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7/30/80

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
<del>letter</del>	<del>John Steinbeck to Secretary McNamara (CONFIDENTIAL)</del>	<del>5/30/??</del> <i>Apr 12/10/80</i>	<del>A</del>
memo	Robert Kintner to the President with attached letter from Steinbeck to Kintner and attached letters from John Steinbeck, Jr. to his father, John Steinbeck <i>Sanitized 12-10-80</i>	8/31/66	C

## FILE LOCATION

White House Famous Names  
Steinbeck, John

## RESTRICTION CODES

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THE WHITE HOUSE

DEC 4 3 43 PM '63

JOHN STEINBECK  
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

November 27, 1963  
RECEIVED 963

Warsaw

President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Dear Mr. President:

May I offer my profound respect and loyalty to you in the hard days ahead. Our shock and sorrow are very great but we know the office is in strong trained and competent hands. Our hearts are with you.

At the request of President Kennedy my wife and I have been moving about behind the iron curtain, talking with writers and with students. Being non-diplomatic, we have been able to observe many things not ordinarily available. And if these experiences could be of value to you, they are freely offered. Some of them are highly unorthodox.

I have never met you but I have a curious tie with you. When my wife was in college in Austin, one of her class mates was a boy named John Connally who said - "Go on into the theatre in New York but as for me, I'm going into politics. There's a man named Lyndon Johnson and I'm going along with him. He's going places." I wonder whether he would remember. Her name was Elaine Anderson - later Mrs Zachary Scott - now Mrs. John Steinbeck.

We think it best to go on with the plan laid down although our hearts are heavy, but we hasten to offer anything we have to our President.

Yours very sincerely  
John Steinbeck

SERVICE SET

Mr. John Steinbeck wrote this on departure  
after being a houseguest at the WH  
Wed, May 10, 1967

Juanita:

*searched  
attached*

Seriously, I do feel it is important --  
historically -- to know the subject of  
the discussion between the President  
and Mr. Steinbeck.

Doesn't Mr. Valenti still have some of  
the Steinbeck letters that were sent to  
him for the President??

dt

*I believe  
so. He says not  
but says he will continue  
to look, that they are not  
yet unpacked in new house.*



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President;

Thank  
you for hearing us.

I, or rather we, are going  
back to our cabbage.

I hope you will  
seriously consider the  
subject discussed this  
morning. It could have  
a profound effect, I  
am convinced.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

As you must know,  
Elaine and I are at  
your service.

Very sincerely, sir  
John F. Kennedy

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*The President*

*from  
John Stemke* —

JOHN STEINBECK  
190 East Seventy-second Street, New York 21, N. Y.

May 18, 1964

Dear Mr. President:

I thank you for the photograph you so graciously sent me. Unpopular, though it may be, I believe with Plutarch and Marcus Aurelius, that just as vice and dishonesty are communicable, so does greatness rub off a little through association.

Your picture will go up in a place of honor as a reminder to me and to my sons that the American dream is not a myth that a lonesome and perhaps a confused little boy from the Texas hills can and has become President through his own efforts.

I come, Sir, from much the same background as you, cattlemen from the dry and treacherous hills of Northern California. Land-poor we were called. Do you have that expression? But we were also land-related and land-proud. Also we were horsemen almost from birth, and that gives a man a kind of humble pride he never loses. And one of our prides is to pay our debts, even those debts of courtesy where no payment is required.

I have written many speeches, but I have delivered only one, my first and last. I spoke it on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

It is my pleasure, Sir, to offer it to you and to Mrs. Johnson with the respect and admiration of

John and Elaine Steinbeck

SERVICE SET



5-3-67 130P  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Dear Mr. Secretary:

*5/30 To the President  
John Steinbeck asked that  
this copy of his message to me  
be sent to you. Bob M. Vener*

This is the tape I spoke of the other day, and I wouldn't do this to you. I would write it in a letter except I have a bursitic shoulder that hurts like hell, and I find difficulty in using either a typewriter or a pencil at the present time. But I will speak as clearly as I can and you are at liberty to use this tape in any way you want privately -- what I mean is non-commercially.

Let me begin by discussing what we spoke of the other day, and for the purposes of this tape, refer to it as Plan B Annex. But first let me go into the semantic difficulties we have got into. For some reason people fall in love with one word, and that word now is escalation. The increase of troops in Vietnam is causing restiveness, but the word escalation is causing even more. I have never seen it printed or stated that turnover of troops is to a certain extent responsible for the large draft calls and this is not escalation, this is replacement. I don't know how many hundred thousands come back every year, but it must be at least 200,000. These are replacements, not escalation, and as far as I know, there has never been any notice taken of the difference between increased numbers of troops and replacement of troops already there.

Now we can go on to the Plan B Annex. Two things are rather unfortunate. One is the new -- if the paper is to be believed -- call on the part of General Westmoreland for 300,000 more troops. And the other is the use of rockets on the Saigon area bases. It seems to me that on the credit side we have the turning over of the RD process to the military and that the military would do it better, but at least it won't be a matter of argument. Now to get back to the Plan B Annex, the sudden unannounced and unexplained cessation of the bombing north of the 17th parallel, with the exception of those communications trails and logistic trails which are being used for the movement of goods. It will be said, of course, that it is done out of fear of the threats that have been made and there's nothing wrong with letting that be said. I do have one idea that might be very effective. You remember, sir, the long discussion about Hiroshima. That it would have been better to drop the bomb on a desert place. I think we could utilize this very nicely. My suggestion is that we do a normal bomb run, but that we pick a place if possible within sight or hearing of Hanoi -- of the Hanoi complex. I haven't flown over the area, so I don't know what it would be. A mountain would be excellent -- but an uninhabited place where we could throw everything we had at it with 52s -- a very small area with the heaviest high explosives. No napalm, just high explosives. Throw it at a small area, saturate it, pinpoint it, and stop. No explanation whatever. But just to give an idea of the amount of pressure that could be brought on a given area if we wanted to. And at the termination of that run, and it should be massive, it should cut deep, then stop. The pressure on the South should, if possible, be increased. General Walt should have as many troops as he needs to turn back attacks out of the DMZ, but should be ordered not to go into the DMZ and not to invade the North, not even to chase back any battalions assaulting -- over the line, that is. Both air and ground pressure south of the DMZ should be increased. Any even suspected concentration should

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By lin, NARS, Date 12/8/80

SERVICE SET



be bombed, but there should also be a psychological warfare included. This might consist of loudspeakers or pamphlets directed at NVN units, Hanoi units, telling them they might soon be able to go home. Because, believe me, homesickness is rampant there. The pressure on the VC should be constant, consistent, and unrelenting. But if possible, if there were any possibility of opening retreat corridors or encouraging retreat from the NVN back to the North, this should be undertaken. And it should be suggested, even if they didn't accept it -- that if they wanted to go home, the ways were open. If they wanted to come over, that way was open. This, of course, is aimed at splitting the two. There's jealousy there already and this giving preferential treatment to the North might split it even more. It might also draw the criticism of the troops on their own central government. If we can indicate that something is going on for their benefit and it doesn't happen, they won't like the organization stopping it happening, and that organization, we can indicate, is the Hanoi government. The President asked the other morning how long I guessed that the ceased bombing north of the 17th should go on before there should be some reaction. I have no way of knowing, but if the surveillance aircraft were over constantly, I think it would be aware fairly soon of what was about to happen. I would anticipate that it would take about three days for them to get the idea that the bombing had stopped, and it would be very interesting to see if they would announce it, that it had stopped. I estimate without particular grounds two weeks should be a kind of a deadline, but I don't think I would resume the bombing at the end of two weeks. I think I would throw another pinpointed 52 strike a little closer, and then stop again and wait. We have nothing to lose by this cessation, and the argument they will bring up a great many supplies, while it is perfectly valid, doesn't mean that the advantages to be gained in a world sense and in a domestic sense here would not be far more effective and valuable than the few targets we would be destroying. Also, if we find that trucks are moving over the trails on surveillance, a sudden strike at the end of two weeks would eliminate them and we could stop again. I do not think the bombing close to the city is either frightening them or is it bringing them around. The only thing that will bring them around is uncertainty and I know this because I've been in areas where the pressure was very great. It is changing pressure that destroys people, not constant pressure. Two or three weeks of immunity from air attack and people would change their lives back -- would live more casually. That and to be dragged back would be much more shattering than continuous bombing. Our own attitude toward questioning -- I mean our government attitude, the President, yourself, Secretary Rusk, should be "no comment," but the implication that comment or interference at this time might injure a process which had started. You don't have to say it. Just say -- no comment -- that when there is something to announce, it will be announced. And if there is any venom left, it could be said that everything so far has been talked to death and columned to death. This time, try to work it out. As for the loss of face, loss of dignity, that can be forgotten. A saved face and a disaster don't go together. And we don't need to worry about saving face or saving dignity. I think everyone in the world knows our potential of power, but how we use it will be how it's judged -- whether we use it privily or intelligently. For example, I would suggest that we put ourselves in the state of mind, or the imaginal state of mind that processes of negotiation were actually starting. That we had made contact which was not only possible but probable. With this state of mind, I think our conduct would indicate that -- that there would be a kind of a jubilation underneath it, if that's possible. I'm not expecting acting from people, but I know of nothing more pregnant than "no



comment" when obviously there is something going on. And it might even put the pressure on the other side. I do hope that this plan or something like it will be tried. Certainly what we are doing is not succeeding, and it seems to me that anyone who presses a process which is not succeeding, is pressing his luck, and we've pressed ours pretty hard now. Actually I think you would have to do very little. The imaginations of the correspondents would do even more than you could accomplish. But there are certain things that could be done. A British ship was supposed to have been hit by our bombers the other day, but testimony showed that a Chinese ship in Haiphong harbor had opened fire with heavy caliber machine guns and had hit the British ship. It might be just as well to warn -- or to suggest to the Russian government that sooner or later they are going to turn loose on a Russian ship, and blame the bombing. But there's not going to be any bombing for this next time.

And so the mine matter that I spoke of might come into being, a warning that mines were being laid or were contemplated being laid by the Peking government in the Haiphong harbor. If they haven't done it already, they will. And if they don't, we should. But if the warning comes before any explosion, at least we have an out. Furthermore, I should let that warning leak to the newspapers. I hope that discipline on a high military level is complete. What juniors talk about and leak and distribute doesn't matter a bit as long as the chiefs know what is going on and why it is going on and will enforce their own secrecy about it. Meanwhile I should encourage, or even initiate, every kind of speculation from all over the world about what is going on because many times people are forced into a position because it is expected of them.

Now I'll go on to some of the other small and dirty weapons that I have suggested in the past which have not been used but seem to me might be highly valuable. The first we spoke of, which is the reloading of small arms cartridges with high explosives -- dynamite, TNT, whatever we have -- captured ammunition, standard Chinese ammunition and anything that we found -- leaving it around, or leaving it on bodies. The same thing can be done with grenades with a fuze clipped so that they explode when the pin is pulled. And the same can be done with mortars, mortar shells. Now I believe that our mortars are 81s, are they not? --- are used in the enemy's tubes -- that they have an 82 mm tube which takes an 81 mm mortar. What would be wrong with letting them capture a few 81 mortar shells which have been fixed to detonate on impact with the propellant. It would take out a crew, and they would be rather chary of using any of our material again. Well enough done, it would be very hard to detect which one was tampered and which one wasn't. Since I don't think we would possibly use any ammunition picked up in the field, it would be of no danger to our own people. But they have used captured weapons ammunition from the beginning. I am not advocating filling small arms fire from our weapons with TNT -- only the standard Chinese shell. I have forgotten exactly the caliber, but it is 7 point something, I believe.

I have another psy war approach which I think might be very effective. As you know, sir, the North and the Viet Cong are badly hurt in a medical sense. The incidence of polidismo is high, meningitis, and difficulty from infection is very high. Loss from infected wounds is not only high, but discouraging.



The Vietnamese is no more proof against the mosquito than we are and he doesn't have the medicine to cure it, or to work on it. I suggest then that you look at the packaging of American drugs -- the drugs that are packaged in aluminum foil. I propose that you package not only atabrine or quinine, remedies for fever, but penicillins and various other immediately needed drugs. Let the foil in which the drugs are protected carry the message, and at least one thing should be said -- "You'll be told this is poison. If you believe that, try it on the cat, and then give it to your friends." It would be a gift, and I swear to you they would pick that one up. The penicillin could be either a jelly, the way they serve catsup in restaurants now, or it could be a powder, but protected by the foil from moisture and disintegration through the elements. These could be dropped from high altitude, their shine would make them easily discovered, and believe me, they would be picked up. Whatever propaganda message you want could be printed on the outside of them, and they would stay with people until they were used. Furthermore, evidence of them is hard to cover up unless you bury them. You can't destroy them.

During the last world war, I designed a method of drops to the partisans in Norway, Denmark, some of France of combining blocks of TNT for sabotage of railways and so forth with instructions, and combining it with chocolate which people needed terribly and wanted terribly. A man who would not pick up and wanted no part of a detonating device would certainly pick up something that had chocolate in it. There must be something parallel now, and while they don't need detonation, they do need medicine, and they will pick up anything that will help them and they will read it. Just picking up propaganda leaflets -- and some of them have been pretty inept -- I've seen them -- is not enough. The messages now, I think should be -- come over, or go home, the war is over, the war is nearly over, you're wasting your time, you're being "had", the bosses are fighting among themselves -- who's going to win and what will you get out of it? But combining your propaganda message with something useful or usable, concentrated food, cigarettes, anything, any little thing that combines the message with something that could be used or needed by the person picking it up will distribute your propaganda things far better than they are being distributed now.

The next matter is a repetition of a thing I spoke to you about and that is the use of Chu Hoi or VC who either come over or are captured to do the thing they are already doing. I know the complaints that come from these truly professional people who are put to work at something they know nothing about and have no interest in -- rock piles, quarries, road work -- they're good soldiers, and they are damned good soldiers, and I'm quite sure they would do as good a job for us as they do for the other side if we made it worth their while. I see no reason not to use them for that. What breaks their hearts is to make them do something they are not equipped to do and have no pride in. I think it would be almost a top priority to screen the experts and send them back to do our work. If we lost some, what difference does it make? And we might gain some very valuable ones. I think the loyalties to people and ideas now are wearing very thin. But the loyalty to country and family have not been touched and will not be touched. The propaganda then should attempt to split the man and his ideology and his leaders -- but not to try to split him from his loyalty to his own country and to his own family. These should be encouraged -- no attempt made to interfere with them. But there should be instilled a worry and a distrust of the leadership and the ideology and the future.



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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I think that's just about all now, sir, that I can think of. I do hope you listen with favor to this suggestion. I am convinced it would make a great difference and I should like very much to know what your feeling about it is if you can tell me. I shall go next Tuesday to Sag Harbor on the end of Long Island where I will be available by mail at the post office there or by telephone at the number Sag Harbor 5-0997. It seems to be true that I am trying to get into the act. I'm not. I want this war over with. I don't want a job. I would do any job to help get it over, but I don't want a job, and I don't want to get in the act. As a matter of fact, I want all of us to get out of it as soon as possible, but I would be pleased to hear your reaction to these suggestions. There may be flaws in them that I haven't foreseen -- there undoubtedly are, but some of them are better than what is being done. I do think one thing: that the placing of the large part of the command, both civilian and military, in the hands of General Westmoreland and the military officers, will give you a better control of the distribution of news and control over what seems to me to be irresponsible work of the press in Vietnam, and a great deal of it is irresponsible. That is one advantage there.

I think that's all, sir. I'm up at Tarrytown now at the National Arts Council thing, and Roger Stevens is going back to Washington on Monday and will see that this is put in your hands. I shall be delighted to hear from you, and if there's anything I can do, believe me I'm open to absolutely anything, but I do not want a job -- I do not. However, it was good seeing you, and I'm glad you didn't find me in Linda's room. You and my wife would have taken a dim view of that. Thank you very much for listening, and you may use this material in any way you see fit. You ought to let the President hear it, see it, or do anything you want. And Secretary Rusk who has been, it seems to me, very open and imaginative. And I hope that we can all be alive to a certain versatility now because we need a versatility. We cannot go down an alley. We've got to improvise now. We have to improve, and if I can help in the improvisation, I'll be very glad to. Thank you very much, sir. This is

John Steinbeck

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SERVICE SET

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# THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

*The Viking Press • New York • 1961*

JOHN  
STEINBECK

This first edition of

**THE  
WINTER  
OF OUR  
DISCONTENT**

limited to 500 copies  
has been specially printed and bound  
for friends of the author and the publishers



For  
President and Mrs.  
Lyndon B. Johnson  
with many thanks  
for grace and hospitality

We are so glad you  
are there!

John Stuntz

Feb 27, 1964



July 1, 1944

TO: (Cont'd)

TO: (Cont'd)

Mr. Walter Disney  
500 South Buena Vista Street  
Burbank, California

Professor J. Frank Dobie  
702 Park Place, New York  
Austin 5, Texas

Dr. Lena F. Edwards

Hereford, Texas

Mr. John W. Gardner  
119 Brite Avenue  
Scarsdale, New York

The Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh  
President  
Notre Dame University  
Corby Hall  
Notre Dame, Indiana

Mr. Clarence (Kelly) Johnson  
16801 Oak View Drive  
Encino, California

Mr. Frederick Kappel  
17 Hewitt Avenue  
Bronxville, New York

Miss Helen Keller  
Arcon Ridge  
Route 1  
Westport, Connecticut

Mr. John L. Lewis  
614 Oronoco Street  
Alexandria, Virginia  
Washington, D. C.

Mr. Walter Lippmann  
Box 250  
Southwest Harbor, Maine  
Greenwich, Connecticut

Mr. Alfred Lunt and Miss Lynn Fontanne  
Genesee Depot, Wisconsin  
115 Juniper Road

Mr. Ralph E. McGill  
3399 Piedmont Road  
Atlanta, Georgia

Mr. Lewis Mumford  
Amenia, New York

Honorable Edward R. Murrow  
Pawling, New York

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr  
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Miss Leontyne Price  
c/o Mr. Hubert Dilworth  
1133 Broadway  
New York, New York

Mr. A. Philip Randolph  
230 West 150th Street  
New York, New York

SERVICE SET

July 1, 1964

TO: (Cont'd)

Mr. Carl Sandburg  
Flat Rock, North Carolina

Mr. John Steinbeck  
Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York

Dr. Helen B. Taussig  
1100 Hollins Lane  
Baltimore, Maryland

Rear Admiral Samuel Elliot Morison  
Somerset Club  
48 Beacon Street  
Boston, Massachusetts

Honorable Carl Vinson  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Mr. Thomas J. Watson, Jr.  
Meadowcroft Lane  
Greenwich, Connecticut

Dr. Paul Dudley White  
115 Juniper Road  
Belmont, Massachusetts

Mr. Robert  
Mr. Holbrook  
Honorable M. Vucelja

SERVICE SET



Dear Jack:

To begin I think you came through the V. Woolf crisis brilliantly. It can't ever be that tough again. It's got to get easier. You know you have a young man working for you name of Peter Stabell who married Susan Loesser, Frank Loesser's daughter. I dandled her on my knee as a baby and she bit me pretty often. But he is a very good and smart young man and should be an asset to you.

Thank you for taking my letter to the President. I had a lovely reply from him. He is a thoughtful and a courteous man.

Jack, I am worried about the bad propaganda against us due to the bombing. I have just answered Yevtushenko's poem to me. I enclose a copy of my answer. It goes on all the wire services tonight but one never knows how much the paper will print. So I send you a copy.

Also I have an idea which might help to neutralize our bad publicity. Maybe you will tell it to the President for his consideration. It is all very well to talk about negotiation but it is also vague. I think the President should appoint a commission of well-known and respected men - Americans, Australians, and a number from each of our allies. This commission should be empowered to negotiate. An office should be opened in Geneva with an active phone 24 hours a day. That commission would be there ready and instructed to receive any lead of any kind to talk. This thing should be done with a full blast of publicity, not just once but kept alive. The commission should advise N. Vietnam that it is ready and waiting and that on the first move in good faith, the bombing will stop. I think such an action would do much to overcome the really dreadful black eye we are getting. Putting it in Geneva would be very important. English, French, and Scandinavian and other observers should be invited to observe and to offer suggestions and help.

Does that make sense, Jack. It is something active, something the newsmen could get their teeth into.

You know I do miss our old association.

Yours,

John *Stembeck*



July 1966

SERVICE SET

The President called Mr. Steinbeck

December 4, 1966

mf



Mr. Steinbeck in California, but not  
at his telephone. We left word.

mf  
12-2-66  
3:30p

Let's get him on the phone if he hasn't  
already left. If he has, let's write him.

LBJ/mf  
12-2-66  
12:05p

*Austin  
12-2-66  
10:30*

*See 1*  
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Wednesday, November 30, 1966  
5:45 p. m.

FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Bill Moyers

⑥

JOHN STEINBECK

190 East Seventy-second Street, New York, N. Y. 10021

November 28, 1966

Dear Mr. Pundant:

I am sorry not to be able to attend the dinner for the Arts Council, but as of November 1, we take off for East Asia on a long and, I hope, a rewarding trip starting in Saigon. There we will see my young son John, and in California we will see my older son Thom who is now in the army and in training at Ft Ord. And, since I have now reactivated my old war correspondent's card, we are all involved, and that's as it should be.

My compliments, as and our love to you and to your family. And if I can be of service to you or to the nation, it is offered with a whole heart

Yours  
John Steinbeck

SERVICE SET



Rec'd  
2/10/67  
3:25P

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 10, 1967

TO: Juanita Roberts

FROM: John Roche

For the President's files.

*Letter from*  
*John Steinbeck*  
Attachment

Saigon 18 January 1967

Dear Mr. President:

I have been in Vietnam about six weeks now, and most of that time I have spent in the field with our troops of all branches as well as with some of the allied forces. From north to south I have been on every outpost, have flown with the Air Cavalry, with Forward Air Control, with 1st Cav units. In fact I went in with the first strike of operations Thursday 11 although I have not written about that since the operation is not completed.

I think I know our men very well now for I have lived with them and have been shot at with them.

I know, Mr. President, that you get many reports through your official channels of information. But I do want to tell you by this completely unofficial means, that we have here the finest, the best trained, the most intelligent and the most dedicated soldiers I have ever seen in any army and I have seen soldiers in my time. These men are the best we have ever had.

In addition to fighting, they have taken on the duty of pacification and repair simultaneously and that is a new thing in the world. It seems to me that our Clamancy is finally dead. He said, you remember, that war is an extension of politics. Now we have discovered and are putting in practice a new dimension - that politics is an extension of war. And this policy is being implemented by American soldiers. They make me very proud to be an American and I know they must make you very proud to be their Commander in Chief. The restrictions placed on them in carrying the war to the enemy must be and are getting to our soldiers. But they obey. I hope, sir, that in the near future you may find occasion to celebrate these men, to give verbal evidence of our love for them and our

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pride in them. They deserve it and I well know that you feel it.

I am going out to Bangkok now to see Thailand and Laos and if I am permitted to enter, to see Cambodia. After that I want to look at the other peripheral countries, Indonesia, Malaya, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and Japan. Our future is closely tied to these nations and I want to know about them. Meanwhile, if any definite change takes place, I shall return to Saigon. I have made arrangements to be notified.

I shall take this letter to Bangkok with me and will ask our ambassador there to put it in the pouch for you.

If you have anything in mind that I can do for you, I can be reached either through the embassy at Bangkok or at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok.

Yours with all respect.  
John Steinbeck

P.S. Elaine is with me. She is a real trooper and a proper descendant of the frontier. I am very proud of her also.

Please give our love to Bird, and to yourself our affection as always.



# OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

INDICATE: ☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

1 3 4 7 9 0

51

Origin

55

Info:

ACTION: Amembassy BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

FEB 10 3 08 PM '67

STATE 134790

LIMDIS

Please deliver following Presidential message to John  
Steinbeck:

BEGIN TEXT

Dear John:

You cannot know how moved I was by your letter of January  
18. I am deeply grateful to you for your brilliant and evocative  
description of the idealism of our men in Viet-Nam.

And I must add that in you they have found a chronicler worthy  
of their gallantry and dedication.

With warm personal regards,

Lyndon B. Johnson END TEXT

END

RUSK

Drafted by:

Tel. Ext.

Telegraphic transmission and

Text received from White House

classification approved by:

S/S - Herbert B. Thompson

Clearances:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

SERVICE SET



Sai gon 18 January 1967

Dear Mr. President:

I have been in Vietnam about six weeks now, and most of that time I have spent in the field with our troops of all branches as well as with some of the Allied forces. From north to south I have been on every outpost, have flown with Air Cavalry, with Forward Air Control, with 1st Cavalry units. In fact I went in with the first strike of Operation Thayer II although I have not written about that since the operation is not completed.

I think I know our men very well now for I have lived with them and have been shot at with them.

I know, Mr. President, that you get many reports through your official channels of information. But I do want to tell you by this completely unofficial means, that we have here the finest, the best trained, the most intelligent and the most dedicated soldiers I have ever seen in any army and I have seen soldiers in my time. These men are the best we have ever had.

In addition to fighting, they have taken on the duty of pacification and repair simultaneously and that is a new thing in the world. It seems to me that von Clausewitz is finally dead. He said, you remember, that war is an extension of politics. Now we have discovered and are putting in practice a new dimension--that politics is an extension of war. And this policy is being implemented by American soldiers. They make me very proud to be an American and I know they must make you very proud to be their Commander-in-Chief. The restrictions placed on them in carrying the war to the enemy must be and are galling to our soldiers. But they obey. I hope, sir, that in the near future you may find occasion to celebrate these men, to give verbal evidence of our love for them and our pride in them. They deserve it and I well know that you feel it.

I am going out to Bangkok now to see Thailand and Laos and if I am permitted to enter, to see Cambodia. After that I want to look at

SERVICE SET

the other peripheral countries, Indonesia, Malaya, the Filipines, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and Japan. Our future is closely tied to these nations and I want to know about them. Meanwhile, if any definite change takes place, I shall return to Saigon. I have made arrangements to be notified.

I shall take this letter to Bangkok with me and will ask our ambassador there to put it in the pouch for you.

If you have anything in mind that I can do for you, I can be reached either through the embassy at Bangkok or at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok.

Yours with all respect,

John Steinbeck

P.S. Elaine is with me. She is a real trooper and a proper descendant of the frontier. I am very proud of her also.

Please give our love to Bird, and to yourself our affection as always.

SERVICE SET

House guests in  
the Lincoln Rm.  
10 May 1967

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Mr. John Steinbeck

SERVICE SET

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Wednesday

Dear Elaine and John

I am crushed  
not to be here when you  
are — I would love to  
listen and listen and  
speak up! But weeks ago  
I agreed to go to a  
concert in New York this  
afternoon and a dinner  
tonight — so I am off.



2

I am putting you in  
the Lincoln Room. If you'd  
like separate rooms, the  
Queen's Room right across  
the hall is for you, Elaine.

Save some of the  
interesting talk until  
I can see you too!

Love,

Lady Bird

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 31, 1966  
6:00 p.m. Wednesday

MR. PRESIDENT:

I asked John Steinbeck to do a talk based on his son's letters, for the President. In the attached letter he says that he could not get off the ground, but I thought that the President might like to read, at his leisure, the extraordinary letters to Steinbeck from his son.

I have given them to Harry McPherson with the thought that part of these letters, plus other letters might make a real moving short talk for the President on one of the trips - not this weekend, because it will take quite awhile to develop correctly this type of talk.

Robert E. Kintner

SERVICE SET

Doug:

First letter from  
John Sr. to Bob Kintner;  
then John Jr's letters.  
Hm



AUGUST 29, 1966

DEAR BOB:

AFTER YOU CALLED ME ON FRIDAY, I CONFESS TO HAVE HAD A KIND OF WEARY RELUCTANCE. NEVER-THE-LESS I LABORED UNTIL FOUR IN THE MORNING TO TRY TO PRODUCE WHAT SEEMED TO BE REQUIRED, AND WHAT I CAME UP WITH, I WOULDN'T SEND. I WISH I COULD HAVE TALKED WITH YOU ABOUT IT. BELIEVE ME I HAVE THOUGHT A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE PRESENT POSITION. WHAT IS HAPPENING IS NORMAL FOR THIS TIME INTERVAL OF AN ADMINISTRATION, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY EASIER. AND THE SPEECH-PHRASES I WROTE WERE WRONG BECAUSE THEY WERE MINE NOT THE PRESIDENT'S. I AGREE THAT HE SHOULD SPEAK OF SOLDIERS, BUT THE SUBJECT IS VERY DELICATE AND ANYONE WHO SPEAKS FEELINGLY OF "OUR BOYS" IS LIKELY TO BE PEGGED AS A PHONY PARTICULARLY BY "OUR BOYS" THE BEST THING I CAN THINK OF IS TO MAKE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR DIRECTION AND APPROACH AS FOLLOWS.

I SUBMIT THAT ANGER HAS GREAT VALUE IN THE EXERCISE OF LEADERSHIP OR COMMAND, BUT THAT IT MUST BE USED SPARINGLY, SUDDENLY AND CAREFULLY. FURTHER, I SUGGEST THAT IT IS TIME FOR THE BOSS TO GET ANGRY AND TO SHOW IT, AND I THINK I KNOW HOW IT MIGHT BE DONE, BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE IN HIS OWN WORDS. THE PRESIDENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY OUR GROUND-RULES TO RESENT OR EVEN TO BE PUBLICLY AWARE OF ANY UGLY THING SAID ABOUT HIM OR ABOUT HIS ADMINISTRATION. WASHINGTON WANTED TO BE KING, JEFFERSON A THEORETICAL FOOL, JACKSON A MURDERER, LINCOLN A BABOON AND SO ON DOWN THE LINE. FOR THE PRESIDENT TO REPLY TO ANYTHING SAID ABOUT HIM IS UNTHINKABLE. HOWEVER, CONSIDER ONE THING. HE IS NOT ONLY PRESIDENT-- HE IS ALSO COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES AND IT IS IN ORDER AND QUITE PROPER THAT HE SHOULD RESENT ANY SLURS CAST ON HIS SOLDIERS. THIS IS NOT ONLY ACCEPTABLE. IT IS ALMOST REQUIRED. SOLDIERS ARE REFERRED TO AS BRUTAL MURDERERS, AS FOOLS WHO DON'T KNOW THE SCORE, AS PAWNS IN A POLITICAL GAME, AS HEARTLESS DESTROYERS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN. AND THESE SLURS ARE PUT FORTH BY PEOPLE WHOSE GREATEST DANGER IS A TORN FINGER NAIL ON A GUITAR STRING AND WHOSE VISION OF HELL IS A BATH AND A HAIRCUT. AND ISN'T IT ODD THAT SOLDIERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN COMBAT ARE NEARLY ALWAYS IN FAVOR OF OUR FAR EASTERN POLICY WHILE THOSE AGAINST IT DEMAND POLICE PROTECTION WHEN THEY BURN A DRAFT CARD AND WHOSE OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD IS PILES. WHAT GOOD ARE THE SOLDIERS TO THE NATION? PUT IT THIS WAY--IN WHICH HANDS WOULD YOU PUT THE SAFETY OF THE NATION, A PLATOON OF FIRST CAV OR A HUNDRED THOUSAND VIETNIKS. HE SHOULD DWELL A LITTLE IN PRIDE IN OUR SOLDIERS, AND THEIR PRIDE. THEY ARE MEN AND THE GREATEST TREASURE ANY NATION CAN HAVE IS MEN. ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS A LITTLE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE SEX OF THE VIETNIK.

AND IN THE YEARS TO COME--- WILL YOU CHOOSE YOUR LEADERS, YOUR ELECTED OFFICERS FROM AMONG THOSE WHO WHEN THEIR COUNTRY NEEDED THEM, DEFECTED AND WENT OVER TO THE DEFENSE OF THE ENEMY OR FROM AMONG THOSE WHO SERVED.

BOB, I AM ENCLOSING COPIES OF FOUR LETTERS FROM MY BOY WHO IS NOW TWENTY THESE FOUR LETTERS READ IN SEQUENCE ARE ALMOST THE BLUEPRINT OF THE MAKING OF A MAN. SINCE THE PRESIDENT KNOWS MY BOY AND HELPED HIM TO GET WHERE HE IS, HE MIGHT LIKE TO SEE THIS RECORD. HE MIGHT EVEN GET SOME IDEAS FOR WHAT HE WANTS TO SAY ABOUT SOLDIERS

SERVICE SET

I HAVE MUCH MORE TO SAY WHICH PERHAPS SHOULD NOT BE WRITTEN NOW. BUT SINCE IT IS FAIRLY LIKELY THAT I WILL BE SEEING YOU BEFORE LONG, I WILL SAVE THOSE THINGS FOR DIRECT COMMUNICATION.

I AM SORRY NOT TO BE ABLE TO TURN OVER TO YOU 1500 WORDS SIGNED AND SEALED, BUT IT DOESN'T COME THAT WAY TO ME NOW. I'M A DOVE, BOB, A DOVE WITH SPURS.

YOURS,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bob', written in a cursive style.



UNITED STATES MILITARY AIR STATION, COMMAND, VIETNAM

APO San Francisco 96243

PFC, JOHN STEINBECK,  
US 563 99 161,  
MAC-OI AFRT,  
APO 96309.

(1)  
Dear Dad,

Well here we go. by the way, pay no attention to the APO number at the top of this page. Use the one that is on the first letter that I sent you. The rains haven't really come yet. It rains every day of course, but only a few inches. Oh yes... Your story or rather letter, your Russian friend came over the wire last night, and they have started calling me Catbird at the station. A lot of AP men have been looking for me to comment, but I've managed to stay out of sight. I don't need that right now. The Army also prefers that I just leave well enough alone. I liked the letter by the way.

New subject. Very important... I've got to give you a little background first: When I was first in the Army, I wanted very much to come to Viet Nam. I think I felt a little decadent or something. I could very easily have been stationed at the Presidio for my entire two years. Well I asked you to get me here. When the orders came down so quickly, I was a little shocked. I knew that I wanted to go. Well as time went on, I had my apartment in San Francisco, a nice girl, and as youth has it, I had it made. Well I finally got my orders, and my stomach fell out of me. Here I was comfortable, and I had actually requested to leave all this. I still wanted to go, but I felt a strange panic. That all went away, and by the time I got here, or actually to New York for that matter, I was mentally prepared for it. Well, I'm here, and I still like it made. I'm a member of an elite group. I work in a air conditioned office. RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED Everything is cheap. There is a lot of liquor, and it's comfortable.

Well, now I don't know if I have this compulsion to be unhappy, or what, but now the story unfolds. I am a news man here at the station, and I also have the regular Disc-Jockey bit. I was sitting here yesterday, talking to the one professional news man we have here. We were talking about the fact that we don't really have any war news.

What we have are handouts that are thrown to us by the information Office. The civilians are getting more News about operations in the Republic than we are. We started talking about how great it would be if we had men in the field, who were on the operations with them, and in the fight. What it amounts to is a combat correspondent, with an M-16 and a tape recorder. Well here it was, a fine idea. Well, we proceeded to get the News department together, and convince the administration that it was good, and needed. I even went to the trouble to get a few First Cav. types to tell the station what shit their news was, when they heard it out in the field. All was going fine, until we tried to find out who would go. You don't have to a great imagination to figure out that there, wasn't one. Well Chuck looked at me, and said, are you with me, and as I said you bet, my stomach went right down to my knees again. It was so familiar to the feeling that I had gone through, I didn't even question it. The plain fact is that I have to go, because I want to. And I can't remember ever being so frightened. I know what its like. I've talked to people, I have friends here that have just gotten out of it. I've seen what a Claymore mine can do. The First Infantry is at this minute in the middle of a regiment, of VC, and they are going to have to shoot their way out. And I have the same feeling that I've created hell for myself. I can get out of it easily, and the whole thing will be scraped. They will only take Volunteers. The only other person that wants to go is with Chuck and myself, has only thirty days left, and the Sgt/Major won't let him go because he has so little time left, and he's seen more than enough.

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(11)

UNITED STATES MILITARY AIR STATION COMMAND, VIETNAM  
APO Saigon 96243



SANITIZED

By NARS Date 12-10-81 EG  
It will take two men. One on the operation, the other at a base camp to get the tape, and the actualities on a chopper, and back to saigon. We would be out for three days or so at a time, then come back to ~~base~~ to clean the material up or just have a break-down. If some unit gets in to a fight. We jump on ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> and get dropped into it. with our fucking tape. You may be starting to see why I'm a little shook. What even I can't understand is why I want to do it in the first place. I'm smarter than that. I enjoy my decadence, I like to drink, and RESTRICTED and all that other fine crap. I wouldn't have to be out there for months at a time. I could come to Saigon whenever I wanted to. I would do the base camp for Chuck half the time while he is out in it. But once were in it, that's it untill the operation is over. We've got fire fights just five miles from Saigon, and it would only take an hour and a half to get all the way to the 17th Par. We will go on the Oil strikes, and wherever they will let us go. I think it is the opportunity that I can't turn down. But I also keep thinking that I have no right to do this to myself. I don't like killing people. I like being killed even less. The thing is that I know I'm going to do it. Professionally, outside of Chuck, I'm the only one who can do it well. And I can't stop myself from doing it. I think that this is what bothers me most of all. I think that I would have been smarter to have stayed in Frisco, and not exposed myself to the ~~temptation~~ temptation. My mind starts to reel, and I begin to think that I knew this would happen the day I was drafted. What makes it all the more exciting in an almost sexual way, is that I have the power to choose my own way, and I think this is the ultimate compulsion. I've been trying to find my motives, as you can see. There is no feeling of compulsion, because no body want's to do it. I can't seem to write anyone about this but you. I don't ask anyone to understand it, I don't. It is irresponsible, and foolish., and my fondest hope is that I really get the shit scared out of me on my first little outing, and give the whole thing up. In any case. I'll send you a letter, sealed, and just keep it that way. There are a few things that you can help me with later on, and you will know what to do, and I hope want to, if you have to read the letter. In the mean time just stick it under a flying pig somewhere, or put in in an itinerant Osprey's nest.

Enough on that, It will take a couple of weeks to get this thing organized, and a couple more to push out. I hope I get a reply to this first.

Stay tuned to this channel:

*Love*

SERVICE SET

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2

UNITED STATES MILITARY DISTRICT COMMAND, VIETNAM  
APO San Francisco 96243



Fa,

There was a Time man looking for me yesterday, but I managed to stay out of his way. You will never know what your statement has done over here. I'm sure that you have had quite a time with it. What most people don't realize is that politics aside, the man is a kind of friend of yours, and not just another russian liar. I say liar with the greatest reservations in the world, and only on a war basis. As I'm sure you know, the statistics on communist kills are a riot, and most red publications are even more amusing in their editorials. However, I think the greatest Animosity is being poured at the present, towards Mr. Harold Wilson. I'm slowly beginning to think that the Australians are the finest, most honest people in the world. We have an institution here, called R&R. it stands for rest and recuperation. There is some talk that they may open up Australia as an R&R center. If they do, I'm going for my six days. Good Lord they are funny people.

My nature trip doesn't start for a while yet. Chuck is out in the field now covering that Marine ~~str~~ strike, "Operation Hastings", he should be back at the end of this week, and then I go out. All the stuff that he has sent in so far, has been clamped up by MAC-OI, because it scoops the army's information specialists in the field, and we can't use it until the Brass ~~allows~~ lets it out first. If it doesn't get too bad, and we have to cancel the whole operation because of what they may call security leaks, everything still stands.

The pictures are great, the White House photos got here a day before the letter with it did. They didn't waste any time with that letter head. I think I may send them back to you and let you keep them for me. I'm still in and out of hotels, and everything is a mess here, so you can keep them, and perhaps put them on the Pioneer 333. at cabin in the sky.

I'll send you a tape tomorrow. I'll record on both sides. Your machine has two tracks., so what you do, if I haven't already told you is to play one side, and then just take the reel that it has been feeding on two, and put it on the feed side, and start all over again. I have about eight reels, and we can just start rotating them. They are in a mailing case and everything, all you have to do is put a new label on them to send them back. Since I have so many of them, we can just keep about five in the mail at all times, that way, there will be only about a day between tapes. I hope you have your X Fuser fixed by now. When you get the first tape, just erase it and record, and then send it back. If there is something that I want you to keep, and there should be a lot, I'll just send it on a different, and longer reel. These will just be for corresponding ~~reference~~ purposes. I really write letters better than I can speak them, but we'll just see how it turns out. I'll put a little production to the others, and they should be pretty good packages. I'll send one off to you tonight now that I think of it, and again, just change the label, use both sides, and send it right back. On the back of this, I'll give you a little illustration of how to do it. Tell everybody to write, it really helps.

Enough of this:

SERVICE SET



DEAR DA

3

I'M SORRY I HAVENT WRITTEN FOR A WHILE, I'VE BEEN OUT IN THE FIELD GATHERING NEWS. THAT IS A PRETTY COLORFUL TERM FOR GETTING BLISTERS. I DON'T THINK I'LL BE DOING ANYTHING LIKE IT AGAIN VERY SOON. FIRST OF ALL MY COLONEL WON'T LET ME UNTILL I CAN GET THE STUFF CLEARED. IT WAS REALLY REDICULAS. I JUST ABOUT GOT MYSELF KILLED, AND THEN MAC-OI WOULDN'T LET ME USE THE STUFF. HELL THE CIVILIAN AGENCIES, WHO WERE'T OUT THERE IN ALL THAT SHIT, HAD THEIR STORIES ON A PLANE THAT SAME DAY. I'LL START FROM THE BEGINING

BY NOW, I'M SURE YOU HAVE HEARD OF OPERATION HASTINGS. THE MARINES ENCOUNTERED AN ESTIMATED REGIMENT OF NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS. IT STARTED JUST AS A NORMAL FIRE-FIGHT BUT ~~STEN~~ TURNED INTO JUST ABOUT THE BIGGEST OPERATION OF THE WAR. WELL I JUMPED INTO A CHOPPER, AND WENT FOR THE FIGHT. WHEN I GOT TO THE BASE CAMP, I GOT INTO ANOTHER CHOPPER, THAT WAS ~~WAS~~ AMUNITION. WHEN IT LANDED ON TOP OF THE RIDGE, THE FIRE WAS SO BAD, THAT THE WOUNDED WOULDN'T EVEN GET IN IT TO BE EVACUATED. ~~THIRTY~~ THIRTY SECONDS AFTER I GOT OUT, WHAT APPEARED TO BE A 75-MILLIMETER RECOILLESS RIFLE GOT IT, AND ~~THE~~ AND I WAS THE ONLY ONE TO GET OUT ALIVE. THE PILOT WAS TRAPED, AND BURNED TO DEATH. WELL I HIT THE GROUND WITH MY STUPID TAPE RECORDER AND M-16, AND JUST STARTED SHOOTING. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I WAS SHOOTING AT, I COULDN'T SEE A THING. THEY HAD ABOUT A ONE-HUNDRED METER PERMETER SET UP, AN WITH SOME KIND OF LECK, I HAD JUMPED OFF INSIDED IT. ~~WERE~~

WERE TO BE CALLED IN. AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR OF THIS, WE CALLED IN SOME AIR STRIKES, AND I SWEAR TO GOD, THEY DROPPED NAPAIM ABOUT 100-FEET AWAY FROM OUR FRONT POSITION. AFTER THAT, B-52s WERE CALLED IN, AND THEY POUNDED THE AREA FOR ABOUT AN HOUR AN A HALF. THE VC STARTED COMING OUT OF THE BUSHES, AND THEY WERE JUST TREMBELING. I THINK WE ALL WERE.

THERE IS NO HELL IN THE WORLD LIKE THOSE 52's. THEY CAN STAY UP THERE FOR EVER, AND NEVER RUN OUT OF BOMBS. AS THEY CAME OUT, WE SHOT THEM DOWN. ~~THE~~ CHOPPERS CAME IN WITH AMUNITION AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES, BUT THE WOUNDED WOULD NOT GET ON THEM. I DON'T BLAME THEM IN THE SLIGHTEST. IT TOOK TWO DAYS TO GET OFF THE RIDGE, AND THE COMPANY I WAS IN KILLED AN E

ESTIMATES 200 VC, THAT'S WITH THE AIR STRIKES. I GOT MY MATERIAL, THREE DAYS AFTER THAT I GOT BACK TO SAIGON, AND MAC-OI KILLED THE STORY. WHEN THE COLONEL CAN GET ASSURANCE THAT THE NEXT TIME, IT CAN BE USED, I'LL GO ~~WENT~~ OUT AGAIN; BUT NOT UNTILL. OUT OF A COMPANY OF 120 MEN, 35 WERE KILLED, SOME OF THEM BY OUR BOMBS, AND ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER WERE WOUNDED. MAC-OI CALLES THAT LIGHT TO MODERATE CASUALTIES. I DON'T MIND WORKING FOR THE RASTARDS, BUT IF I'M GOING TO GET KILLED, OR HAVE ANOTHER CHOPPER SHOT OUT FROM UNDER ME, I AT LEAST WANT IT TO BE FOR A REASON. YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE ENEMY FIRE COMING IN ON THAT BIRD WHEN IT LANDED. WE WERE ABOUT 300 FEET OF THE GROUND, WHEN FIFTY-CAL.

MACHINE GUNS JUST TORE THE SHIT OUT OF IT. SO HERE I AM IN SAIGON, GETTING DRUNK, AND

RESTRICTED AND LOVING EVERY MINUTE OF IT. WITH LECK, IT BILL TAKE A MONTH OR MORE FOR THEM TO CONVINCE MAC-OI, THAT OLD STEINBECK IS HELPING THE WAR EFFORT, AND SHOULD BE OUT THERE WITH THE BOYS. ~~THE~~ OPETATION HASTINSS IS STILL GOING ON, AND OUT OF THE COMPANY THAT I WAS FIGHTING WITH, THERE ARE ONLY THREE OF THE ORIGINALS, MABEY TOMOROW, THEY'LL BY ALL BE OUT OF THIS WAR FOR GOOD.

I'LL TRY AND SEND A TAPE TOMORROW.

*John G. ...*

SERVICE SET

NARS, Date 12-10-81

SANITIZED



UNITED STATES MILITARY SERVICE COMMAND, VIETNAM  
Office of the Commander  
APO Sa 56243



FA,

I AM VERY TIRED TONIGHT, BUT I MUST WORK, SO IT WILL BE A GOOD TIME TO WRITE. I GOT A LETTER FROM TEHR IS BEAU THE OTHER DAY. HE SHOULD HAVE MY REPLY ALREADY. I ALSO RECEIVED A LETTER FROM BOB WASTEN, BUT I HAVEN'T ANSWERED YET. IF YOU TALK TO HIM, THANK HIM FOR THE LETTER, AND TELL HIM THAT I WILL TRY AND REPLY SOON.

TELL ME SOMETHING, YOU TOLD ME ONCE THAT YOU WANTED TO COME OVER HERE, BUT        THERE WERE SOME PROBLEMS. I FORGET JUST WHAT YOU SAID, SO TELL ME AGAIN. I THINK THAT YOU WOULD GAIN MUCH BY COMING OVER HERE. MOST OF MY FRIENDS ARE VIETNAMESE. I HAVE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO        ACCEPTED INTO MANY HOMES, AND HAVE MET MOST OF THE YOUNG POWERFUL MEN IN THE GOVERNMENT AND ARMY. TWO IN PARTICULAR ARE LIKE BROTHERS TO ME. ONE OF THEM, NGUEN THAO DAN, WILL I AM SURE BE THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER. WE GO JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE TOGETHER.

RESTRICTED

WELL THAT IS ANOTHER

VERY LARGE STORY, AND DOESN'T HAVE ANY IMPORTANCE HERE. WHAT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW IS IF YOU WOULD COME OVER HERE. IF IT EVER OCCURS TO YOU THAT YOU WANT TO, OR NEED TO (WHICH IS MORE LIKELY) FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION, PLEASE LET ME SET IT UP. IF YOU DO, OR COULD, I THINK MY FRIENDS CAN SHOW YOU MORE THAN THE STATE DEPARTMENT EVER DREAMED EXISTED. MOST OF THE INTELLECTUALS IN VIET NAM ARE FROM THE NORTH, AND CAME HERE AS REFUGEES IN 1954. ALL MY FRIENDS HAVE        DID HAVE HOMES IN HANOI. DAN, MY FRIEND, WENT TO SCHOOL IN HANOI WITH PREMIER KY. HE INTRODUCED ME TO THE MAYOR OF SAIGON YESTERDAY. THE MAYOR IS A DOCTOR, AND HAS MORE INTEGRITY THAN ANYONE I HAVE MET SO FAR. HE IS NOT A POLITICIAN, JUST A VERY DEDICATED MAN. THE PEOPLE        LOVE MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE.

GET THIS, YOUR WAYWARD SON IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING AN ORPHANAGE FOR THE CHILDREN OF        VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED. IT IS DAN'S IDEA, AND HE HAS THE DRAWINGS, A MODEL, AND ALL THE BLUE PRINTS FOR THE BUILDING. WE WENT OUT TODAY LOOKING FOR THE LAND. THE GOVERNMENT WON'T BUILD IT, SO IF DAN CAN DO IT, PERHAPS HE CAN SHAKE THE GOVERNMENT INTO BUILDING OTHERS.        HE THINKS IT WILL TAKE ABOUT SIX MONTHS TO GET THE MONEY FROM HIS MEN. MY OTHER PROJECT WITH DAN IS WRITING LETTERS TO THE MOTHERS AND WIDOWS OF AMERICAN SERVICE MEN. THEN ONCE A WEEK WE TAKE THEM TO THE SCHOOLS AND HAVE THEM SIGNED BY VIETNAMESE CHILDREN, THANKING THE AMERICANS FOR SACRIFICING SO MUCH THAT THEY MIGHT BE FREE. I HOPE THAT WHEN WORD GETS AROUND, IT WILL HELP THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE. IF JUST ONE WOMAN OR FAMILY UNDERSTANDS, IT WILL HAVE HELPED. IT IS VERY EXCITING AND REWARDING SO FAR. IT IS THE HOSPITAL AND ORPHANAGE THAT I REALLY HAVE MY HEART SET ON. IF IT WORKS, WE MAY HAVE TO SAY THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT AT LEAST THEY WILL GET SOME REFORM. I LOVE THE COUNTRY DAD. I LOVE THE PEOPLE. IT IS NOT LIKELY HOWEVER THAT I WILL BRING A LITTLE ORIENTAL GIRL HOME TO COOK RICE IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR THREE INCH PILE CARPET AT CABIN IN THE SKY, SINGING PRIMITIVE CHANTS AS I FOLLOE ON THE PIANO WITH PROFOUND AMENS AT THE        START OF EVERY COURSE.

I REALLY WISH YOU COULD GET HERE, BUT YOU TELL ME YOUR IDEAS. THE OTHER THING THAT I HAVE GOING, COULD USE YOUR HELP I THINK. WE HAVE A GOLF COURSE HERE. IT IS RIGHT NEXT TO THE AIRPORT, AND QUITE OFTEN THE WOUNDED LAND IN THE CLUB AND ARE EVACUATED FROM IT THERE. IN ANY CASE I GOT A PUBLIC RELATIONS BRAIN STORM THE OTHER DAY, THAT IS ONLY EQUAL BY YOUR ART CONTEST ON THE BERLIN WALL. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE COULD BE NO GREATER SLAP AT THE VC AS FAR AS PROPAGANDA GOES, THAN HAVING A PGA PRO-AM GOLF TOURNAMENT AT THE SAIGON GOLF CLUB. HERE IT IS A WAR ZONE, AND THE FUCKING AMERICANS HAVE ALL       

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SAFORIZED  
NARS, Date 12-10-81  
BY 258



UNITED STATES MILITARY SERVICE COMMAND, VIETNAM  
Office of the Commander  
APO Saigon 96243



FA,

I AM VERY TIRED TONIGHT, BUT I MUST WORK, SO IT WILL BE A GOOD TIME TO WRITE. I GOT A LETTER FROM TERRIE BEAU THE OTHER DAY. HE SHOULD HAVE MY REPLY ALREADY. I ALSO RECEIVED A LETTER FROM BOB WARSTEN, BUT I HAVEN'T ANSWERED YET. IF YOU TALK TO HIM, THANK HIM FOR THE LETTER, AND TELL HIM THAT I WILL TRY AND REPLY SOON.

TELL ME SOMETHING, YOU TOLD ME ONCE THAT YOU WANTED TO COME OVER HERE, BUT [REDACTED] THERE WERE SOME PROBLEMS. I FORGET JUST WHAT YOU SAID, SO TELL ME AGAIN. I THINK THAT YOU WOULD GAIN MUCH BY COMING OVER HERE. MOST OF MY FRIENDS ARE VIETNAMESE. I HAVE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE ACCEPTED INTO MANY HOMES, AND HAVE MET MOST OF THE YOUNG POWERFUL MEN IN THE GOVERNMENT AND ARMY. TWO IN PARTICULAR ARE LIKE BROTHERS TO ME. ONE OF THEM, NGUEN THAO DAN, WILL I AM SURE BE THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER. WE GO JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE TOGETHER.

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WELL THAT IS ANOTHER VERY LARGE STORY, AND DOESN'T HAVE ANY IMPORTANCE HERE. WHAT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW IS IF YOU WOULD COME OVER HERE. IF IT EVER OCCURS TO YOU THAT YOU WANT TO, OR NEED TO (WHICH IS MORE LIKELY), FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION, PLEASE LET ME SET IT UP. IF YOU DO, OR COULD, I THINK MY FRIENDS CAN SHOW YOU MORE THAN THE STATE DEPARTMENT EVER DREAMED EXISTED. MOST OF THE INTELLECTUALS IN VIET NAM ARE FROM THE NORTH, AND CAME HERE AS REFUGEES IN 1954. ALL MY FRIENDS HAVE [REDACTED] DID HAVE HOMES IN HANOI. DAN, MY FRIEND, WENT TO SCHOOL IN HANOI WITH PREMIER KY. HE INTRODUCED ME TO THE MAYOR OF SAIGON YESTERDAY. THE MAYOR IS A DOCTOR, AND HAS MORE INTEGRITY THAN ANYONE I HAVE MET SO FAR. HE IS NOT A POLITICIAN, JUST A VERY DEDICATED MAN. THE PEOPLE [REDACTED] LOVE MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE.

GET THIS, YOUR WAYWARD SON IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING AN ORPHANAGE FOR THE CHILDREN OF [REDACTED] VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED. IT IS DAN'S IDEA, AND HE HAS THE DRAWINGS, A MODEL, AND ALL THE BLUE PRINTS FOR THE BUILDING. WE WENT OUT TODAY LOOKING FOR THE LAND. THE GOVERNMENT WON'T BUILD IT, SO IF DAN CAN DO IT, PERHAPS HE CAN SHAKE THE GOVERNMENT INTO BUILDING OTHERS. [REDACTED] HE THINKS IT WILL TAKE ABOUT SIX MONTHS TO GET THE MONEY FROM HIS MEN. MY OTHER PROJECT WITH DAN IS WRITING LETTERS TO THE MOTHERS AND WIDOWS OF AMERICAN SERVICE MEN. THEN ONCE A WEEK WE TAKE THEM TO THE SCHOOLS AND HAVE THEM SIGNED BY VIETNAMESE CHILDREN, THANKING THE AMERICANS FOR SACRIFICING SO MUCH THAT THEY MIGHT BE FREE. I HOPE THAT WHEN WORD GETS AROUND, IT WILL HELP THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE. IF JUST ONE WOMAN OR FAMILY UNDERSTANDS, IT WILL HAVE HELPED. IT IS VERY EXCITING AND REWARDING SO FAR. IT IS THE HOSPITAL AND ORPHANAGE THAT I REALLY HAVE MY HEART SET ON. IF IT WORKS, WE MAY HAVE TO SAY THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT AT LEAST THEY WILL GET SOME REFORM. I LOVE THE COUNTRY DAD. I LOVE THE PEOPLE. IT IS NOT LIKELY HOWEVER THAT I WILL BRING A LITTLE ORIENTAL GIRL HOME TO COOK RICE IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR THREE INCH PILE CARPET AT CABIN IN THE SKY, SINGING PRIMITIVE CHANTS AS I FIDDLE ON THE PIANO WITH PROFOUND AMENS AT THE [REDACTED] START OF EVERY COURSE.

I REALLY WISH YOU COULD GET HERE, BUT YOU TELL ME YOUR IDEAS. THE OTHER THING THAT I HAVE GOING, COULD USE YOUR HELP I THINK. WE HAVE A GOLF COURSE HERE. IT IS RIGHT NEXT TO THE AIRPORT, AND QUITE OFTEN THE WOUNDED LAND IN THE CLUB AND ARE EVACUATED FROM IT THERE. IN ANY CASE I GOT A PUBLIC RELATIONS BRAIN STORM THE OTHER DAY, THAT IS ONLY EQUALLED BY YOUR ART CONTEST ON THE BERLIN WALL. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE COULD BE NO GREATER SLAP AT THE VC AS FAR AS PROPAGANDA GOES, THAN HAVING A PGA PRO-AM GOLF TOURNEY AT THE SAIGON GOLF CLUB. HERE IT IS A WAR ZONE, AND THE FUCKING AMERICANS HAVE ALL [REDACTED]

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THEIR NAME ENTERTAINERS AND GOLF PRO'S PLAYING GOLF FOR THE GI'S IN SAIGON. IT IS SO BEAUTIFUL THAT I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT. CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THIS COULD DO FOR MORAL, AND GENERAL STOIC CHAMP? OBVIOUSLY BOB HOPE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD PULL IT OFF, AND SINCE HE IS HERE EVERY CHRISTMAS, IT WOULD BE GREAT AROUND THAT TIME. THERE IS NO MONEY PROBLEM, I HAVE THAT ALL SET, AS LONG AS I CAN SELL THE IDEA TO THE PGA, OR INDIVIDUAL PRO'S. NEXT WEEK SOME TIME I'M GOING TO START COLD, TRYING TO GET IN TOUCH WITH PALMER AND OTHER PEOPLE LIKE THAT. IT IS A GREAT CREDIT FOR GOLFING ACTORS, AND WHAT EVER PERSONALITIES WANT TO COME. I EVEN PICTURE IT AS A ROUTINE STOP ON THE PGA CIRCUIT. THE MONEY COULD GO TO ANY GOOD CAUSE, PERHAPS EVEN MY (GET THAT MY) HOSPITAL. ACTUALLY THERE SHOULD BE NO PROCEEDS WHATSOEVER. AGAIN, TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK. IF YOU LIKE THE IDEA, PERHAPS YOU CAN REALLY HELP ME. I SEEM TO REMEMBER THAT YOU ALWAYS GOT CHRISTMAS CARDS FROM MR. HOPE. PERHAPS YOU CAN GET ME HIS ADDRESS. IF I CAN SELL IT TO HIM, I THINK I'VE GOT IT MADE.

YOUR WHEELER DEALER SON IS GOING TO GET BACK AT THE INFORMATION OFFICE FOR FUCKING UP HIS WAR CORRESPONDENCE IF IT IS THE LAST THING I DO. THEY CAN'T LET ME GET SHOT AT FOR NOTHING AND GET AWAY WITH IT. ONCE I GET IT SET UP, AND GET THE USO HELP I NEED, I' GOING TO DUMP IT ALL IN PIC'S LAP AND WATCH THEM COLAPSE WITH GLEE AND OVERWORK. I'M RUTHLESS, BUT IT SHOULD BE GOOD FUN FOR EVERYONE, AND THAT IS SOMETHING THAT ANY WAR CAN USE. I AM VERY TIRED, AND EVERY CRUNCE OF EGO COMES OUT AT THESE MOMENTS, BUT I'M GOING TO MAKE VIET NAM REMEMBER THAT I WAS HERE. I AM SURE THAT I WILL BE BACK HERE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. I'VE REALLY BEEN BITTEN. I SUPPOSE THAT IS WHY I WANT YOU TO COME HERE SO MUCH SO THAT I MAY SEE IF I'M CRAZY OR IF IT IS AS WORTH WHILE AS I THINK IT IS. NO LONGER IS IT A MATTER OF FIGHTING COMMUNISM SO THAT AMERICA CAN STOP IT IN THIS HEMISPHERE. THIS IS AN OLD AND BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY. WITH THE CHINESE, FRENCH AND AMERICANS OCCUPYING THE COUNTRY FOR THE LAST THREE THOUSAND YEARS, THEY ARE DESPERATLY IN NEED OF GOOD MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL PRIDE. THE AMERICANS CAN GIVE THEM THE FIRST, BUT IT WILL TAKE HOSPITALS THEY THEY HAVE BUILT WITH THEIR OWN MONEY AND LABOR AND MANY MORE NGUEN THAO DANGS TO GIVE THEM THE LATTER. BY THE WAY, DANG WAS MR. JOHNSONS AIDE WHEN HE WAS HERE AS VICE PRESIDENT. I MET HIM THROUGH HIS BROTHER WHO WAS TRANSLATING FOR ME IN A WHORE HOUSE ONE DAY. I TELL YOU THESE PEOPLE ARE AMAZING.

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WITH MY WORK AND ALL THIS OTHER CRAP I AM PRETTY BUSY. I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT PRESERVING MYSELF FROM DECADENCE. I AM SAFE FOR THE MONTH AT ANY RATE.

THAT'S ABOUT ALL THE NEWS I HAVE. TELL ME WHAT IS GOING ON THERE. I SEE THAT YOUR BOOK IS OUT IN SERIAL FORM. I'M STAYING AWAY FROM IT AS YOU ADVISED. TELL ELAINE THAT THE PICTURES WERE GREAT, AND THANK JACK FOR TAKING THEM. I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE COPIES, BECAUSE THESE MAY NOT MAKE IT OUT OF THE EAST IN            VERY GOOD SHAPE. WHAT ELSE IS NEW. TERR SAID THAT YOU WOULD READ HIS SCRIPT SOON. TELL ME ABOUT IT. I'M PANICED THAT IT WON'T BE GOOD. TELL ME ANYWAY. HE SOUNDS VERY GOOD. I HOPE I GET TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH HIM BEFORE I GO BACK TO CALIFORNIA. I AM SUPPOSE TO LEAVE HERE NEXT JUNE, AND I AM OUT OF THE ARMY 6TH MONTHS AFTER THAT. I MUST DECIDE IF I AM GOING TO STAY HERE FOR            THOSE SIX MONTHS OR GO BACK TO THE STATES TO SOME DUTY THERE WAITING FOR MY DISCHARGE. IF I DO COME BACK, I THINK I'LL TRY FOR WASHINGTON ATTACHED TO CONARC OR            SOME            COMPARABLE INFORMATION OFFICE. IT'S A LITTLE EARLY TO TELL, BUT I THINK I'M GOING TO REALLY MISS THE ARMY. I KNOW THAT I'LL MISS VIETNAM. IT IS DIRTY, AND UGLY. THE PEOPLE ARE SUSPICIOUS AND SMALL. THEY SEEM TO HAVE NO PRIDE WHATSOEVER, THEY ARE LIARS, CHEATS, AND IGNORANT; AND I CAN'T REMEMBER MEETING            OR BEING AROUND A MORE ENAGAGING ETHNIC GROUP.

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THERE IS SO MUCH POTENTIAL IN THIS COUNTRY, BOTH ECONOMICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY. AS YOU MAY KNOW, THERE IS ENOUGH RICE IN SOUTH VIET NAM TO FEED ALL OF CHINA. THEY HAVE EVERY IMAGINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE, AND THAT IS WHY MAO WANTS IT SO BADLY. I DON'T KNOW WHY I HAVE SO MUCH FAITH IN THESE PEOPLE, IT IS PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY WANT FREEDOM SO MUCH, AND THEY DON'T YET HAVE THE WIT TO DEAL WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DEMOCRACY. THEY ARE LIKE ZEALOUS CHILDREN, AND AT THE SAME TIME, EMBARRASSED BY THEIR MATURITY. THEY PLAY GAMES WITH THEMSELVES, AND WITH THEIR COUNTRY, HOPING THAT IT WILL BE CONSTRUCTIVE, AND MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, SOMEONE GETS RICH AND LEAVES THE COUNTRY. IT'S NOT A NEW STORY IN THE WORLD, BUT WHY DOES IT HAPPEN. I HOPE THAT I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THEM FIND THEMSELVES. LIKE MOST PEOPLE, THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL, AND IT WOULD BE FULFILLING TO SAY THE LEAST, TO SEE THIS COUNTRY FIND THE INCONVENIENCES OF BEING FREE, AND PRESERVE THEM. THERE IS NO FOREIGN AIDE PACKAGE IN THE WORLD THAT PROVIDES DIGNITY, WHEN THEY HAVE THIS, NOT CLIQUE INDIGNATION, BUT SIMPLE SELF-RESPECT. THEIR BATTLE WITH ADVERSE HUMAN NATURE WILL BE OVER. ANY AMERICAN HELP SUCH AS THE THINGS THAT I'M DOING SHOULD BE DONE WITH AS LITTLE NOISE AS POSSIBLE. THEY HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS BIG BAND SHIT, FULL OF DEDICATIONS AND BOTTLE BREAKING, AND COOZING WITH GOOD WILL. THEY MUST BUILD, AND WE MUST HELP THEM, NOT TO MAKE GOOD COPY, BUT TO MAKE A STRONG NATION. WHEN IS STOP BEING A CIRCUS, AND THEY GET DOWN TO THE HARD WORK AND SERIOUSNESS THAT YOU SAW IN ISRAEL, THEN PROGRESS WILL COME TO THIS COUNTRY, AND BRING WITH IT, PRIDE THAT THEY WON'T SELL.

ENOUGH OF THIS, NOW I KNOW  
I'M GETTING TIRED. I MUST GET  
BACK TO WORK NOW. PLEASE WRITE  
SOON, AND TRY AND GET ME HOPE'S  
ADDRESS. WITH LUCK I CAN GET  
THIS THING OFF THE GROUND.

LOVE,

SERVICE SET



SEPTEMBER 5, 1966

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT LANCASTER, OHIO

(AT 8:40 PM EST)

My dear friends of Ohio; Congressman Moeller; Senator Lausche; Frazier Reams; Tom Bush; Virgil Musser; the voices of labor who have toured this state with me today, Jim Suffridge, Walter Reuther, Jim Keenan, and Al Barkin; Mayor Burt.

I don't know how to thank you good people for this wonderful reception. All Labor Day weekend I have traveled over America, and I have been talking about America. Everywhere I have repeated a common theme:

-- that our country's strength lies in the responsibility of its citizens;

-- and that our real wealth comes from our sense of public service.

Here in Lancaster, tonight, at the end of a long day for me, in the rain, it is time to turn to our responsibilities abroad. To think for a moment what those 300,000 men that are defending our liberties out there tonight are thinking.

Our newspapers are filled with reports from Vietnam. Bulletins from the battlefield fill the air waves. As never before, television brings both the bravery and the brutality of war right into our homes.

We are all concerned with this struggle that is going on half way around the world. For our men are fighting and they are dying tonight for us here in Lancaster. And it is right that we keep asking ourselves the basic questions about the prospects for peace and about the world that our children will inherit.

I came here to talk to you very briefly about four fundamental facts which shape our country's foreign policy.

First, why are we in Vietnam?

No parent, no wife, no mother, wishes to see her son or her husband go off to die. No American soldier wants to kill or to be killed. No President of the United States wishes to send any young man ever into battle. Deep in our souls -- and deep in our history -- is the passion for peace in all America.

MORE

(OVER)



But we must deal with the world as it is and we cannot walk away from the simple fact that the peace and security of many nations is threatened if aggressors are permitted to succeed in a strategic area of the world. If vital treaties are broken, and if men and arms are moved illegally across international boundaries to conquer and gobble up helpless small countries that can't defend themselves.

Our history offers us many examples. Europe knows peace today, Europe is peaceful tonight, because free men stood firm in Greece and in Berlin. Perhaps it reflects poorly on our world that man must fight limited wars to keep from fighting larger wars. But that is the condition of the world today. Our objective in Vietnam is very simple: we want the killing to stop and the people of Vietnam to make their own future in peace.

The United States of America says tonight that we are ready, willing and anxious to withdraw our troops. And we will do so when we have any evidence that aggression and infiltration and the war there will end.

I repeat again, as I have said so many, many, many times before: The United States welcomes any effort that will persuade the men in Hanoi that this is the right path for them and for all humanity. For to stop aggression is only the beginning not the end of our policy.

We face a second fundamental fact that people have other enemies in the world; hunger, diseases, ignorance, poverty.

Here in this hemisphere we are working for a plan to defeat all of those enemies. In Asia free nations have made remarkable gains. South Korea has moved ahead as has Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore.

This summer in Washington we met with friends from Japan. We have started working together on solving problems in all of that area of the world. But the peoples of the world tonight want more than security. They want more even than economic progress.

This leads to the third fact of our foreign policy: The peoples of other nations want to play a bigger part in running their own affairs and in shaping their own destiny.

Our purpose in promoting a world of regional partnerships is not without self-interest. For as they grow in strength inside a strong United Nations, we can look forward to a decline in the burden that America has had to bear this generation. And we can look forward to increased growth and stability in each corner of the world.

But even this will not be enough. For there is a fourth fundamental fact if we are to be faithful to a larger vision of the world. Beyond the present conflict, we must prepare for the task of reconciliation which leads to lasting peace.



In Europe, our partnership has been the foundation for building bridges to the East. We and our friends in Western Europe are ready to move just as fast, just as far, as the East is prepared to go in building those bridges of friendship.

In Asia, we have a similar hope, though tonight it is clouded by war and by bitterness. But still we look to the day when those on the mainland of China are ready to meet us half way -- are ready to devote their enormous talents and energy to improving the life of their people -- when they are ready to take their place peacefully as one of the major powers of Asia and the world.

Yes, we in America dream of a world at peace. But we also know that the forces that provoke hostility are deeply embedded and they are not going to yield quickly or easily.

Yet, day by day, quiet victories are being won on every continent. Deep forces for real peace are at work. They are working slowly' almost unnoticed, creating the conditions and institutions of enduring hope.

If we here in America, living in luxury, in all of our prosperity and with all of the many things that we have to be thankful for, if we grow tired, if we despair, then much will be lost. But if we heed the lessons of the past -- if we increase the role in international life of compassion and cooperation, foresight and reason, self-discipline and common sense, of friendship and of firmness -- then our hope can be practical and our triumphs lasting.

And those men who fight for us tonight will not have died in vain.

This is my faith: that we, the American people, have the courage, have the fortitude, have the patience and the persistence to see Vietnam through to the end; that we shall look forward and not backwards. But when victory does come we will review this period of our life as one of history's greatest turning points in the world in which we live.

And I believe just as firmly as I believe anything in the world that historians will say of us in the years to come: The Americans by their courage and faith, by their love of liberty and freedom, preserved liberty and freedom and opened the door to peace to all mankind. in all countries in all lands for all peoples with all religions.

For so long so many of us have worked to see some of the dreams that have come true in recent months. Tonight as we meet here those who till our soil are prosperous. The average income per farm when I went to Washington was \$300 per farm. Tonight it is \$5,400 per farm.

MORE

(OVER)

SERVICE SET

When I went to Washington in 1932 -- a year that a good many of you may remember but not like to recall -- the average weekly wage was \$18 per week. In terms of today's dollars that is \$30 per week. Tonight the average weekly weekly wage is \$112 per week.

In the last six years our prices have risen 10 percent. The folks who do the work at the bottom of the heap in all of the services from the charwomen to the janitors to the elevator operators have all improved their lot by minimum wages and increased wages.

All of that has gone into our costs. The farmer is receiving little more although tonight he receives only 69 percent of what the average factory worker receives. He receives a little more than he did get.

And all of that goes into your milk and your meat and your bread and your bacon. That goes up some. Your transportation has gone up some. Your services, your medical services have gone up some. All of that adds up to 10 percent.

MORE



The nearest that any nation has come to us is Germany. It has gone up just twice as much there, 18 percent.

In France and England it has gone up 23 percent.

In Italy it has gone up 29 percent.

In Japan it has gone up 40 percent.

Now we haven't done as good a job as we would have liked to have done because we wish it hadn't gone up at all. But while your costs were going up 10 percent, your wages were going up 18 percent. And you had 18 percent more to pay the 10 percent bill with.

The same thing is true not only of the wage earner but of the farmer. Profits have gone up 83 percent. So I say to you tonight: Look at your own family. Engage in a little introspection and ask yourselves some questions.

See if you hadn't rather have high employment, 76 million people with jobs, unemployment dropping from 8 percent down to under 4 percent.

If you hadn't rather have high wages -- not \$30 a week wages but \$112 a week wages; not 3 cent calves, but 28 cent calves; not burning wheat but getting a pretty good price for it; -- if you hadn't rather have all those things and have some money in your pocket to pay those prices with than to have high prices as we had in the Fifties without the money to meet the bills.

Now there are some people who are going to find something wrong with everything we do. We had problems of poverty. We had soup lines. We had WPA. We look back upon that day without any great pride and hope that it will ever happen again. Now, tonight we have problems of prosperity. This is no time for us to gnash our teeth and divide ourselves and quarrel with our fellow man and abuse our neighbor.

The problems that come with high wages, high prices, high employment and high standards of living are here and we are going to try to deal with them. But we ought to deal with them as intelligent, united Americans. We ought not to divide our country.

In two and a half years we have passed 30 bills improving the health, education and the conservation of the people of this country. We have had the finest Congress that that was ever elected in the 89th Congress.

I didn't say what Mr. Truman said about the 80th Congress. He said it was a do-nothing, no good Congress. I didn't say that. I said this was the finest Congress that had ever been elected. And I didn't say just the Democrats were fine. I said the finest Congress. But I would have to admit that we have all of the other kind that we need right now.

MORE

(OVER)

SERVICE SET



So when they ask about my political philosophy I say: I am a free man, first. I am an American, second. I am a public servant, third. And I am a Democrat, fourth -- in that order.

I haven't come all the way out here to complain. I have come to thank you. I haven't come all the way out here to villify. I have come to tell you how blessed I think we are.

To the people who put these signs up, to the folks who had the posters, to all the folks who showed us a happy smile and gave us a warm hand today, I want to say to you that I shall return to your Capitol tonight stronger and I hope wiser for having come your way.

I am going to do everything that I can in the days ahead to keep prosperity at home and to bring peace to the world. I am going to try to be fair to my fellow man. I am going to try not to be bitterly partisan.

I think the other man has about as good motives and hopes as I have. All I am going to say to you is: You go home tonight and talk to your wife and to your children and to your family and don't feel sorry for yourself. Don't become a martyr. Don't complain about everyone around you. Think about how much better a world we are living in than our fathers lived in. Think about the sacrifices that our pioneer grandfathers and grandmothers made. Count your blessings and then say to yourselves: "I am going to do what is best for my country." I leave that judgment up to you. And when you do what is best for your country, you will do what is best for me.

Thank you and goodnight.

END

(AT 9:00 P.M. EST)