that have been mounting around the world for you to negotiate the situation in Viet Nam. Could you explain to us under what conditions you might be willing to negotiate a settlement there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, since the Geneva conference of 1962, as has been stated before, the United States has been in rather active and continuous consultation. We have talked to other governments about the great danger that we could foresee in this aggression in Southeast Asia. We have discussed it in the United Nations. We have discussed it in NATO. We have discussed it in the SEATO councils. On innumerable occasions we have discussed it directly through diplomatic channels. We have had direct discussions with almost every signatory of the 1954 and the 1962 pacts.

We have not had any indication, and as the Secretary of State said the other day, what is still missing is any indication -- any indication -- from anyone -- that Hanoi is prepared or willing or ready to stop doing what it is doing against its neighbors. I think that the absence of this crucial element affects the current discussion of negotiation.

A great friend of mine who had great responsibilities for a long period of military and executive life in our Government said to me the other day, "When I see the suggestions about negotiation, I wonder if folks don't recognize that there must be someone to negotiate with, and there must be someone willing to negotiate."

QUESTION: I said, sir, that the events in Selma occurred last Sunday, and I asked why you waited to have a press conference and make a statement until late Saturday afternoon?

THE PRESIDENT: I know of nothing that either required or justified my making a statement prior to the time that I had a recommendation to make on the problem that was facing us, namely, they were demonstrating about voting rights, and I had that message delivered to me only a few hours ago. I have reviewed it, and I am in general agreement on what I am going to send to the Congress. It happened that I had the time this afternoon to review it, and I had the information that was available to me.

I think the President should have some leeway when he determines to have press conferences. I have had 46 since I have been President. I plan to have at least one once a month. But the President will determine when they are held, where they are held, and what subjects he discusses.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that there has been some violence in the Youth Camps, Youth Corps Camps, or Job Corps, and that involves a knifing, and there have been one or more deaths as a result of that. Is that the reason you visited the Catoctin, Maryland, camp last week, to build the morale up in the camp and give them public confidence?

THE PRESIDENT: I visited the camp last week because I had agreed to some time ago, and I had been forced to cancel one planned visit. I want to visit a good many of their camps. We all deeply regret any accidents or any violence or any injuries that may occur at any time. That is not any reason, though, or rather, that is not the sole reason why I should be interested in what they are doing. I hope by my visits to better understand their work, perhaps to stimulate some of them, and maybe improve on what is being done.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I should like to ask you to stay here for another 10 or 15 minutes, we will say 15 minutes, for the Attorney General to give you a very brief briefing on the high points of this message, and if you will do that for 15 minutes, he will be here longer and Mr. Moyers will, but at the conclusion of 15 minutes, I hope that Mr. Reedy will tell you, and any of you that need to rush away to meet your deadlines can do so.

(THE FOLLOWING IS FOR BACKGROUND ONLY:)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is on a BACKGROUND basis.

Has television been cut on this?

THE PRESS: Yes.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Can we have it cut on this?

THE PRESIDENT: Please, folks, let's don't take up time. Cut off your cameras and television, please. Let Mr. Katzenbach go ahead. Some of the reporters are very anxious to meet a deadline. We try to be cooperative with you. Would NBC cameras cut over there, and let's move out of the way.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let me run through very quickly -- yes, they are all off.

Let me run very quickly for you through the principal provisions that are going to be in the legislation which the President is going to propose. First of all, it is going to be based on the Fifteenth Amendment. The Fifteenth Amendment provides that Congress has the power to legislate in order to implement its provisions which forbid any State or the Federal Government to discriminate in voting on the basis of race or color. It is going to affect all of those States and all of those voting districts where there has been discrimination in the past, and it is going to be triggered by an automatic formula which we have devised which will cover all of those areas where there have been complaints about discrimination.

Within those areas, it is going to abolish all restrictions except age and residence, conviction of a crime, mental problems, and require nothing more than filling out of a very simple form: name and address and length of residence, and so forth.

It is going to cover all elections -- Federal, State, and local. It is going to provide that if State officials don't register people, Federal officials will, wherever that occurs, and it is going to set up a system that is not going to require every single person to go and be turned down before he comes to a Federal official.

It is going to establish a system which gets all of the names of those people who come to Federal officials, if that is necessary, registered on the State books. The Federal officials will be run under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission.

It is going to set up a system not only to get those people registered, but to get those people voted whenever they are certified by the appropriate Federal official as being eligible to vote. It is going to be automatic and quick. It is not going to provide for delaying lawsuits or permit that each person's right to vote be proved with great evidence in the courts. It is going to include broader and more severe penalties on State officials or anyone else who interferes with the rights of anyone to register and vote.

Now, those are the principal provisions. Are there any questions?

QUESTION: On that provision regarding the conviction for a crime --

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Felonies.

QUESTION: Felonies; not any crime.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

QUESTION: Can you give us any idea what sort of bipartisan support, if any, you have for this legislation?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This legislation is going to have bipartisan support, and I have no question that it will get bipartisan support.

QUESTION: Where will the action come first -- in the House or Senate, please?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I can't answer that at this point. The bill is not there at this point.

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on the House percentage.

QUESTION: Will the registrars be appointed by officials here in Washington or by Federal District Courts?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The officials will be appointed simply under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission which is a bipartisan commission and will have the power to appoint those people. They will be people local in the area.

QUESTION: Can you describe in any more detail this simple formula that will apply to all the States?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. We believe that wherever 50 percent of the people have not been registered in the past, all people, or 50 percent voted in the general election in the past, that that would automatically invoke the provisions of this Act, and where there is a literacy or other test.

QUESTION: Will that go down to the level of voting districts?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

QUESTION: Sir, how many voters do you think it will add to the rolls?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: As many as are eligible.

THE PRESIDENT: Substantial.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A substantial number.

QUESTION: What about the penalty: Will the penalty be imprisonment?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There will be broader penalties on people who attempt to interfere, threaten, intimidate, coerce, or otherwise attempt to prevent people from registering or voting. Those will be criminal penalties.

QUESTION: Will there be any provision in the event that votes are not counted for Federal District Courts to hold up the results of an election?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, there will be a power in the courts to impound all ballots in any such district where people are not permitted to vote, and give them time to vote.

QUESTION: Mr. Attorney General, I may have missed this point, but on the literacy test, are there to be any literacy tests, or what kind of literacy tests, and if they are some of the kind of tests there have been, would that be considered a violation?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, the type of tests there have been. I think the simple ability to read and write is demonstrated by being able to fill out your name and address and state how long you have been a resident of the State where you live.

QUESTION: Sir, can you tell us what States would come under this automatic triggering device that you have worked out? What States would be eligible?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The States that would come under it would be Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. It would include a lot of voting districts elsewhere.

QUESTION: Do I understand you correctly, Mr. Attorney General, that upon passage of this law, just to take an example, the registration procedure in Selma would automatically go under the Federal Government?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, it would not automatically go under the Federal Government, but this law would provide what the State could do. If the State registrars then declined to comply with it, a Federal official would be appointed to see that the people had a place to register in Selma.

(THE FOLLOWING IS ON THE RECORD:)

THE PRESIDENT: I should like to observe that the 15 minutes is about up, but at 9:00 o'clock, in Mr. Reedy's office on Monday morning, we plan, and hope, and pray that we will have the message ready for you. If you will be ready for it, there will be a briefing there.

Over the past few weeks, I have determined that we would have a voting rights law this year on about November 15th, and so informed certain Members of the Congress and certain Governors of the States. Since that time, I have talked to the Majority

and Minority Leaders, the chairmen of various committees, the Speaker of the House, and have reviewed with them the highlights of my viewpoint and have asked the Attorney General to go into some detail in connection with the principles that we would have in this bill.

We are very anxious to have Democratic and Republican support. As you know, President Kennedy in the Kennedy-Johnson Administration in 1963, in the civil rights measure that I counseled on and worked on and approved, submitted to the Congress a voting rights section that provided, however, for voting only in Federal elections. That section was deleted in the legislation that finally came to me and, as a result of that deletion, I have felt that we should again approach that subject, but to extend it from Federal elections to both State and local elections.

I have talked to the leaders of the Negro organizations in this country and asked for their suggestions, and asked for their counsel. I have talked to various Southern Senators and Southern leaders including Governors, and generally reviewed with them what I hope to have encompassed in this legislation. Of course, there will be amendments and changes, and extensions and deletions. But I think that our message will go to the Congress Monday. Perhaps the bill will accompany it. If not, it will go there very shortly.

We will not only expect the Congress to give fair and just consideration to the Administration bill, which they have been asking for for several days now, but to give consideration to any one suggestion, as they always do.

So if you will be back at 9:00 o'clock Monday, we will have a briefing on the details of the message.

We thank you for enduring us this afternoon.

MR. MERRIMAN SMITH (UPI): Thank you, Mr. President.

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READ THIS FIRST

This March week has brought a deep and painful challenge to the unending search for American freedom. That challenge is not yet over. But before it is ended every resource of this government will be directed to ensuring justice for men of all races -- in Alabama and everywhere in this land. That is the meaning of the oath I swore before Almighty God when I took this office. That is what I believe in with all my heart. That is what ^{the} ~~this~~ people demand.

Last Sunday a group of Negro Americans in Selma, Alabama, attempted peacefully to protest the denial of the most basic political right of all -- the right to vote. They were attacked, and some were brutally beaten.

From that moment, until this, we have acted effectively to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of Selma, and to prevent further violence and lawlessness.

More than seventy federal officials, including FBI agents, Justice Department lawyers, and Governor Collins, whom I asked to go to Selma, have been continuously present in Selma. They have all been working to keep the peace and enforce the law.

At all times the full power of the federal government has been ready to protect the people of Selma against further lawlessness.

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But the final answer to this problem will be found, not in armed confrontation, but in the process of law. We have acted to bring this conflict from the streets to the courtroom. Your government has asked the federal court to order the law officials of Alabama not to interfere with American citizens who are peacefully demonstrating for their constitutional rights.

When the court has made its order, it must be ~~enforced~~ obeyed.
The events of last Sunday cannot and will not be repeated.

But the demonstrations in Selma have a larger meaning. They are a protest against a deep and unjust flaw in American democracy itself.

Ninety-five years ago our Constitution was amended to require that no American be denied the right to vote because of race or color. Almost a century later many Americans are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes.

Therefore, this Monday, I will send to the Congress a request for legislation to carry out the command of the Constitution. Wherever there is discrimination this law will strike down all restrictions used to deny the right to vote. It will establish a simple uniform standard which cannot be used, however ingenious the effort, to flaunt the Constitution. And if state officials refuse to cooperate, then citizens

will be registered by federal officials.

This law is not an effort to punish or coerce. Its object is one which no American in his heart can truly reject. It is to give all our people the right to choose their leaders. To deny this right is to deny democracy itself.

What happened in Selma was an American tragedy. The blows that were received, the blood that was shed, the life that was lost, must strengthen our determination to bring justice to all our people.

This is not just the policy of your government or your President. It is the heart and the purpose and the meaning of America.

We all know how complex and difficult it is to bring about basic social change in a democracy. But this complexity must not obscure the clear and simple moral issues. It is wrong to do violence to peaceful citizens in the streets of their town. It is wrong to deny Americans the right to vote. It is wrong to deny any person full equality because of the color of his skin.

The promise of America is a simple promise. Every person shall share in the blessings of this land on the basis of his merits as a person. He shall not be judged by his color or his beliefs, or his religion, by where he was born or the neighborhood in which he lives.

All my life I have seen America move closer toward that goal.

And every step of the way has brought enlarged opportunity for all our people.

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Those who do injustice are as surely the victims of their own acts as the people they wrong. They scar their own lives and the communities in which they live. By turnin g from hatred to understanding they can ensure a richer and fuller life for themselves as well as for their fellows.

For if we put aside disorder and violence, hatred and lawlessness, we can provide, for all our people, opportunity almost beyond imagination.

We will con tinue the battle for human dignity. We will apply all the resources of government to the task. We will not be moved from the path of justice.

And in this task we will seek the help of that Divine Power which surpasses the petty barriers between man and man, people and people. Under His guidance we can seek the Biblical promise "I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart which shall not be put out." And we will follow that light until all of us have bowed to the command "let there be no strife ... between me and thee for we be brethren." "

PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 30

of the

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

3:45 P.M.

Saturday

March 13, 1965

In The Rose Garden

At The White House

Washington, D. C.

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

This march week has brought a very deep and painful challenge to the unending search for American freedom. That challenge is not yet over, but before it is ended, every resource of this Government will be directed to insuring justice for all men of all races, in Alabama and everywhere in this land. That is the meaning of the oath that I swore before Almighty God when I took the office of the Presidency. That is what I believe in with all of my heart. That is what the people of this country demand.

Last Sunday a group of Negro Americans in Selma, Alabama, attempted peacefully to protest the denial of the most basic political right of all -- the right to vote. They were attacked and some were brutally beaten. From that moment until this, we have acted effectively to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of Selma, and to prevent further violence and lawlessness in this country wherever it occurred. More than 70 United States Government officials, including FBI agents, including Justice Department lawyers, Governor Collins, the Assistant Attorney General, Mr. John Doar, whom I asked to go to Selma, have been continuously present in Selma. They have all been working to keep the peace and to enforce the law.

At all times the full power of the Federal Government has been ready to protect the people of Selma against further lawlessness, but the final answer to this problem will be found not in armed confrontation, but in the process of law. We have acted to bring this conflict from the streets to the court room. Your Government, at my direction, asked the Federal Court in Alabama to order the law officials of Alabama not to interfere with American citizens who are peacefully demonstrating for their constitutional rights. When the court has made its order, it must be obeyed.

The events of last Sunday cannot and will not be repeated, but the demonstrations in Selma have a much larger meaning. They are a protest against a deep and very unjust flaw in American democracy itself. Ninety five years ago our Constitution was amended to require that no American be denied the right to vote because of race, or color. Almost a century later, Americans are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes. Therefore, this Monday I will send to the Congress a request for legislation to carry out the amendment of the Constitution. Wherever there is discrimination, this law will strike down all restrictions used to deny the people the right to vote. It will establish a simple, uniform standard which cannot be used however ingenious the effort to flaunt our Constitution. If State officials refuse to cooperate, then citizens will be registered by Federal officials. This law is not an effort to punish or coerce anyone. Its object is one which no American in his heart can truly reject. It is to give all our people the right to choose their leaders; to deny this right, I think, is to deny democracy itself. What happened in Selma was an American tragedy. The blows that were received, the blood that was shed, the life of the good man that was lost, must strengthen the determination of each of us to bring full and equal and exact justice to all of our people.

This is not just the policy of your Government or your President. It is in the heart and the purpose and the meaning of America itself. We all know how complex and how difficult it is to bring about basic social change in a democracy, but this complexity must not obscure the clear and simple moral issues.

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All my life I have seen America move closer toward that goal, and every step of the way has brought enlarged opportunity and more happiness for all of our people. Those who do injustice are as surely the victims of their own acts as the people that they wrong. They scar their own lives and they scar the communities in which they live. By turning from hatred to understanding they can insure a richer and fuller life for themselves, as well as for their fellows. For if we put aside disorder and violence, if we put aside hatred and lawlessness, we can provide for all our people great opportunity almost beyond our imagination.

We will continue this battle of human dignity. We will apply all the resources of this great and powerful government to this task. We ask that all of our citizens unite in this hour of trial. We will not be moved by anyone or anything from the path of justice, and in this task we will seek the help of the Divine Power which surpasses the petty barriers between man and man, and people and people. Under His guidance, we can seek the biblical promise: "I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart which shall not be put out." And we will follow that light until all of us have bowed to that command: Let there be no strife between me and thee, for we be brethren.

I met today with Governor Wallace of Alabama to discuss very thoroughly the situation that exists in that state. The Governor expressed his concern that the demonstrations which have taken place are a threat to the peace and security of the people of Alabama. I expressed my own concern about the need for remedying those grievances which led to the demonstrations by people who feel their rights have been denied. I said that those Negro citizens of Alabama who have systematically been denied the right to register and to participate in the choice of those who govern them should be provided the opportunity of directing national attention to their plight. They feel that they are being denied a very precious right, and I understand their concern. In his telegram last night to me, Governor Wallace expressed his belief that all eligible citizens are entitled to exercise their right to vote. He repeated that belief today, and he stated that he is against any discrimination in that regard. I am firmly convinced, as I said to the Governor a few moments ago, that when all of the eligible Negroes of Alabama have

been registered, the economic and the social injustices they have experienced throughout will be righted, and the demonstrations I believe will stop. I advised the Governor of my intantion to press with all the vigor at my command to assure that every citizen of this country is given the right to participate in his government at every level through the complete voting voting process.

(C follows)

The Governor's expressed interest in law and order met with a warm response. We are a Nation that is governed by laws, and our procedure for enacting and amending and repealing these laws must prevail. I told the Governor that we believe in maintaining law and order in every county and in every precinct in this land. If State and local authorities are unable to function, the Federal Government will completely meet its responsibilities.

I told the Government that the brutality in Selma last Sunday just must not be repeated. He agreed that he abhorred brutality and regretted any instance in which any American citizen met with violence. As the Governor had indicated his desire to take actions to remedy the existing situation in Alabama, which caused people to demonstrate, I respectfully suggested to him that he consider the following actions which I believed and the Attorney General and others familiar with the matter, and associated with me believed, would be highly constructive at this stage of the game.

First, I urged that the Governor publicly declare his support for universal suffrage in the State of Alabama, and the United States of America.

Second, I urged him to assure that the right of peaceful assembly will be permitted in Alabama so long as law and order is maintained.

Third, I expressed the hope that the Governor would call a bi-racial meeting when he returns to Alabama, to seek greater cooperation and to ask for greater unity among Americans of both races.

I asked the Governor for his cooperation and I expressed my appreciation for his coming to Washington to discuss this problem.

QUESTION: Mr. President, against the background of what you said, and aside from the situation in Selma, I wonder if you could tell us your general philosophy, your belief in how demonstrators in other parts of the country should conduct themselves? For example, how do you feel about the demonstrations that are going on outside of the White House right now, or in other parts or other cities of the United States and in front of Federal buildings?

THE PRESIDENT: I tried to cover that in my statement, but I believe in the right of peaceful assembling. I believe that people have the right to demonstrate. I think you must be concerned with the rights of others, and I do not think a person as has been said, has the right to holler fire in a crowded theater. But I think that people should have the right to peacefully assemble and to demonstrate their views and to do anything they can to bring those views to the attention of people, provided they do not violate laws themselves and provided they conduct themselves as they should.

QUESTION: Mr. President, did Governor Wallace indicate, sir, at all, an area of understanding and cooperation, except answer of some of your suggestions, to solve this violence there?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to let the Governor speak for himself, he is going to appear tomorrow. We spoke very frankly, and very forthrightly, and we exchanged views, and we are not in agreement on a good many things. I am hopeful that the visit will be helpful and I did my best to make my viewpoint clear. Mr. Comer?

QUESTION: Mr. President, I was going to ask how the Governor reacted.

THE PRESIDENT: The Governor had his share of the conversation. He told me of the problems that he had in Alabama, the fears that he entertained and he expressed the hope that I could do something to help bring the demonstrations to an end. I told him very frankly that I thought our problem, which I had been working on for several weeks now, was to face up to the cause of the demonstrations and remove the cause of the demonstrations, and that I hoped if he would give assurance that people would be protected in their demonstrations in Alabama, he would give assurance that he would try to improve the voting situation in Alabama -- if I do submit my message to the Congress and get prompt action on it -- that would insure the right of the people of Alabama to vote, that I thought that we could improve the demonstration situation.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, a two part question on the same subject.

Can you tell us what your thinking is if Governor Wallace would not accept any or all of your suggestions, and, secondly, in accounting from Montgomery that he had asked to see you, he indicated that he was concerned about a threat throughout the country. Do you share that concern?

THE PRESIDENT: I am deeply concerned that our citizens anywhere should be discriminated against and should be denied their constitutional rights. I have plotted my course. I have stated my views. I have made clear whether the Governor agrees or not that law and order will prevail in Alabama, that people will be -- their rights to peacefully assemble will be preserved and that their constitutional rights will be protected.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Roberts.

QUESTION: Mr. President, some of the clergymen who came out yesterday reported that you had detected a resurgence among moderates -- a resurgence among the whites in the South. Can you tell us what evidence you have seen of that and perhaps anything that is being done to encourage it?

THE PRESIDENT: The presence of a good many people from the South in Selma, the presence of some of the ministers from the South here, the messages that I have received from the citizens of that area, the support that the businessmen and the clergy and the labor people have given the Civil Rights Act and its enforcement, have all given me strength and encouragement.

QUESTION: Mr. President, to turn to the other problem that has occupied so much of your hours in Viet Nam, about five weeks ago, when you felt it necessary to give an order that our wives and children of our men in Viet Nam be withdrawn, a high officer said to me, "Give us a year and they will be back." I have two questions:

First, would you like to see the wives and children of our civilian and military officers in Viet Nam go back; and secondly, do you think that a year is a good prognostication?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think that I can be much of a prophet in either respect. First, I do not think that Saigon is the place for our wives and children of our military people at the moment, or else I wouldn't ask for them to come out. If the situation changes, and conditions are different, I will pass on them in the light of those changes. I think that anyone that makes a prophecy now as to what the situation will be a year from now would have to be a big guesser.

QUESTION: Mr. President, sir, I would like to change the subject to another matter. Mr. Otto Otepka, a top security officer in the State Department, faces dismissal for answering the questions of some members of Congress who were investigating the security of the United States. I would like to know if you can't stop this dismissal.

THE PRESIDENT: I have had some conversations with Secretary Rusk concerning that case, and I have complete confidence in the manner in which he will handle it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in the last five weeks the American participation in the situation in South Viet Nam has undergone certain changes. Could you give us your view of any benefits that have accrued to us, or your view of the situation over the past five weeks in South Viet Nam?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have a very difficult situation there as a result of the instability of the governments and the frequent changes of them. I would not say it has improved in the last five weeks. I would say that our policy there is the policy that was established by President Eisenhower, as I have stated, since I have been President, 46 different times, the policy carried on by President Kennedy, and the policy that we are

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now carrying on. I have stated it as recently as February 17th in some detail, and prior to that, in my last press conference, on February 4th. Although the incidents have changed, in some instances the equipment has changed, in some instances the tactics and perhaps the strategy, in a decision or two, has changed.

Our policy is still the same, and that is to any armed attack our forces will reply. To any in Southeast Asia who ask our help in defending their freedom, we are going to give it, and that means we are going to continue to give it. In that region, there is nothing that we covet, there is nothing we seek, there is no territory or no military position or no political ambition. Our one desire and our one determination is that the people of Southeast Asia be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there was a report published this morning that some Federal troops had already been alerted at your direction for possible move into Alabama. Will you confirm this report?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say that the FBI officials, the Marshals in the general area, the United States forces, including the Armed Forces, were ready to carry out any instructions that the President gave them, and the President was prepared to give them any instructions that were necessary and justified and wise.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I wonder if you could tell us your reaction to the pressures that have been mounting around the world for you to negotiate the situation in Viet Nam. Could you explain to us under what conditions you might be willing to negotiate a settlement there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, since the Geneva conference of 1962, as has been stated before, the United States has been in rather active and continuous consultation. We have talked to other governments about the great danger that we could foresee in this aggression in Southeast Asia. We have discussed it in the United Nations. We have discussed it in NATO. We have discussed it in the SEATO councils. On innumerable occasions we have discussed it directly through diplomatic channels. We have had direct discussions with almost every signatory of the 1954 and 1962 pacts.

We have not had any indication, and as the Secretary of State said the other day, what is still missing is any indication -- any indication -- from anyone -- that Hanoi is prepared or willing or ready to stop doing what it is doing against its neighbors. I think that the absence of this crucial element affects the current discussion of negotiation. A great friend of mine who had great responsibilities for a long period of military and executive life in our government said to me the other day, "When I see the suggestions about negotiation, I wonder if folks don't recognize that there must be someone to negotiate with, and there must be someone willing to negotiate."

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QUESTION: I said, sir, that the events in Selma occurred last Sunday, and I asked why you waited to have a press conference and make a statement until late Saturday afternoon?

THE PRESIDENT: I know of nothing that either required or justified my making a statement prior to the time that I had a recommendation to make on the problem that was facing us, namely, they were demonstrating about voting rights, and I had that message delivered to me only a few hours ago. I have reviewed it, and I am in general agreement on what I am going to send to the Congress. It happened that I had time this afternoon to review it, and I had the information that was available to me.

I think the President should have some leeway when he determines to have press conferences. I have had 46 since I have been President. I plan to have at least one a month. But the President will determine when they are held, where they are held, and what subjects he discusses.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that there has been some violence in the Youth Camps, Youth Corps Camps, or Job Corps, and that involved a knifing, and there have been one or more deaths as a result of that.

THE PRESIDENT: I just went to Camp Catoctin last week to build up the morale in the camp, and give them public confidence. I visited the camp last week because I had agreed to some time ago, and I had been forced to cancel one planned visit. I want to visit a good many of their camps. We all deeply regret any accident or any violence or any injuries that may occur at any time. That is not any reason, though, or rather that is not the sole reason I should be interested in what they are doing. I hope my visits will help me to better understand their work, perhaps to stimulate some of them, and maybe improve on what is being done.

I should like to ask you to stay here for another 10 or 15 minutes for the Attorney General to give you a very brief briefing on the high points of this message, and if you will do that for 15 minutes, he will be here longer, as Mr. Moyers will, but at the conclusion of 15 minutes I hope that Mr. Reedy will tell you, and any of you that need to rush away to meet your deadlines can do so.

(Time: 4:20 PM)

(MORE FOLLOWS)

(THE FOLLOWING IS FOR BACKGROUND ONLY:)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is on a BACKGROUND basis.

Has television been cut on this?

QUESTION: Yes.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Can we have it cut on this?

THE PRESIDENT: Please, folks, let's don't take up time; cut off your cameras and television, please. Let Mr. Katzenbach go ahead. Some of the reporters are very anxious to meet a deadline. We try to be cooperative with you. Would NBC cameras cut over there, and let's move out of the way.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Let me run -- yes, they are all off.

Let me run very quickly for you through the principal provisions that are going to be in the legislation which the President is going to propose. First of all, it is going to be based on the Fifteenth Amendment. The Fifteenth Amendment provides that Congress has the power to legislate in order to implement its provisions which forbid any State or the Federal Government to discriminate in voting on the basis of race or color. It is going to affect all of those States and all of those voting districts where there has been discrimination in the past, and it is going to be triggered by an automatic formula which we have devised which will cover all of those areas where there have been complaints about discrimination.

Within those areas, it is going to abolish all restrictions except age and residence, conviction of a crime, mental problems, and requiring nothing more than the filling out of a very simple form; name and address, and length of residence and so forth.

It is going to cover all elections, Federal, State and local. It is going to provide that ~~the~~ State officials don't register people, Federal officials will, wherever that occurs, and it is going to set up a system that is not going to require every single person to go and be turned down before he comes to a Federal official.

It is going to establish a system which gets all of the names of those people who come to Federal officials, if that is necessary, registered on the State books. The Federal officials will be run under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission.

It is going to set up a system not only to get those people registered, but to get those people voted whenever they are certified by the appropriate Federal official as being eligible to vote. It is going to be automatic and quick. It is not going to provide for delaying lawsuits or permit that each person's right to vote be

proved with great evidence in the courts. It is going to include broader and more severe penalties on State officials or anyone else who interferes with the rights of anyone to register and vote.

Now, those are the principal provisions. Are there any questions?

QUESTION: On that provision regarding the conviction for a crime --

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Felonies.

QUESTION: Not any crime, but felonies.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

QUESTION: Can you give us any idea what sort of bipartisan support, if any, you have for this legislation:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This legislation is going to have bipartisan support and I have no question that it will get bipartisan support.

QUESTION: Where will the action come first, in the House or the Senate?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I can't answer that at this point. The bill is not there at this point.

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on the House percentage.

QUESTION: Will the registrars be appointed by officials here in Washington or by Federal District Courts?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The officials will be appointed simply under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission on which is a bipartisan commission and will have the power to appoint those people. They will be people local in the area.

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QUESTION: Can you describe in more detail this simple formula that will apply to all the states?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. We believe that wherever 50 per cent of the people have not been registered in the past, all people, or 50 per cent voted in the general election in the past, that that would automatically invoke the provisions of this Act, and where there is a literacy or other test.

QUESTION: Will that go down to the level of voting districts?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

QUESTION: Sir, how many voters do you think it will add to the rolls?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: As many as are eligible.

THE PRESIDENT: Substantial.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A substantial number.

QUESTION: Will the penalty be imprisonment?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There will be broader penalties on people who attempt to interfere, coerce, interfere with or otherwise attempt to coerce people from registering or voting. Those will be criminal penalties.

QUESTION: Will there be any provision in the event that votes are not counted for Federal District Courts to hold up the results of an election?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, there will be a power in the courts to impound all ballots in any such district where people are not permitted to vote, and give them time to vote.

QUESTION: Mr. Attorney General, I may have missed this point, but on the literacy test, are there to be any literacy tests, or what kind of literacy tests, and if they are some of the kind of tests they have been, would that be considered a violation?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, the type of tests there have been. I think the simple ability to read and write is demonstrated by being able to fill out your name and address, and state how long you have been a resident of the state where you live.

QUESTION: Sir, can you tell us what states would come under this automatic triggering device that you have worked out? What states would be eligible?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The states that would come

under it would be Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. It would include a lot of voting districts elsewhere.

QUESTION: Do I understand you correctly, Mr. Attorney General, that upon passage of this law, just to take an example, the registration procedure in Selma would automatically go under the Federal Government?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, it would not automatically go under the Federal Government, but this law would provide what the state could do. If the state registrars then declined to comply with it, a federal official would be appointed to see that the people had a place to register in Selma.

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(THE FOLLOWING IS ON THE RECORD:)

THE PRESIDENT: I should like to observe that the 15 minutes is about up, but at 9:00 o'clock, in Mr. Reedy's office on Monday morning, we plan, and hope, and pray that we will have the message ready for you. If you will be ready for it, there will be a briefing there.

Over the past few weeks, I have determined that we would have a voting rights law this year on about November 15th, and so informed certain members of the Congress and certain Governors of the States. Since that time, I have talked to the Majority and Minority Leader, the chairmen of various committees, the Speaker of the House, and have reviewed with them the highlights of my viewpoint and have asked the Attorney General to go into some detail in connection with the principles that we would have in this bill.

We are very anxious to have Democratic and Republican support. As you know, President Kennedy in the Kennedy-Johnson Administration in 1963, in the civil rights measure that I counseled on and worked on and approved, submitted to the Congress a voting rights section that provided, however, for voting only in Federal elections. That section was deleted in the legislation that finally came to me and, as a result of that deletion, I have felt that we should again approach that subject, but to extend it from Federal elections to both State and local elections. I have talked to the leaders of the Negro organizations in this country and asked for their suggestions, and asked for their counsel. I have talked to various Southern Senators and Southern leaders, including Governors, and generally reviewed with them what I hope to have encompassed in this legislation. Of course, there will be amendments and changes, and extensions and deletions. But I think that our message will go to the Congress Monday. Perhaps the bill will accompany it. If not, it will go there very shortly. We will not only expect the Congress to give fair and just consideration to the Administration bill, which they have been asking for for several days now, but to give consideration to any one suggestion, as they always do. So if you will be back at 9:00 o'clock Monday, we will have a briefing on the details of the message.

We thank you for enduring us this afternoon.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

END

(At 4:30 p.m. EST)

I met today with Governor Wallace of Alabama to discuss the situation that has developed in his State.

The Governor expressed his concern that the demonstrations which have taken place are a threat to the peace and security of the citizens of Alabama.

I expressed my own concern about the need for remedying those grievances which lead to demonstrations by people who feel their rights have been denied. I said that those Negro citizens of Alabama who have systematically been denied the right to register and to participate in the choice of those who govern them, should be provided the opportunity of directing national attention to their plight. They feel they are being denied a very precious right, and I understand their concern.

In his telegram to me, Governor Wallace expressed his belief that all citizens are entitled to exercise the right to vote. I am firmly convinced, as I told the Governor today, that when all of the eligible Negroes of Alabama have been registered, the economic and social injustices they have experienced throughout will be righted and the demonstrations will stop. I advised the Governor of my intention to press with all the vigor of which I am

capable to assure that every citizen of this country is given the right to participate in his government -- at every level -- through the voting process.

The Governor's expressed interest in law and order met with a warm response. We are a nation governed by laws and our procedures for enacting, amending, and repealing them must prevail. I told the Governor we believe in maintaining law and order in every county and precinct in the country. If State and local authorities are unable to function, the Federal government will meet its responsibilities. I told the Governor that the brutality and anarchy in Selma last Sunday must not be repeated. He agreed.

As the Governor had indicated his desire to take actions to remedy the existing situation in Alabama which causes people to demonstrate, I suggested to him that he consider the following actions, which I believed would be constructive:

First, I urged that he publicly declare his support for universal suffrage in the State of Alabama and in the United States.

Second, I urged him to assure that the right of peaceful assembly will be permitted in Alabama so long as law and order is maintained;

Third, I urged the Governor to call a bi-racial meeting when he returns to Montgomery to seek greater cooperation and unity among Americans of both races.

I asked the Governor for his cooperation and expressed my appreciation for his visit.

* * *

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Last Sunday a group of Negro Americans in Selma, Alabama, attempted peacefully to protest the denial of the most basic political right of all -- the right to vote. They were attacked, and some were brutally beaten.

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But the demonstrations in Selma have a larger meaning. They are a protest against a deep and unjust flaw in American democracy itself.

Ninety-five years ago our Constitution was amended to require that no American be denied the right to vote because of race or color. Almost a century later many Americans are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes.

Therefore, this Monday, I will send to the Congress a request for legislation to carry out the command of the Constitution. Wherever there is discrimination this law will strike down all restrictions used to deny the right to vote. It will establish a simple uniform standard which cannot be used, however ingenious the effort, to flaunt the Constitution. And if state officials refuse to cooperate, then citizens

will be registered by federal officials.

This law is not an effort to punish or coerce. Its object is one which no American in his heart can truly reject. It is to give all our people the right to choose their leaders. To deny this right is to deny democracy itself.

What happened in Selma was an American tragedy. The blows that were received, the blood that was shed, the life that was lost, must strengthen our determination to bring justice to all our people.

This is not just the policy of your government or your President. It is the heart and the purpose and the meaning of America.

We all know how complex and difficult it is to bring about basic social change in a democracy. But this complexity must not obscure the clear and simple moral issues. It is wrong to do violence to peaceful citizens in the streets of their town. It is wrong to deny Americans the right to vote. It is wrong to deny any person full equality because of the color of his skin.

The promise of America is a simple promise. Every person shall share in the blessings of this land on the basis of his merits as a person. He shall not be judged by his color or his beliefs, or his religion, by where he was born or the neighborhood in which he lives.

All my life I have seen America move closer toward that goal.

And every step of the way has brought enlarged opportunity for all our people.

Those who do injustice are as surely the victims of their own acts as the people they wrong. They scar their own lives and the communities in which they live. By turning from hatred to understanding they can ensure a richer and fuller life for themselves as well as for their fellows.

For if we put aside disorder and violence, hatred and lawlessness, we can provide, for all our people, opportunity almost beyond imagination.

We will continue the battle for human dignity. We will apply all the resources of government to the task. We will not be moved from the path of justice.

And in this task we will seek the help of that Divine Power which surpasses the petty barriers between man and man, people and people. Under His guidance we can seek the Biblical promise "I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart which shall not be put out." And we will follow that light until all of us have bowed to the command "let there be no strife ... between me and thee for we be brethren. "

PRESS CONFERENCE NO. 30
of the
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

3:45 P.M.
Saturday
March 13, 1965

In The Rose Garden
At The White House
Washington, D. C.

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

This march week has brought a very deep and painful challenge to the unending search for American freedom. That challenge is not yet over, but before it is ended, every resource of this Government will be directed to insuring justice for all men of all races, in Alabama and everywhere in this land. That is the meaning of the oath that I swore before Almighty God when I took the office of the Presidency. That is what I believe in with all of my heart. That is what the people of this country demand.

Last Sunday a group of Negro Americans in Selma, Alabama, attempted peacefully to protest the denial of the most basic political right of all -- the right to vote. They were attacked and some were brutally beaten. From that moment until this, we have acted effectively to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of Selma, and to prevent further violence and lawlessness in this country wherever it occurred. More than 70 United States Government officials, including FBI agents, including Justice Department lawyers, Governor Collins, the Assistant Attorney General, Mr. John Doar, whom I asked to go to Selma, have been continuously present in Selma. They have all been working to keep the peace and to enforce the law.

At all times the full power of the Federal Government has been ready to protect the people of Selma against further lawlessness, but the final answer to this problem will be found not in armed confrontation, but in the process of law. We have acted to bring this conflict from the streets to the court room. Your Government, at my direction, asked the Federal Court in Alabama to order the law officials of Alabama not to interfere with American citizens who are peacefully demonstrating for their constitutional rights. When the court has made its order, it must be obeyed.

The events of last Sunday cannot and will not be repeated, but the demonstrations in Selma have a much larger meaning. They are a protest against a deep and very unjust flaw in American democracy itself. Ninety five years ago our Constitution was amended to require that no American be denied the right to vote because of race, or color. Almost a century later, Americans are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes. Therefore, this Monday I will send to the Congress a request for legislation to carry out the amendment of the Constitution. Wherever there is discrimination, this law will strike down all restrictions used to deny the people the right to vote. It will establish a simple, uniform standard which cannot be used however ingenious the effort to flaunt our Constitution. If State officials refuse to cooperate, then citizens will be registered by Federal officials. This law is not an effort to punish or coerce anyone. Its object is one which no American in his heart can truly reject. It is to give all our people the right to choose their leaders; to deny this right, I think, is to deny democracy itself. What happened in Selma was an American tragedy. The blows that were received, the blood that was shed, the life of the good man that was lost, must strengthen the determination of each of us to bring full and equal and exact justice to all of our people.

This is not just the policy of your Government or your President. It is in the heart and the purpose and the meaning of America itself. We all know how complex and how difficult it is to bring about basic social change in a democracy, but this complexity must not obscure the clear and simple moral issues.

B follows

It is wrong to do violence to peaceful citizens in the streets of their town. It is wrong to deny Americans the right to vote. It is wrong to deny any person full equality because of the color of his skin. The promise of America is a simple promise: Every person shall share in the blessings of this land, and they shall share on the basis of their merits as a person. They shall not be judged by their color or by their beliefs, or by their religion, or by where they were born, or the neighborhood in which they live.

All my life I have seen America move closer toward that goal, and every step of the way has brought enlarged opportunity and more happiness for all of our people. Those who do injustice are as surely the victims of their own acts as the people that they wrong. They scar their own lives and they scar the communities in which they live. By turning from hatred to understanding they can insure a richer and fuller life for themselves, as well as for their fellows. For if we put aside disorder and violence, if we put aside hatred and lawlessness, we can provide for all our people great opportunity almost beyond our imagination.

We will continue this battle of human dignity. We will apply all the resources of this great and powerful government to this task. We ask that all of our citizens unite in this hour of trial. We will not be moved by anyone or anything from the path of justice, and in this task we will seek the help of the Divine Power which surpasses the petty barriers between man and man, and people and people. Under His guidance, we can seek the biblical promise: "I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart which shall not be put out." And we will follow that light until all of us have bowed to that command: Let there be no strife between me and thee, for we be brethren.

I met today with Governor Wallace of Alabama to discuss very thoroughly the situation that exists in that state. The Governor expressed his concern that the demonstrations which have taken place are a threat to the peace and security of the people of Alabama. I expressed my own concern about the need for remedying those grievances which led to the demonstrations by people who feel their rights have been denied. I said that those Negro citizens of Alabama who have systematically been denied the right to register and to participate in the choice of those who govern them should be provided the opportunity of directing national attention to their plight. They feel that they are being denied a very precious right, and I understand their concern. In his telegram last night to me, Governor Wallace expressed his belief that all eligible citizens are entitled to exercise their right to vote. He repeated that belief today, and he stated that he is against any discrimination in that regard. I am firmly convinced, as I said to the Governor a few moments ago, that when all of the eligible Negroes of Alabama have

been registered, the economic and the social injustices they have experienced throughout will be righted, and the demonstrations I believe will stop. I advised the Governor of my intantion to press with all the vigor at my command to assure that every citizen of this country is given the right to participate in his government at every level through the complete voting voting process.

(C follows)

The Governor's expressed interest in law and order met with a warm response. We are a Nation that is governed by laws, and our procedure for enacting and amending and repealing these laws must prevail. I told the Governor that we believe in maintaining law and order in every county and in every precinct in this land. If State and local authorities are unable to function, the Federal Government will completely meet its responsibilities.

I told the Government that the brutality in Selma last Sunday just must not be repeated. He agreed that he abhorred brutality and regretted any instance in which any American citizen met with violence. As the Governor had indicated his desire to take actions to remedy the existing situation in Alabama, which caused people to demonstrate, I respectfully suggested to him that he consider the following actions which I believed and the Attorney General and others familiar with the matter, and associated with me believed, would be highly constructive at this stage of the game.

First, I urged that the Governor publicly declare his support for universal suffrage in the State of Alabama, and the United States of America.

Second, I urged him to assure that the right of peaceful assembly will be permitted in Alabama so long as law and order is maintained.

Third, I expressed the hope that the Governor would call a bi-racial meeting when he returns to Alabama, to seek greater cooperation and to ask for greater unity among Americans of both races.

I asked the Governor for his cooperation and I expressed my appreciation for his coming to Washington to discuss this problem.

Merriman Smith
QUESTION: Mr. President, against the background of what you said, and aside from the situation in Selma, I wonder if you could tell us your general philosophy, your belief in how demonstrators in other parts of the country should conduct themselves? For example, how do you feel about the demonstrations that are going on outside of the White House right now, or in other parts or other cities of the United States and in front of Federal buildings?

THE PRESIDENT: I tried to cover that in my statement, but I believe in the right of peaceful assembling. I believe that people have the right to demonstrate. I think you must be concerned with the rights of others, and I do not think a person as has been said, has the right to holler fire in a crowded theater. But I think that people should have the right to peacefully assemble and to demonstrate their views and to do anything they can to bring those views to the attention of people, provided they do not violate laws themselves and provided they conduct themselves as they should.

Charlie Shutt
QUESTION: Mr. President, did Governor Wallace indicate, sir, at all, an area of understanding and cooperation, except answer of some of your suggestions, to solve this violence there?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to let the Governor speak for himself, he is going to appear tomorrow. We spoke very frankly, and very forthrightly, and we exchanged views, and we are not in agreement on a good many things. I am hopeful that the visit will be helpful and I did my best to make my viewpoint clear. Mr. Comer?

Frank Cormier
 QUESTION: Mr. President, I was going to ask how the Governor reacted.

THE PRESIDENT: The Governor had his share of the conversation. He told me of the problems that he had in Alabama, the fears that he entertained and he expressed the hope that I could do something to help bring the demonstrations to an end. I told him very frankly that I thought our problem, which I had been working on for several weeks now, was to face up to the cause of the demonstrations and remove the cause of the demonstrations, and that I hoped if he would give assurance that people would be protected in their demonstrations in Alabama, he would give assurance that he would try to improve the voting situation in Alabama -- if I do submit my message to the Congress and get prompt action on it -- that would insure the right of the people of Alabama to vote, that I thought that we could improve the demonstration situation.

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Edward P. Morgan

D 1

QUESTION: Mr. President, a two part question on the same subject.

Can you tell us what your thinking is if Governor Wallace would not accept any or all of your suggestions, and, secondly, in accounting from Montgomery that he had asked to see you, he indicated that he was concerned about a threat throughout the country. Do you share that concern?

THE PRESIDENT: I am deeply concerned that our citizens anywhere should be discriminated against and should be denied their constitutional rights. I have plotted my course. I have stated my views. I have made clear whether the Governor agrees or not that law and order will prevail in Alabama, that people will be -- their rights to peacefully assemble will be preserved and that their constitutional rights will be protected.

QUESTION: Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Roberts.

Chuck Roberts

QUESTION: Mr. President, some of the clergymen who came out yesterday reported that you had detected a resurgence among moderates -- a resurgence among the whites in the South. Can you tell us what evidence you have seen of that and perhaps anything that is being done to encourage it?

THE PRESIDENT: The presence of a good many people from the South in Selma, the presence of some of the ministers from the South here, the messages that I have received from the citizens of that area, the support that the businessmen and the clergy and the labor people have given the Civil Rights Act and its enforcement, have all given me strength and encouragement.

Andrew Adams

QUESTION: Mr. President, to turn to the other problem that has occupied so much of your hours in Viet Nam, about five weeks ago, when you felt it necessary to give an order that our wives and children of our men in Viet Nam be withdrawn, a high officer said to me, "Give us a year and they will be back." I have two questions:

First, would you like to see the wives and children of our civilian and military officers in Viet Nam go back; and secondly, do you think that a year is a good prognostication?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think that I can be much of a prophet in either respect. First, I do not think that Saigon is the place for our wives and children of our military people at the moment, or else I wouldn't ask for them to come out. If the situation changes, and conditions are different, I will pass on them in the light of those changes. I think that anyone that makes a prophecy now as to what the situation will be a year from now would have to be a big guesser.

Frank McCloud

QUESTION: Mr. President, sir, I would like to change the subject to another matter. Mr. Otto Otepka, a top security officer in the State Department, faces dismissal for answering the questions of some members of Congress who were investigating the security of the United States. I would like to know if you can't stop this dismissal.

THE PRESIDENT: I have had some conversations with Secretary Rusk concerning that case, and I have complete confidence in the manner in which he will handle it.

John Chances

QUESTION: Mr. President, in the last five weeks the American participation in the situation in South Viet Nam has undergone certain changes. Could you give us your view of any benefits that have accrued to us, or your view of the situation over the past five weeks in South Viet Nam?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have a very difficult situation there as a result of the instability of the governments and the frequent changes of them. I would not say it has improved in the last five weeks. I would say that our policy there is the policy that was established by President Eisenhower, as I have stated, since I have been President, 46 different times, the policy carried on by President Kennedy, and the policy that we are

MORE

now carrying on. I have stated it as recently as February 17th in some detail, and prior to that, in my last press conference, on February 4th. Although the incidents have changed, in some instances the equipment has changed, in some instances the tactics and perhaps the strategy, in a decision or two, has changed.

Our policy is still the same, and that is to any armed attack our forces will reply. To any in Southeast Asia who ask our help in defending their freedom, we are going to give it, and that means we are going to continue to give it. In that region, there is nothing that we covet, there is nothing we seek, there is no territory or no military position or no political ambition. Our one desire and our one determination is that the people of Southeast Asia be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way.

Bill Lawrence
 QUESTION: Mr. President, there was a report published this morning that some Federal troops had already been alerted at your direction for possible move into Alabama. Will you confirm this report?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say that the FBI officials, the Marshals in the general area, the United States forces, including the Armed Forces, were ready to carry out any instructions that the President gave them, and the President was prepared to give them any instructions that were necessary and justified and wise.

Bob Pierpan
 QUESTION: Mr. President, I wonder if you could tell us your reaction to the pressures that have been mounting around the world for you to negotiate the situation in Viet Nam. Could you explain to us under what conditions you might be willing to negotiate a settlement there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, since the Geneva conference of 1962, as has been stated before, the United States has been in rather active and continuous consultation. We have talked to other governments about the great danger that we could foresee in this aggression in Southeast Asia. We have discussed it in the United Nations. We have discussed it in NATO. We have discussed it in the SEATO councils. On innumerable occasions we have discussed it directly through diplomatic channels. We have had direct discussions with almost every signatory of the 1954 and 1962 pacts.

We have not had any indication, and as the Secretary of State said the other day, what is still missing is any indication -- any indication -- from anyone -- that Hanoi is prepared or willing or ready to stop doing what it is doing against its neighbors. I think that the absence of this crucial element affects the current discussion of negotiation. A great friend of mine who had great responsibilities for a long period of military and executive life in our government said to me the other day, "When I see the suggestions about negotiation, I wonder if folks don't recognize that there must be someone to negotiate with, and there must be someone willing to negotiate."

E follows

Donna F. Hanson

QUESTION: I said, sir, that the events in Selma occurred last Sunday, and I asked why you waited to have a press conference and make a statement until late Saturday afternoon?

THE PRESIDENT: I know of nothing that either required or justified my making a statement prior to the time that I had a recommendation to make on the problem that was facing us, namely, they were demonstrating about voting rights, and I had that message delivered to me only a few hours ago. I have reviewed it, and I am in general agreement on what I am going to send to the Congress. It happened that I had time this afternoon to review it, and I had the information that was available to me.

I think the President should have some leeway when he determines to have press conferences. I have had 46 since I have been President. I plan to have at least one a month. But the President will determine when they are held, where they are held, and what subjects he discusses.

Jennie Stearns

QUESTION: Mr. President, I understand that there has been some violence in the Youth Camps, Youth Corps Camps, or Job Corps, and that involved a knifing, and there have been one or more deaths as a result of that.

THE PRESIDENT: I just went to Camp Catoctin last week to build up the morale in the camp, and give them public confidence. I visited the camp last week because I had agreed to some time ago, and I had been forced to cancel one planned visit. I want to visit a good many of their camps. We all deeply regret any accident or any violence or any injuries that may occur at any time. That is not any reason, though, or rather that is not the sole reason I should be interested in what they are doing. I hope my visits will help me to better understand their work, perhaps to stimulate some of them, and maybe improve on what is being done.

I should like to ask you to stay here for another 10 or 15 minutes for the Attorney General to give you a very brief briefing on the high points of this message, and if you will do that for 15 minutes, he will be here longer, as Mr. Moyers will, but at the conclusion of 15 minutes I hope that Mr. Reedy will tell tell you, and any of you that need to rush away to meet your deadlines can do so.

(Time: 4:20 PM)

(MORE FOLLOWS)

I met today with Governor Wallace of Alabama to discuss the situation that has developed in his State.

The Governor expressed his concern that the demonstrations which have taken place are a threat to the peace and security of the citizens of Alabama.

I expressed my own concern about the need for remedying those grievances which lead to demonstrations by people who feel their rights have been denied. I said that those Negro citizens of Alabama who have systematically been denied the right

to register and to participate in the choice of those who govern them, should be provided the opportunity of directing national attention to their plight. They feel they are being denied a very precious right, and I understand their concern.

In his telegram to me, Governor Wallace expressed his belief that all eligible citizens are entitled to exercise the right to vote. He repeated that belief today and stated that he is against discrimination in that regard. I am firmly

convinced, as I told the Governor today, that when all of the eligible Negroes of Alabama have been registered, the economic and social injustices they have experienced throughout will be righted and the demonstrations will stop. I advised the Governor of my intention to press with all the vigor of which I am capable to assure that every citizen of this country is given the right to participate in his government -- at every level -- through the

voting process.

The Governor's expressed interest in law and order met with a warm response. We are a nation governed by laws and our procedures for enacting amending, and repealing them must prevail. I told the Governor we believe in maintaining law and order in every county and precinct in the country. If State and local authorities are unable to function the Federal government will meet its responsibilities.

☐ I told the Governor that the brutality in Selma last

Sunday must not be repeated. He agreed that he abhorred brutality and regretted any incidents in which any American citizen met with violence.

As the Governor had indicated his desire to take actions to remedy the existing situation in Alabama which causes people to demonstrate, I suggested to him that he consider the following actions, which I believed would be constructive:

First, I urged that he publicly declare his support for universal suffrage in the State of

Alabama and in the United States.

Second, I urged him to assure that the right of peaceful assembly will be permitted in Alabama so long as law and order is maintained;

Third, I urged the Governor to call a bi-racial meeting when he returns to Montgomery to seek greater cooperation and unity among Americans of both races.

I asked the Governor for his cooperation and expressed my appreciation for his visit.

THE PRESIDENT

March 13, 1965

Lee C. White

Points to Consider in Connection With the Wallace Meeting

1. Elimination of Demonstrations -- The right of petition, guaranteed by the Constitution assures American citizens of the right to make known their grievances and to assemble peaceably. In fact, the type of demonstration which Dr. King has used is nonviolent, as distinguished from the riots that occurred in Harlem, Rochester, Paterson, N. J., Chester, Pa., etc. We had a march on Washington in August 1963 with a quarter of a million people and not a single untoward incident. The right is not unrestricted or unqualified and any reasonable restrictions to protect the safety and welfare of the general public would probably not violate the Constitution and would be understood and ~~on~~ accepted by the American people.
2. Law and Order -- The Governor's interest in law and order is shared here. The President has made this clear on countless occasions, the most recent being his statement on the Selma situation last Tuesday. He sent a whole message to Congress on the subject of law enforcement only last Monday. But law enforcement involves behaviour that is acceptable generally and the use of appropriate and acceptable force to maintain the peace. There would be no current crisis if the Alabama troopers had merely ~~showered~~ ~~th~~ barred the path of those who sought to march. The horses, the whips, the clubs, and the tear gas was what shocked and aroused the American public. It was the television films of these tactics which circulated around the world to our nation's great detriment.
3. Federalizing the National Guard -- This will present some difficulties if he formally requests you to federalize the Guard and take over law enforcement responsibilities in the State. Although there are good reasons for not doing that: once having started it will be very difficult to withdraw; anything that goes wrong is the Federal Government's responsibility. Nevertheless, the public posture would be terribly awkward if Wallace concedes that he is incapable of controlling the situation and requests the Federal Government to do it. I am now trying to find out what past precedents there are and will get the information as quickly as possible.
4. What can Wallace Do to Help -- His request for a meeting and his visit here has highlighted his personal responsibility, which I believe is

all to the good. Assuming he is sincere, he can issue a statement indicating general support for our American system of universal suffrage and provide assurances that the right of peaceful assembly will be permitted in Alabama where there is State jurisdiction so long as there is concern for the safety and well-being of all of the citizens of Alabama, both white and Negro, and so long as law and order is maintained. I don't know that he could ever apologize, but if he were able to express remorse over the death of Rev. Reeb and those who were injured on Sunday, that would go a long way toward draining some of the tension out of the situation. Another thing that Wallace could do is meet with the Negro leadership when he returns to Montgomery; even if there is no hope of his doing that (and frankly, I think it would be a good idea on his part), you may wish to recommend it to him anyway so that subsequently you can always claim that you urged that course of action upon him.

5. Presidential Attitude -- Despite the intense and increasing pressure on the Federal Government to do something, the President has refused to panic and send troops to Alabama and to invade it. It is a step that will be taken if necessary, but it is perfectly obvious that it is ⁱⁿ one that the President would make only "as a last resort", but he must have assistance and cooperation from Alabama if we are to avert almost a civilian invasion. If the mood of the country is accurately gauged, the potential danger is immense.

6. What Happens when Wallace Leaves the White House -- Undoubtedly he will meet the press as he leaves and will make a statement. You may wish to discuss with him any statement he might make in which he could indicate that it had been approved by you. If, however, the meeting has gone badly and it is clear that he is about to go out and launch an attack on you or say anything else irresponsible, it may be well to be prepared with your statement for release by George Reedy almost immediately after Wallace's departure.

DRAFT OF PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT (or WHITE HOUSE)

I met today with Governor Wallace of Alabama to discuss the tense situation that has developed in his State.

The Governor expressed his concern about the demonstrations that have taken place which, in his view, threatened the peace and security of the State of Alabama and its citizens. I expressed my own concern that every effort be made by state and local leaders to take necessary actions to relieve the tension that exists in certain areas of Alabama and pledged that the Federal Government would play its proper role in restoring tranquility and peace to the people of Alabama.

I pointed out to the Governor that the Constitution of the United States assures to the citizens of this country the right to assemble peaceably and to petition their Government for a redress of grievances. This right, of course, is not unlimited or unqualified and, in my view, reasonable limitations may be imposed on this Constitutional right in the protection of the safety and well-being of the general population. Nevertheless, those Negro citizens of Alabama who have systematically been denied the right to register and to participate in the choice of those who govern them should certainly be provided the opportunity of directing local, state and national ~~tax~~ attention to their plight. My own personal commitment and the commitment of my Administration to achieving this right is, I believe,

well known. In Governor Wallace's telegram to me, he expressed his belief that all citizens are entitled to exercise the right to vote. I am firmly convinced that when that day comes -- and I hope it will not be far distant -- when all of the eligible Negroes of Alabama have been registered, many of the economic and social injustices they have experienced throughout the centuries will be righted. I advised the Governor of my intention to press with all of the vigor of which I am capable to assure that all citizens of this country will be given the right to participate in their government through the voting process.

The Governor's expressed interest in law and order met with a warm response here. We are a nation governed by laws and our procedures for enacting, amending and repealing them must prevail if we are to escape anarchy. I pointed out that I have called for law and order on countless occasions, the two most recent being my statement last Tuesday on the Selma situation and my message to Congress of last Monday on law enforcement and the administration of justice. However, I made perfectly clear to the Governor that I recognize the obligation to use appropriate and acceptable force to maintain the peace. The television film of the events of last Sunday in Selma with State Troopers mounted on horses, wielding clubs and whips and using tear gas against unarmed and peaceful marchers cannot, in my judgment, be described

as proper law enforcement. The brutality, the excessive force have damaged not only Alabama but this nation. Barbarous actions of this type have no place anywhere in the world today and certainly not in the United States.

Assuming that the Governor was sincere in his statement that he wished to take actions to remedy the existing situation, I suggested to him that he could consider the following actions which I believed would be constructive: First, I urged that he issue a statement expressing general support for universal suffrage in the State of Alabama and in the United States. Second, I urged him to provide assurances that the right of peaceful assembly will be permitted in Alabama so long as there is adequate protection for the safety and well-being of all of the citizens of Alabama, both white and Negro and so long as law and order is maintained. Third, I urged the Governor to meet with the Negro leadership upon his return to Montgomery and to attempt to work with local officials.

I indicated to the Governor that the Federal Government would meet its responsibilities. As reluctant as I, and any other occupant of this office, would be to send Federal troops into any state, I made it crystal clear that if in my judgment such action is required to preserve law and order I would meet my constitutional responsibilities by appropriate action.

I asked the Governor for his cooperation and I sincerely hope it will be forthcoming. But with it or without it, my responsibilities are clear and they will be met.

Draft 1 (GER) 1203 Mar 13, 1965
on accusation
of riot by
Gov. Wallace of Ala

I told Governor Wallace that there are many issues involved in the current dispute but the one over-riding issue is that this is a government of law and order and the laws must be enforced equally where all of our people are concerned.

As Governor of Alabama he has responsibilities to the people of his state and I do not and did not presume to lecture him on his responsibilities. But as President of the United States I have my responsibilities and I am going to meet all of them fully and completely within the limits of whatever wisdom I have and whatever strength I have.

This is a nation where people are entitled to proceed about their business without fear of intimidation and physical violence. This is a nation where people are entitled to assemble and make known their grievances without intimidation and without coercion. This is a nation of free men and free men do not have to live in fear.

As for myself, I am going to enforce all of the laws equally. If the present laws are inadequate to guarantee free men the protection they should have, I am going to ask for more laws. But whatever may be the situation we are not going to permit the bull whip and the cattle prod to displace the evenly balanced scales as the symbol of justice.

1st Draft - B. Mayers
March 13, 1964

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~~and anarchy~~ in Selma last Sunday must not be repeated.

He agreed.

That he abhorred brutality and repelled any incidents of violence in which any American citizen has suffered met with violence.

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