

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This dissertation was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

### University Microfilms

300 North Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106  
A Xerox Education Company

72-22,441

JONES, Henry Paschal, 1930-  
JOHN FOSTER DULLES AND UNITED STATES  
INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1972  
Political Science, general

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

JOHN FOSTER DULLES AND UNITED STATES  
INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY  
HENRY PASCHAL JONES  
Norman, Oklahoma

1972

JOHN FOSTER DULLES AND UNITED STATES  
INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

APPROVED BY

Rufus L. Hall  
Oliver Benson  
Paul E. Secrest  
Paul A. Thompson  
Russell D. Bunker

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

PLEASE NOTE:

Some pages may have

indistinct print.

Filmed as received.

University Microfilms, A Xerox Education Company

for Esther

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author hereby expresses his gratitude to Professor Rufus G. Hall, Jr., of the University of Oklahoma Political Science Department. His helpful suggestions and patience in directing this dissertation are sincerely appreciated. I also express my appreciation to Professor Oliver E. Benson for his help and encouragement.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Professor Richard C. C. Kim. I believe he will know why.

And finally I express thanks to Mrs. Bendy Simms whose conscientious typing of the final manuscript lightened the burden considerably.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
 Chapter	
I.    INDOCHINA POLICY IN THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION--BACKGROUND TO THE DULLES ERA . . . . .	11
The Containment Policy Negotiation from Strength NSC-68--A Global Commitment Truman-Acheson Indochina Policy	
II.   JOHN FOSTER DULLES AND HIS WORLD . .	45
What Manner of Man? Background and Qualifications Dulles and Moralism Dulles as Partisan Dulles and Communism Dulles's Strategic Concepts Massive Retaliation and Liberation Dulles and Indochina	
III.  1954--THE YEAR OF THE NEGATIVE DECISION . . . . .	105
The Effort to Avert Negotiations The Meeting with Congressional Leaders The Senate Debate The President Speaks The Decision not to Intervene Sequela	
IV.   THE GENEVA CONFERENCE . . . . .	153
The "New Look" in Foreign Policy and Red China	

	Page
The Berlin Conference	
The Allies Disagree	
The Negotiations	
Did the Russians "Bet a Little in	
Asia to Win a Lot in Europe"?	
Negotiations Concluded--Innocence	
by Disassociation	
V. THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COLLECTIVE DEFENSE	
TREATY . . . . .	201
Origins	
The Nature and Purpose of the	
Treaty	
The Alternative Fizzles	
VI. POST-GENEVA POLICY AND DEVELOPMENTS .	257
VII. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	268
A Policy Based on Anti-	
Communist Ideology	
APPENDICES . . . . .	288
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	297

JOHN FOSTER DULLES AND UNITED STATES  
INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

INTRODUCTION

Though much has now been written about the Vietnam War, the American scholarly community has yet to produce an explanation of its meaning that has been widely accepted. Has it been a war like any other, explainable in terms of a realistic resort to political violence in the face of a generally perceived threat to the national interest? Was the war the result of a new American militarism, stimulated by a "warrior caste," as Arthur M. Schlesinger has suggested?<sup>1</sup> Has it been a Leninist-defined imperialist war? Or was American involvement in Vietnam on such a large scale the result of conceptual failures of leadership and bureaucratic confusion, as Henry A. Kissinger has suggested?<sup>2</sup>

These questions raise the further question of what lessons for United States foreign policy can be learned from the Vietnam experience. Any lessons learned would redound

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard M. Pfeffer (ed.), No More Vietnams? The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 11.

to the benefit of future policymakers, unless it is found that policymaking is essentially and inevitably an irrational process. Some scholars have found the Vietnam situation so intractable that they have concluded that no lessons can be drawn. Thus Professor Samuel P. Huntington observed that "it is conceivable that our policy-makers may best meet future crises and dilemmas if they simply blot out of their minds any recollection of this one." The danger of drawing the wrong conclusions was so great that Professor Huntington thought none should be drawn at all.<sup>3</sup>

Each significant historical experience does have its unique aspects, and so reasoning by false analogy is an ever-present danger. The tendency of many American policy makers to reason by false analogy--comparing the Geneva settlement of 1954 to the Munich agreement of 1938, for example--is a factor in the original decisions to go into Vietnam. But to argue that men are condemned to the vicious circle of false analogy is to argue that history holds no lessons, if not to deny the applicability of human intelligence to political affairs altogether.

An interesting question is, what draws leaders away from an intelligent application of historical knowledge to a foreign policy problem? One answer to this question is that "an individual policymaker in this case responds not only to the 'objective' characteristics of a situation, but also

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 2.

to the meaning the situation has for him." And more specifically, "enemies are those who are defined as such, and if one acts upon this interpretation, it is more than likely that the original definition will be confirmed." The author of this hypothesis further believes that there is "an apparently universal tendency to judge the actions of others --and particularly of those defined as enemies--according to different standards from those applied to oneself."<sup>4</sup> This may be understood as a form of ideology to which certain personality types are more subject than others. For some United States policymakers in the era of the cold war, this kind of ideology may result in no distinction being made, or only a blurred one, "between moral and political bases for evaluating the Soviet Union" and Communist activities generally.<sup>5</sup>

The broad purpose of this work is to apply this hypothesis to the manner in which a particular leader, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, approached a particular foreign policy issue, namely the emergence of Communist power in Indochina. This work is not seen by the author as a conventional example of what is known as the "decision making approach" to political inquiry. It does seek to analyze a number of related positive and negative decisions

---

<sup>4</sup>Ole R. Holsti, "Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy," Journal of International Affairs, XXI, No. 1, 1967, 16-39.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

as they affected and called forth United States political and military involvement in Indochina in the 1950's. But it seeks also to examine some personality factors of one of the chief participants in these decisions, and to explore some of the ideological factors which pressed upon the minds of all of the participants. The work is also seen as a kind of case study of one of the most significant of recent United States foreign policy dramas, the final denouement of which we do not yet know. By now, many writers have tried to tell how the United States became involved in Vietnam. It is hoped that a further contribution to the understanding of that involvement is hereby made.

#### A General Framework of Analysis

In his book Foreign Policy in Perspective,<sup>6</sup> John P. Lovell suggests a number of "key factors in decision-making analysis." Lovell's factors are presented below with brief comment as to what extent, and where, they will be incorporated in the body of this work. It should be noted that the attempt here is to focus on the elected or appointed policy-makers in Washington, that is to say on the political aspects, and not on the military aspects of United States involvement in Vietnam.

Lovell's factors are:

1. Situation, External Setting and Capabilities.

---

<sup>6</sup>John P. Lovell, Foreign Policy in Perspective (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 227-240.

Mr. Lovell comments that the problems confronting American foreign policymakers are "frustrating, perplexing, and multifaceted." This is unexceptionable; it is less obvious that "each situation calls for a distinctive pattern of response." This seems too mechanical and restrictive. It will be seen in chapters 1, 2 and 3 below that the pattern of United States response to the situation in Indochina was a matter of some debate, even if the debate was not very penetrating and even though political leaders shared certain general assumptions about the nature of a Communist threat to American interests. It is by no means certain that the basic patterns and principles of American foreign policy devised in the administration of President Harry S. Truman would have brought forth the identical response to the situation in Indochina had Dean Acheson remained Secretary of State rather than being replaced by John Foster Dulles. It is true that, broadly, the situation was seen in both administrations as being the threat of the establishment of a Communist government in Vietnam and perhaps all of Indochina. It is also true that a general concept which came to be called the "domino theory" affected the thinking of the officials in both administrations, but this thinking was applied specifically to the Indochina situation by the Eisenhower Administration. These questions are treated in chapters 1, 2 and 3.

The setting of the problem, geographically, was

distant and, from the military point of view, involved a difficult terrain and climate. In Indochina, much of the population could be counted upon to be hostile to United States involvement. This latter aspect was considered by Secretary of State Acheson in his policy speech of January 12, 1950.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding tactical capabilities, Mr. Lovell says that "a situation is invariably interpreted in relation to an estimate of the capability of the government to respond to it." But in a "frustrating, perplexing, and multifaceted" situation such as that in Indochina, such an estimate may be especially difficult to make. Moreover, there is much evidence that the Indochinese situation was not interpreted by American policymakers in such a way as to correspond to United States capabilities of responding to it. It seems indeed to have been one of those classic cases described by Hans Morgenthau: "When faced with a complex political problem, we try to escape by redefining it in military terms."<sup>8</sup> The first estimate of the Indochinese situation was not precise but involved the notion that a limited amount of military and economic aid to the French would achieve some desired results, if not a total solution to the problem. As

---

<sup>7</sup> See pages 30-31, chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> The quotation is from James P. Young, The Politics of Affluence (Scranton: Chandler Publishing Company, 1968), 159. For further discussion of the point see Hans Morgenthau, The Purpose of American Politics (New York: Knopf, 1960), 132-196.

the French military-political effort failed to bring these desired results, the United States gave its backing and a promise of bearing virtually the entire expense of the Navarre Plan for winning the war in Vietnam. The French assured the Americans and the American leadership assured the public that the plan would be successful. By the summer of 1954 it was clear that it would not be. Still later, in the mid-1960's, United States leaders believed that a few divisions of troops in South Vietnam and a few months of bombing North Vietnam would achieve their goal of an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam. Whether this goal will ever be achieved by United States efforts is somewhat doubtful. The question of United States capabilities, short of specific military requirements, is discussed passim in chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5.

2. Personality factors. "The drama of foreign policy consists not only of complex and challenging situations that must be confronted through the allocation of scarce resources," writes Lovell. "It is also revealed in the human frailty and courage, stupidity and genius, or conflict and team work characteristic of the actors. Therefore, explanation of foreign-policy decisions requires the identification of the particular cast of characters that participated in the decisions, in order to discern the individual weaknesses and strengths, biases and predispositions that helped to determine various responses." The principal

personality to be considered here is that of John Foster Dulles. A thorough treatment of this subject will be found in chapter 2. Less attention will be given to other individuals as they appear in the narrative.

3. Political culture. Only those aspects of American political culture which have some direct bearing on the events under consideration here will be treated in some detail. The American commitment to democracy, however defined, and the concomitant subscription to the "Puritan ethic" are background or foundation elements which are taken for granted in almost any discussion of American foreign policy. This may be seen in terms of making foreign policy decisions "democratically," or of promoting democracy outside the United States' borders. In the present work, criticism is implied of a policy-making process in which democracy is virtually reduced to a public relations or salesmanship plane. Whatever democracy was to be promoted abroad was defined essentially in terms of anti-Communism. The shortcomings of the climate for democratic, competitive debate within the United States was also a factor.<sup>9</sup>

4. Recruitment. Lovell defines recruitment as "a process of selection and self-selection," and says that "we can see some links between recruitment patterns and

---

<sup>9</sup>For a stimulating discussion of some of these aspects of American political culture, see John C. Livingston and Robert G. Thompson, The Consent of the Governed (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), chapters 1 and 2.

personality, since those who occupy key policy positions are unlikely to represent a random cross section of the population in terms of personality, but rather, are drawn from the segment of the population with needs and aspirations for responsibility and power." We shall see in chapter 2 how this applies especially to John Foster Dulles and in subsequent chapters how his virtual self-selection to the post of Secretary of State affected, indeed tended to dominate, his performance in office.

5. Socialization. This is defined as "the process of learning a social role," and Lovell considers it a significant factor in foreign policy-making. John Foster Dulles held a very personalized conception of his office. The extent to which he held this view is perhaps the most remarkable thing about Mr. Dulles's career as Secretary of State. There were times when Mr. Dulles's self esteem took on mystical aspects that seemed to border on delusions of grandeur. Since Mr. Dulles eschewed an institutionalized concept of his occupation of the position as Secretary of State, the matter of socialization is, for him, scarcely pertinent. The personality factors, therefore, remain dominant. They will be discussed in chapter 2.

A summary of these factors and the impact they had on Secretary Dulles's Indochina policies is presented in the concluding chapter.

### A Note on Sources

The chief sources employed here are the private works and public statements of former Secretary of State Dulles, and those of his associates in the making and conduct of United States foreign policy in the 1950's. Official sources, such as the U. S. Department of State Bulletin, have been used wherever possible. Direct access to the private papers of Mr. Dulles deposited at Princeton University (many of which have appeared publicly over the years, of course) was an opportunity of which the author has not been able to take advantage. Works based on these sources, a few of which deal directly with United States involvement in Vietnam, have been used, and it is felt that a fair cross-section of Mr. Dulles's personal works was available to justify the data and conclusions presented here. Mr. Andrew H. Berding's Dulles on Diplomacy contains verbatim statements by Mr. Dulles on a wide variety of foreign policy and diplomatic questions. It is an invaluable source by a close friend and associate of the former Secretary of State. Volume XVII of The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy - John Foster Dulles was likewise an invaluable source for the work presented here. Finally, and as will be evident, extensive use has been made of selected secondary sources on Mr. Dulles and the war in Vietnam.

## CHAPTER I

### INDOCHINA POLICY IN THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION--

#### BACKGROUND TO THE DULLES ERA

##### The Containment Policy

Whatever the nature and origins of the cold war,<sup>1</sup> the policy devised by the United States to meet that situation has been almost universally referred to as the policy of containment. The first statement of the policy is found in an article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," in the July 1947 issue of Foreign Affairs. The article was written by "Mr. X" or George F. Kennan, who was at that time director of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department. Mr. Kennan argued that the Soviet Russian leaders were, owing to the influence of their Marxist ideology, implacably opposed to the capitalist countries. There could "never be on

---

<sup>1</sup>For representative works on the subject see Walter Lippmann, The Cold War--A Study in U. S. Foreign Policy (New York: Harper, 1947); Norman A. Graebner, Cold War Diplomacy, 1945-1960 (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1952); Martin F. Herz, Beginnings of the Cold War (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966); Herbert Fies, From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War 1945-1950 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970); Louis J. Halle, The Cold War as History (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Denna F. Fleming, The Cold War and its Origins, 1917-60, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1961); and Gar Alperovitz, Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

Moscow's side any sincere assumption of a community of aims between the Soviet Union and powers which are regarded as capitalism (sic.). It must invariably be assumed in Moscow that the aims of the capitalist world are antagonistic to the Soviet regime." Serious antagonisms would thus last "for the foreseeable future" and the Soviet Union would be very difficult to deal with. But because their ideology assured them an ultimate worldwide victory for the Communist system, "the Kremlin has no compunction about retreating in the face of superior force." Kennan therefore recommended a resolute "application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points." It is important to emphasize this point, for the State Department would, some six years later under a different administration, seem at least to directly challenge and abandon this prescription. It was, as James P. Young has observed, a hard doctrine which demanded "that Americans give up their traditional isolationism, that they cease looking for quick, final solutions to international problems, that they forsake a highly congenial moralism, that they entrench themselves for a long 'twilight struggle.'"<sup>2</sup>

The significance of Mr. Kennan's title should also be noted, for there was some ambiguity as to the exact sources of Soviet conduct. Kennan was unable to make clear

---

<sup>2</sup>James P. Young, The Politics of Affluence (Scranton: Chandler Publishing Company, 1968), 153. For Kennan's article see Foreign Affairs, XXV, No. 4 (July 1967), 566-82.

whether Soviet fears of "capitalist encirclement" were grounded originally in their Marxist ideology or in the normal reaction they themselves provoked by "their own aggressive int ansigence." He also failed to distinguish between this po sible source of Soviet conduct and another quite different one relating to the difficulty of establishing firm leadership within the Soviet Union. Kennan believed that

there is ample evidence that the stress laid in Moscow on the menace confronting Soviet society from the world outside its border is founded not in the realities of foreign antagonism, but in the necessity of explaining away the existence of dictatorial authority at home.<sup>3</sup>

Kennan acknowledged that the Soviet leaders might have some legitimate fears growing out of an objective appraisal of their national history. But was it Soviet fear, based on history and ideology, that accounted for their behavior? Or was it Soviet intransigence and aggressiveness borne of the Communist Party leadership's penchant for dictatorial authority which was not accepted by the Russian people that explained their conduct? Fear and a guilty conscience may often go together, but they are not synonymous. Mr. Kennan left these questions unanswered, but his brief essay constituted a quasi-official explication, in part at least, of postwar United States foreign policy.<sup>4</sup> When Communist

---

<sup>3</sup>Kennan in Foreign Affairs, July, 1957.

<sup>4</sup>Though the essential elements of Mr. Kennan's analysis became official policy, Mr. Kennan himself has tended to back off from some of his original propositions, pleading

governments were established in China and other Asian countries, the problem of analysis became even more complex.

While George F. Kennan's article gave the containment policy its name, the policy gained concrete existence and popular acceptance through the Truman Doctrine of 1947. The Truman Doctrine was enunciated by the President in an address before a Joint Session of Congress on March 12, 1947,<sup>5</sup> but was actually born at a significant White House meeting on February 27, 1947.

Earlier, British Foreign Secretary Bevin had informed the United States that because of its serious economic difficulties at home, Britain would be forced to end its aid to Greece and Turkey, countries threatened with internal or external Communist challenges. The United States was asked to pick up the burden.<sup>6</sup> At the February 27 White House meeting, Secretary of State George C. Marshall presented to congressional leaders the Administration's proposals for meeting the situation. He stressed United States friendship

---

generally that his views were misunderstood and misapplied by those who subsequently directed U. S. foreign policy. This writer knows of no instance where Mr. Kennan has admitted to any ambiguity in his 1947 article. See for example his speech "The Quest for Concept," printed in Harvard Today, Autumn, 1967, 11-17.

<sup>5</sup>For a text of the President's address see Department of State Bulletin, XVI (March 29, 1947), 534-537.

<sup>6</sup>For a full general account of the creation of the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan with which it is organically connected, by a former member of the Department of State, see Joseph M. Jones, The Fifteen Days (New York: Viking, 1955).

with the British and the humanitarian approach. Apparently his appeal failed to impress his audience. Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson came to the rescue of the nascent policy. His account is worth quoting at some length:

My distinguished chief, most unusually and unhappily flubbed his opening statement. In desperation I whispered to him a request to speak. This was my crisis. For a week I had nurtured it. These congressmen had no conception of what challenged them; it was my task to bring it home. Both my superiors, equally perturbed, gave me the floor. Never have I spoken under such a pressing sense that the issue was up to me alone. No time was left for measured appraisal. In the past eighteen months, I said, Soviet pressure on the Straits, on Iran, and on northern Greece had brought the Balkans to the point where a highly possible Soviet breakthrough might open three continents to Soviet penetration. Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the east. It would also carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt, and to Europe through Italy and France, already threatened by the strongest domestic Communist parties in Western Europe. The Soviet Union was playing one of the greatest gambles in history at minimal cost. It did not need to win all of the possibilities. Even one or two offered immense gains. We and we alone were in a position to break up the play. These were the stakes that British withdrawal from the eastern Mediterranean offered to an eager and ruthless opponent.<sup>7</sup>

Acheson notes that a long silence followed. In the Republican 80th Congress, success for any major foreign policy initiative depended in large part on the support of Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, who carefully cultivated his reputation as the guardian of a bipartisan foreign policy. According to Acheson, Vandenberg finally spoke solemnly: "Mr. President, if you will say that to the Congress and the

---

<sup>7</sup>Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 219.

country, I will support you and I believe that most of its members will do the same."<sup>8</sup>

The Congress, after frequent and lengthy public hearings at which Acheson appeared, did finally give its approval. There were questions as to the scope and ultimate meaning of the new doctrine. Acheson thought that Congressional questioners tried "to embarrass a witness himself by pushing statements to what has been called a 'dryly logical extreme.'"<sup>9</sup> Acheson's own "unmeasured" language now haunted him a bit and he was irritated by the result. Senator Vandenberg made repeated requests "that the problems of the two small countries be put in the setting of the larger confrontation between the Soviet Union and ourselves."<sup>10</sup> China Lobby specialists in the Congress, notably Representative Walter Judd, wanted to know if the new doctrine would apply to China.

With the help of Senator Tom Connally, Acheson was able to de-escalate. The Greek-Turkish aid proposal was "not a pattern out of a tailor's shop to fit everybody in the world and every nation in the world, because the conditions in no two nations are identical."<sup>11</sup> Acheson did, however, leave considerable latitude for applying the Truman Doctrine: future requests for aid would depend on the circumstances of each specific case. And elsewhere in his book, Mr. Acheson ties United States involvement in

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 225.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

Vietnam directly to the Truman Doctrine. In a rather curious yet obvious reference to Vietnam, Mr. Acheson reveals how the global concept of a struggle between a "Communist world" and a "free world" has formed the basis for American foreign policy since 1947:

The prime necessity was to save the pivotal position occupied by Greece and Turkey. Many years would go by before an officer commanding in a forward and exposed spot would call down his own artillery fire upon his own position to block an enemy advance. The spirit which inspired us all at the time has been well put by Joseph M. Jones of the Office of Public Affairs, who was both a participant in and the historian of all this effort: "All . . . were aware that a major turning point in American history was taking place. The convergence of massive historical trends upon that moment was so real as to be almost tangible, and it was plain that in that carrefour of time all those trends were being to some degree deflected."<sup>12</sup>

#### Negotiation from Strength

Coral Bell, an Australian student of recent American foreign policy, has written that the policy of containment was "a concept for the day-to-day level of operations," but that another component of U. S. policy operated at the aspiration level.<sup>13</sup> This policy came to be known as "negotiating from strength," a phrase "widely used as a sort of shorthand for the aspirations of the Western alliance in its relationship with the U. S. S. R. early in 1950."<sup>14</sup> The term and

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 220.

<sup>13</sup>Coral Bell, Negotiation from Strength - A Study in the Politics of Power (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 23.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 5.

the policy were promoted in speeches by Dean Acheson and Winston Churchill.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Bell further distinguishes the "containment" from the "negotiating from strength" policy by stating that the former was a status quo concept, aimed at keeping the situation from deteriorating, while the latter was "prima facie a revisionist one," aimed at improving things, for example persuading the Russians to withdraw their troops from the Eastern European countries.<sup>16</sup> This distinction was to become more significant under the Eisenhower Administration when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles sought publicly to deny the containment policy.<sup>17</sup>

In theory, the policy of negotiating from strength was merely an example of the classic policy of balance of power. Acheson went beyond Kennan's statement of the containment doctrine, and, by seeing the causation of war as lying in the nature of the relation between states, arrived at a prospect of ending the cold war through diplomatic adjustment. In so doing he generally avoided the ambiguity innerent in Kennan's hope for a solution growing out of

---

<sup>15</sup>For Acheson's speeches see Department of State Bulletin, XXII (March 20, 1950), 427-9; and XXII (February 20, 1950), 273. For a pertinent excerpt from a Churchill speech, see Bell, op. cit., 10.

<sup>16</sup>Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 23. Dr. Bell uses the term "revisionist" here to refer to a policy designed to gain a power advantage by changing the status quo.

<sup>17</sup>See chapters 2 and 3.

Soviet domestic change, "an erosion from despotism."<sup>18</sup>

Acheson's policy was thus more "hard-headed" than Kennan's and required that the Western countries redress the balance of power before undertaking the diplomatic adjustment that would one day be possible.<sup>19</sup> That day was not to come during Acheson's incumbency in the Department of State nor under succeeding Republican and Democratic administrations, though there would be efforts at "summit" diplomacy in the 1950's and 1960's. Well before the outbreak of the Korean War the emphasis in American policy was placed on rearmament and military strength, rather than on bargaining. Winston Churchill, British Opposition Leader in the late 1940's, spoke out from time to time in favor of a "parley at the summit" which might end or abate the cold war. Churchill regarded such diplomacy as merely the continuation of a war-time policy which he considered to have been successful. But this was hardly the official or public view in the United States.

This was so not only because of the traditional

---

<sup>18</sup>American Diplomacy, 1900-1950, 124.

<sup>19</sup>Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 22-25. There was considerable divergence between Acheson and Kennan which grew into open debate by 1947. See Acheson's article in Foreign Affairs, April 1958, and his book, Power and Diplomacy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958). As noted above, Kennan significantly modified his own views by 1957 and developed his own approach to diplomatic adjustment, but he drew no closer to Acheson's views on the broader questions of U. S. foreign policy.

American distaste for balance-of-power diplomacy,<sup>20</sup> but due also to another related American attitude which was especially acute in this postwar period. As Bell points out, distrust of personal Presidential diplomacy was "a sort of overlay on a general American skepticism of American diplomacy as such, which may be unreasonable but is historically deep-seated, visible as early as Jay's Treaty."<sup>21</sup> Summit meetings were generally regarded as being "more in conformity with customs and policies followed in the days of absolute monarchy,"<sup>22</sup> than with those of our Republic. The results of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences were already being brought into question by 1947. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, this skepticism toward diplomacy was to be exaggerated into a fear bordering on panic by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in the 1950's.

As for openly pursuing a "balance of power" policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, Acheson declined to use that term and put forward instead the term "negotiation from strength." To have used the term "balance of power" would, as Coral Bell has suggested, "been a tactless expression for a Secretary of State to use, since the concept of the balance

---

<sup>20</sup> See Frederick H. Hartmann, The New Age of American Foreign Policy (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 4, 16, and 143n.

<sup>21</sup> Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 15.

<sup>22</sup> New York Herald Tribune editorial, June 14, 1961. Quoted in Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 15n. One may also recall that Will Rogers captured the fancy of many Americans with such quips as "We never lost a war or won a conference."

of power is regarded as sinister by many Americans."<sup>23</sup> But another possible explanation for Acheson's choice of words may be that he had in mind not a parity of strength but a preponderance of strength for the United States and her allies in the cold war. The question would probably turn on how, that is in terms of what kinds of military and political assets, strength was to be measured. Here we need only point out that the Truman Administration's policy was one of building "situations of strength," and that these included the Greek-Turkish aid program, the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It is obvious that, as far as concrete steps are concerned, these actions were located in Europe and were aimed at what was regarded as an aggressive and expansionist Soviet Union. The application of these policies to Asia was to come later, though not much later. When they began to be applied to Asia, the focal point of challenge continued to be the Soviet Union, and there remains until today confusion as to how these policies are to be applied to Asia.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup>Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 19n.

<sup>24</sup>One author, Richard Harris, has contended that the "ideological" centers of the globe today are the United States and East Asia, and not the United States and the Soviet Union. America and East Asia - A New Thirty Years War? (New York: George Braziller, 1968). Whatever the validity of his thesis at this time, the first decade of the cold war was essentially a U. S.-U. S. S. R. struggle. The 1960's saw a rise in American concern over a threatening China which contributed new dimensions to U. S. involvement in Southeast Asia, and it may be true that "the change of adversaries has not persuaded us to reexamine the theory." The

One final point should be made about the broad outlines of American policy as it emerged in the Truman Administration. As we shall see below, 1950 was a crucial year for foreign policy decision-making, but the basic policy here characterized as "negotiating from strength" was not really new when Secretary Acheson first used the term in his February, 1950 speeches. The State Department had at least from 1947, at the time of the Foreign Ministers Conference in Moscow, wanted to avoid negotiations with the Russians.<sup>25</sup> From 1947 to 1951, negotiation from strength was "an aspiration made explicit."<sup>26</sup> The policy was bequeathed to the Republican administration, which welcomed it but gave it a new twist in January, 1953.

#### NSC-68--A Global Commitment

While the containment doctrine as enunciated by George F. Kennan was a very general statement, and Dean Acheson's policy of negotiating from strength came closer to the operations level, the most cogent statement of post-World

---

latter phrase is Ronald Steel's, quoted in Michael Parenti, The Anti-Communist Impulse (New York: Random House, 1969), 167. Chapters 9 and 10 of this book offer an interesting commentary on the changes in our perceptions of cold war adversaries.

<sup>25</sup> See Walt W. Rostow, The United States in the World Arena (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 209; and John C. Campbell, The United States in World Affairs, 1948-49 (New York: Harper & Brothers for Council on Foreign Relations, 1950 and 1951).

<sup>26</sup> Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 23.

War II American foreign policy is to be found in a document which was written and adopted in early 1950. If negotiating from strength was an "aspiration made explicit" in the late 1940's and early 1950's, it was also the United States foreign-policy posture in the precise sense of the word; it was how the United States stood vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, and the stance was rather rigid.<sup>27</sup> Acheson's policy is more accurately termed "building situations of strength," and National Security Council paper 68 gets very close to the matter of how this was to be done. Mr. Acheson, more intimately associated with NSC-68 than any other individual, once called it "one of the great documents in our history."<sup>28</sup>

The National Security Council was created by the National Security Act of 1947 as part of the "revolution" in the U. S. foreign policy system which took place after World War II.<sup>29</sup> It was designed as a high-level, inter-departmental committee for the coordination of United States foreign and defense policy. How it is actually used and how well it works at any particular time depends on the man who occupies the presidency. According to Dean Acheson, President Truman

---

<sup>27</sup> Acheson makes clear in his memoirs that as far as he was concerned, there would be strength, but very little, if any, negotiation for a long time. See page 380, Present at the Creation.

<sup>28</sup> Cabell Phillips, The Truman Presidency (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 305.

<sup>29</sup> Hartmann, New Age of American Foreign Policy, 74-83.

used the NSC to the best possible advantage.<sup>30</sup>

In September, 1949 the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb. One of the United States' greatest sources of strength was thereby greatly undermined, and it was judged that within four years the U. S. advantage could be wiped out altogether.<sup>31</sup> President Truman was faced with the decision of whether to order rapid development of the hydrogen bomb. In January, 1950 he authorized a crash program for development. But the Russians were sure eventually to develop hydrogen bombs too. A stand-off would be incompatible with policies already being pursued. A greater yet more flexible effort was needed to bring United States capabilities ahead of those of the Soviet Union. The urgency was surely heightened by the emergence of a Communist government in China and by the reaction to this event within the United States. Within this context of events, President Truman ordered the Departments of Defense and State to undertake a complete review of United States objectives in peace and war. This effort became significant later for U. S. involvement in Vietnam, for, as Dean Acheson puts it, "While our efforts had helped Europe make great strides toward recovery, this had not been so in the Far East."<sup>32</sup> The principal result of the review was NSC-68, which constituted, in Acheson's view,

---

<sup>30</sup>Acheson, Present at the Creation, 733.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 376.      <sup>32</sup>Ibid., 344.

"a new definition of foreign policy."<sup>33</sup>

NSC-68 bears a "top secret" classification, "and may not be quoted, but its contents have been widely discussed in print."<sup>34</sup> Several paraphrases or summations have appeared, one of which is here reproduced in full:

Events since the end of World War II have created a new power relationship in the world which must be viewed not as a temporary distortion but as a long-range and fundamental realignment among nations. This has arisen out of two historical events: the Russian revolution and the growth of the Communist movement throughout the world; and the development of nuclear weapons with their capacity for unlimited destruction. The U. S. and the U. S. S. R. are the terminal poles of this new international axis.

Kremlin policy has three main objectives: (1) to preserve and to strengthen its position as the ideological and power center of the Communist world; (2) to extend and to consolidate that power by the acquisition of new satellites; and (3) to oppose and to weaken any competing system of power that threatens Communist world hegemony.

These objectives are inimical to American ideals, which are predicated on the concepts of freedom and human dignity. Our objectives in this context are set out nowhere better than in the Constitution: "to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

It must be assumed that these concepts and objectives of American life will come under increasing attack. If they are to be protected, the nation must be determined, at whatever cost or sacrifice, to preserve at home and abroad those conditions of life in which these objectives can survive and prosper. We must seek to do this by peaceful means and with the cooperation of other like-minded peoples. But if peaceful means fail we must

---

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., chapters 38 and 41.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 375. Acheson cites Samuel P. Huntington, The Common Defense (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 50-51. NSC-68 was not among the documents disclosed to the New York Times and other newspapers in the spring of 1971.

be willing and ready to fight.

Conceding the possibility of such a war, what are the relative capabilities of the U. S. and its probable allies, and the U. S. S. R. and its probable allies?

As a first consideration, Russia's progress in the development of atomic bombs probably means that an approximate stalemate in nuclear weapons will be reached by about 1954. The United States might extend its advantage for a few years longer if the hydrogen bomb should be perfected, but success in that effort is uncertain.

While the economic and productive capacity of the U. S. S. R. is markedly below that of the West, its potential for growth is great, and the Communist nations are striving more determinedly than the West to realize full potentials for growth.

In spite of these weaknesses, the Communist military capability for conventional, or nonatomic, warfare is now substantially superior to that of the West and is continuing to improve at a more rapid rate. This imbalance can be expected to continue for at least as long as it takes to achieve the economic rehabilitation of Western Europe and the full implementation of the NATO alliance.

Could the crisis between the two great powers be reduced through negotiation and particularly by mutual arms reduction? The prospects at present are poor, given the immutability of Soviet objectives and its advantage in military power. The West cannot abandon its efforts to negotiate, particularly to neutralize the threat of nuclear holocaust, but it must act in the realization that Stalin respects the reality of force a great deal more than he does the abstraction of peace.

Based on these premises, an indefinite period of tension and danger is foreseen for the United States and for the West--a period that should be defined less as a short-term crisis than as a permanent and fundamental alteration in the shape of international relations. To meet this new condition, four possible lines of action are open to the United States:

1. It can continue on its present course of reduced defense budgets and limited military capabilities, but without reducing its commitments to free-world security.

2. It can abandon these commitments, maintain its military capabilities at the present level, and withdraw behind the shield of a "fortress America."

3. It can attempt through "preventive war" a quick, violent but possibly more favorable redress in the world balance of power.

4. It can strike out on a bold and massive program of rebuilding the West's defensive potential to surpass that of the Soviet world, and of meeting each fresh challenge promptly and unequivocally. Such a program

must have the United States at its political and material center with other free nations in variable orbits around it. The strength of such an alliance should be insurmountable as long as each of its members remains strong.

This fourth alternative is inescapably the preferred one. Its fulfillment calls for the United States to take the lead in a rapid and substantial buildup in the defensive power of the West, beginning "at the center" and radiating outward. This means virtual abandonment by the United States of trying to distinguish between national and global security. It also means the end of subordinating security needs to the traditional budgeting restrictions; of asking, "How much security can we afford?" In other words, security must henceforth become the dominant element in the national budget, and other elements must be accommodated to it.

The wealth potential of the country is such that as much as 20 percent of the gross national product can be devoted to security without causing national bankruptcy. This new concept of the security needs of the nation calls for annual appropriations of the order of \$50 billion, or not much below the former wartime levels.<sup>35</sup>

NSC-68 was the product of a very extensive study participated in by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Atomic Energy Commission and other branches of the government as well as the Departments of State and Defense. The paper itself was not very long, but "was heavily documented with special studies and statistics"; the above summary contains only the "principal postulates and conclusions."<sup>36</sup>

The paper was discussed in the National Security Council on April 25, 1950 and with the President's approval became

---

<sup>35</sup>Phillips, The Truman Presidency, 306-308. Phillips' summation is in turn based on that of Paul Y. Hammond. See his "NSC-68: Prologue for Rearmament" in Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder, Strategy, Politics and Defense Budgets (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 271-378.

<sup>36</sup>Phillips, The Truman Presidency, 306.

national policy that same month.<sup>37</sup>

One of those who worked on the study called NSC-68 "the most ponderous expression of elementary ideas" he had ever encountered.<sup>38</sup> Dean Acheson considered the document "formidable," and has recorded his view that it amounted to "more than a clinic in political science's latest, most fashionable, and most boring study, the 'decision-making process,' for it carries us beyond decisions to what should be their fruits, action."<sup>39</sup> To underestimate the import of NSC-68 would, then, be difficult. Certainly the high officials of the Truman Administration agreed upon its significance for U. S. foreign policy and even for U. S. history. At this point it is hazardous to state with finality the precise interpretation put upon these decisions by the succeeding Eisenhower Administration. John Foster Dulles' role in such interpretation will be explored in the following chapter. It would seem safe to say at least that a basic premise of NSC-68, that of a monolithic Communist world headed by the Soviet Union and bent on world domination, was shared by all succeeding administrations. In 1950 Dean Acheson "went about the country preaching this premise of NSC-68."<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Acheson, Present at the Creation, 374.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.      <sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 375. Acheson notes that there was disagreement within the government on this premise. Although it is fundamental, Acheson's attitude seems to have been simply

Truman-Acheson Indochina Policy

Charles A. Beard once wrote that "foreign policy rests upon an image of the world."<sup>41</sup> Such images are not likely to emerge full blown from a short span of time nor from a single event. The image of the world reflected in NSC-68 existed in the mind of those who created the document

---

that, in any case, the United States could not afford to take a chance. He is aware of the cold war "revisionist" literature, but seems unimpressed. See pages 752-53.

As for eliciting a favorable response from the general public, Acheson believed that "the task of a public officer seeking to explain and gain support for a major policy is not that of the writer of a doctoral thesis. Qualifications must give way to simplicity of statement, nicety and nuance to bluntness, almost brutality, in carrying home a point." Present at the Creation, 375. This is a very revealing statement. Just what is being subjected to brutality is not entirely clear. The "facts about ourselves, our allies, and the Soviet Union" which underlay the conclusions of NSC-68 were for Acheson "beyond argument," though perhaps not beyond doubt. (page 375). This was unavoidable because in Acheson's view, what the President needed "was communicable wisdom, not mere conclusions, however soundly based in experience or intuition, what the man in the street called 'educated hunches.'" I saw my duty as gathering all the wisdom available and communicating it amid considerable competition." (pages 347-48) This is an ambiguous statement. Cf. Hans J. Morgenthau, Truth and Power (New York: Praeger, 1970), 238; Politics Among Nations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 4-5; and "The Intellectual, Political, and Moral Roots of U. S. Failure in Vietnam," a paper prepared for delivery at the 1968 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 5-8. Overall, Mr. Acheson's view was that "no one can decide and act who is beset by second thoughts, self-doubts, and that most enfeebling of emotions, regret." Present at the Creation, 731. Mr. Acheson comes close to adopting for himself the witty cliché, "these are the conclusions-on which I base my facts." At one point (page 375) he was constrained to place the word "facts" with quotation marks.

<sup>41</sup> Charles A. Beard, A Foreign Policy for Americans (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), 5.

for some time before it saw the light of day--for just how long it is impossible to say. A United States policy for Indochina, which became more specific and virtually automatic as a result of NSC-68, had begun to take shape at least five years before the adoption of the new broad policy in 1950.<sup>42</sup>

Anticipating the return of the French colonial rulers to Indochina after World War II, Ho Chi Minh or Nguyen Ai Quoc, leader of the Revolutionary League for the Independence of Vietnam (Vietminh) appealed to the United States for support for Vietnamese independence. The appeals were sent in messages to Washington from OSS officers in Indochina, and requested that Vietnam be given the "same status as the Philippines."<sup>43</sup> Later, as fighting broke out with the returning French troops, Ho appealed again for formal American intervention: "Ho cited the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations Charter, and a speech by President (Harry S.) Truman in October, 1945 endorsing national self-determination."<sup>44</sup> Though the United States gave no aid to

---

<sup>42</sup>For a very useful account of U. S. Indochina policy before 1945, see Edward R. Drachman, United States Policy Toward Vietnam, 1940-1945 (Rutherford, N. J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970).

<sup>43</sup>The McNamara Pentagon history of U. S. involvement in Vietnam, hereafter cited as Pentagon History. The account given here is taken from a text in the St. Louis Post Dispatch, June 30, 1971. This text did not appear in the New York Times. See also, Drachman, U. S. Policy Toward Vietnam, 116-124.

<sup>44</sup>Pentagon History, SLPD, June 30, 1971.

the returning French at this time, Ho received no answers to his messages, and was forced to acquiesce in the return of the French to Vietnam for a five year period.<sup>45</sup>

Already fear existed in the United States government that Ho Chi Minh might lead his country into the orbit of the Soviet Union. But another motivating factor was the desire of the United States to win the support of France for its policies in Europe. As the Pentagon History reads:

After 1946, not only were Ho's direct communications with the U. S. cut, but also signals he received from the U. S. were hardly encouraging. By the time the Indochina war had begun in earnest in late 1946, U. S. military equipment had already been used by French forces against the Vietnamese, and the U. S. had arranged credit for France to purchase \$160,000,000 worth of vehicles and miscellaneous industrial equipment for use in Indochina.<sup>46</sup>

In February, 1947, as the fighting spread, Secretary of State George C. Marshall expressed hope that "a pacific basis for adjustment of the difficulties could be found."<sup>47</sup> Within six months the Marshall Plan, meaning greater aid to France which would indirectly give her greater maneuverability in Indochina, was inaugurated. There is no evidence that this was the direct purpose of the United States at this time. It seems that the United States was not much interested in Vietnam in this period. The government was aware of Ho Chi Minh's political strength, and may have feared his influence or potential control over other

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Also New York Times, February 8, 1947.

Southeast Asian countries. His party had at one time been called the Indochinese Communist Party.

State Department instructions on December 5, 1946 to United States representatives in Hanoi advised: "Keep in mind Ho's clear record as an agent of international communism . . . least desirable eventuality would be establishment of Communist-controlled Moscow-oriented state." Yet the documents supporting the Pentagon History show that the United States government was unable to distinguish any direct links between Ho and the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup>

President Franklin D. Roosevelt had been personally opposed to French colonialism in Indochina,<sup>49</sup> but took no concrete steps to effect independence for Vietnam. After March, 1945, the United States provided modest aid to the French and the Vietminh resistance forces. Later, the disinclination of the United States to intervene on behalf of the anti-French Vietnamese was tantamount to acceptance of the French re-establishment of control. The general guidelines of U. S. policy--to urge the French toward "progressive measures in Indochina, but to expect France to decide when its peoples would be ready for independence"--were established by June, 1945 and remained basic to all U. S. activities and decisions until the policy was formally

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Elliott Roosevelt, As He Saw It (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945), 71, 76-77, 114-116. Also Drachman, United States Policy Toward Vietnam, 43-57.

changed in 1950.<sup>50</sup> The State Department instructed United States diplomats to "apply such persuasion and-or pressure as is best calculated to produce desired result of France's unequivocally and promptly approving the principle of Vietnamese independence." Before 1954, France actually granted independence "in principle" to Vietnam several times. In 1955, the United States helped to give the French the final shove in granting Vietnam de facto independence,<sup>51</sup> and thereby assumed the French "burden."

But the Truman Administration was more interested in seeing Communism defeated in Indochina than in independence per se, though the United States leaders obviously desired both. France was therefore informed that U. S. policy of nonintervention would not be changed "unless real progress is made in reaching non-Communist solution in Indochina based on cooperation of true nationalists of that country." This remained the desire and the policy of the succeeding administration, but it vastly oversimplified the task facing the French. The near monopoly of nationalistic prestige held by the Vietminh was a situation over which the French had limited control.<sup>52</sup> It was easy to say that the French

---

<sup>50</sup> Pentagon History, SLPD, June 30, 1971.

<sup>51</sup> Victor Bator, Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1965), 182-83.

<sup>52</sup> Bernard B. Fall, The Two Viet-Nams (New York: Praeger, 1967), 104-105. Fall follows the conventional U.S. practice of contrasting the Vietnamese "nationalists," i.e., the anti-Communists, with the Vietminh. It is an arbitrary

should rally the non-Communist nationalist forces. It was not so easy to do it, especially since the French were not sure they wanted to divest themselves of their Indochinese colonies. The State Department knew that Ho Chi Minh was a Communist, and indeed the United States government tended to define nationalism in Indochina in terms of anti-Communism. But being able to confirm their own inclination to believe that Ho was a Soviet puppet, the Americans could hardly expect to impress those Vietnamese who were fighting the French nor define their nationalism for them.

As was seen above, a basis for the modification of overall U. S. policy was laid in 1947 with the adoption of the containment policy and the Truman Doctrine. The collapse of the Chiang Kai-shek government of China in 1949 led to a further significant step toward greater U. S. involvement in Indochina. This step was taken almost simultaneously with the adoption of NSC-68. Yet there was hesitation in the Administration when it came to applying the new policy to the Far Eastern situation. The situation in China had already become a ponderous domestic political issue.<sup>53</sup> Secretary of

---

use of words growing out of the perception of a monolithic world Communism, and has even less justification in the case of Vietnam than in that of China.

<sup>53</sup> John King Fairbank, The United States and China (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). Fairbank writes: "To have Free China become Communist seemed a national disaster. Like the Great Depression, it became political ammunition against the party in office. The Republicans used it in the 1948 campaign. Soon the Hiss case, the Fuchs atomic spy case, the fear of spies and

State Acheson was, no doubt inadvertently, intensifying the squabble over China. In early 1949, Mr. Acheson made his famous remark about letting the dust settle in China.<sup>54</sup>

This was before the ultimate collapse of the Chinese Nationalists, and Acheson has explained that he did not intend the remark to describe a policy,<sup>55</sup> it would seem at least to have indicated a policy attitude. Certainly the Truman Administration was resisting attempts by Congress to extend new aid to the failing Chiang Kai-shek regime.<sup>56</sup> Realistically, Acheson thought that it was too late to "save"

conspiracies, capped by a major war against Communist China in Korea, among other complex factors, took the lid off the McCarthy era." How much was genuine concern and how much merely political opportunism can perhaps never be known. Fairbank continues, "The first reaction of many Americans, suddenly confronted by a China strong, chauvenist, and anti-Western (instead of weak and pro-American) was to seize upon international Communism as the explanation and attribute our reverse to Kremlin plots and State Department treachery." (page 420) As holders of high positions in the State Department, Dean Acheson and Dean Rusk rejected the latter explanation, but on at least one occasion each, they embraced the former. See pages 40 and 41 below, note 68.

It seems likely that Acheson's remarks referred to here were more in response to his Republican tormenters than to the Far Eastern situation itself. But for many Fairbank's further comments were no doubt true: U. S. self-confidence suffered. The entire Western liberal political heritage seemed threatened. We could not believe, therefore, that Chinese had willingly chosen Communism. It had been imposed by force and manipulation, and was too evil to last. "We therefore set ourselves at least to "contain" the expansion of the Sino-Soviet monolith outside its borders, and this we did in the Korean War, in our alliance with Taiwan, and by supporting the French in Indo-China until 1954 and South Vietnam after that date." Page 421.

<sup>54</sup>Acheson, Present at the Creation, 306.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

China. He thought that the Nationalist government "was not overthrown, because there simply was nothing to overthrow."<sup>57</sup>

In general, it seemed that the Truman Administration view was that the events in China amounted to certain aggressive moves by Soviet Russia and that the Chinese people would one day see the light and turn angrily against the Russians.

Meanwhile, the United States would not interfere in the internal affairs of China.<sup>58</sup> The problem was Russia and the greatest threat lay in Europe.

The French began to advance the Bao Dai "solution" in 1947. The United States was apparently reluctant to endorse it--though it had no better solution--through 1949. But with the victory of the Communists in China, and a weakening of the French military position in Indochina, the United States publicly changed its position and gave firmer support to Bao Dai. Mr. Acheson was later to explain that we "came to the aid of the French in Indochina, not because we approved of what they were doing, but because we needed their support for our policies in regard to NATO and Germany." He further explained that the French had "black-mailed" the United States:

At every meeting when we asked them for greater effort in Europe they brought up Indochina and later North Africa . . . . They asked for our aid for Indochina but

---

<sup>57</sup>Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 61, quoted.

<sup>58</sup>China and U. S. Far East Policy, 48-49. See also Tang Tsou, America's Failure in China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 534-535.

refused to tell me what they hoped to accomplish or how. Perhaps they didn't know. They were obsessed with the idea of what you have you hold . . . . They wanted nothing to detract from French control. We urged them to allow more and more scope to the political activities of the Vietnamese. They did not take our advice. I thought it was possible to do something constructive with Bao Dai--not much, but something.<sup>59</sup>

Although the McNamara Pentagon History of U. S. Vietnam involvement indicates that U. S. support was reluctant and came rather late, others have suggested that the U. S. role in supporting Bao Dai began earlier and was rather more significant. It is known that William C. Bullitt, United States Ambassador to France during World War II, went to Indochina in October, 1947, and thence to Hong Kong where he visited Bao Dai. As explained in a recent account, Bullitt

. . . then went to Paris where he met with some important French officials, and early in 1948 he paid yet another visit to Bao Dai in Geneva. In December, Life magazine published an article by Bullitt which, while advocating that the French "permit the non-Communist nationalists of Vietnam to prepare complete political, economic and military organizations for control of the country," studiously avoided mentioning the name of Bao Dai.<sup>60</sup>

Ho Chi Minh had proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945. Bao Dai had abdicated and

---

<sup>59</sup> Dean Acheson, The New York Times Book Review, October 12, 1969, 30.

<sup>60</sup> Chester L. Cooper, The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1970), 57. Lucien Bodard argues that the U. S. energetically undermined the French in Vietnam on behalf of Bao Dai from an early date. See The Quicksand War: Prelude to Vietnam (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1967), 223.

for a brief time served as "Supreme Adviser to the Republican Government" as "Citizen Prince Nguyen Vin-Thuy."<sup>61</sup> He soon left on a trip to Hong Kong and later Europe from which he did not return to Vietnam until 1949. The first step taken to establish the "State of Vietnam" under Bao Dai was in June, 1948. Other agreements followed in March and June, 1949. Before the French government ratified these agreements, the United States indicated its intention to grant recognition to the new political entity.<sup>62</sup> It is probably significant that, prior to these developments, Ho Chi Minh had not sought or at least did not receive, recognition of his government from the Soviet Union or other Communist countries. The Soviet Union and her satellites, and the new Communist government of China did recognize the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in January, 1950. Secretary of State Acheson responded by charging that this action "should remove any illusions as to the 'nationalist' nature of Ho Chi Minh's aims . . ." and that it was "timed in an effort to cloud the transfer of sovereignty by France to the legal Governments of Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam . . . ." Ho Chi Minh, said Acheson, had "shown his true colors."<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 207.

<sup>62</sup>See Department of State Bulletin, XXI, July 18, 1949, 75; and Ellen J. Hammer, "Indochina," in Lawrence K. Rosinger, The State of Asia: A Contemporary Survey (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 240-267.

<sup>63</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXII (February 13, 1950), 224.

The French Assembly had been wrangling over the "Elysee Agreements," as the results of the negotiations with Bao Dai were called. The wrangling now stopped, and the French government ratified the agreements the day after Acheson's statement, February 2, 1950. On February 7 the United States gave formal recognition to Bao Dai's government.<sup>64</sup>

United States recognition and the initiation of military and economic aid for Vietnam came even before the formal transfer of power to Bao Dai's government actually took place. And, as the Pentagon History states, "the French yielded control only pro forma, while the Emperor Bao Dai adopted a retiring, passive role, and turned his government over to discreditable politicians."<sup>65</sup> The Vietnamese army remained under French leadership. The steps did not add up to meaningful independence for Vietnam and, as the Pentagon History concludes, France was probably fighting more a colonial than an anti-Communist war, concerned not only with her holdings in Indochina, but in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco as well.<sup>66</sup>

The French resented and resisted United States control or even suggestions in Vietnam. Although by 1954 the United States was paying some 80 per cent of the cost of the

---

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., February 20, 1950, 291.

<sup>65</sup>Pentagon History, SLPD, June 30, 1971.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

war, "the French retained full control of the dispensation of military assistance and of the intelligence and planning aspects of the military struggle."<sup>67</sup> Given the United States view of Communism as a monolithic, world-wide expansionist movement, the necessity for winning French approval for the European Defense Community and keeping them in the fight in Indochina gave them considerable leverage and locked the United States into a position in Indochina from which she could not extricate herself. And, as we have seen, domestic political considerations had become an important factor in the situation by 1950.

The United States' strategic perception of the Communist threat had as one of its elements what has come to be known as the "domino theory." The Pentagon History suggests that this principle has its origin in the collapse of the Chinese Nationalists government in 1949,<sup>68</sup> and was confirmed

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Evidence abounds that U. S. officials viewed China as a domino pushed over by Soviet Russia. Two striking examples should suffice. At a meeting of the Advertising Council at the White House in February, 1950, Secretary Acheson told the group: "There has never, in the history of the world, been an imperialist system that compares with what the Soviet Union has at its disposal. We have seen it in China. The Communists took over China at a ridiculously small cost. What they did was to invite some Chinese leaders who were dissatisfied with the way things were going in their country to come to Moscow. There, they thoroughly indoctrinated them so that they returned to China prepared to resort to any means whatsoever to establish Communist control." See Department of State Bulletin, XXII (March 20, 1950), 427-430.

At a meeting of the China Institute in New York on May 18, 1951 Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State for Far

in U. S. thinking by the outbreak of the Korean War and Chinese intervention there. But early versions of the "theory" cropped up in 1947. Acheson's appeal to the Congressional leaders on behalf of the Truman Doctrine<sup>69</sup> was an example of it, as was the conclusion of NSC-68 that the United States should abandon trying to "distinguish between national and global security."

Another significant element in U. S. policy after 1949 was the expectation of and the need to calculate the likelihood of overt Chinese intervention in Indochina. This fear existed in the Truman Administration and was heightened in the Eisenhower Administration when Secretary of State Dulles began to issue public warnings to China against such intervention.<sup>70</sup>

The Pentagon History states that "the United States decision to provide military assistance to France and the Associated States of Indochina was reached informally in February-March, 1950, and was announced on May 8 of that year."<sup>71</sup> Without implying a specific military guarantee, Secretary Acheson on March 15, 1950 applied the Truman

---

Eastern Affairs stated: "We do not recognize the authorities in Peiping for what they pretend to be. The Peiping regime may be a colonial Russian government--a Slavic Manchukuo on a larger scale. It is not the Government of China. It does not pass the first test. It is not Chinese." Department of State Bulletin, XXIV (May 28, 1951), 847.

<sup>69</sup>Page 5, above.      <sup>70</sup>See chapter 3.

<sup>71</sup>Pentagon History, SLPD, June 30, 1971.

Doctrine formula of supporting free peoples resisting armed subversion or outside pressure to Southeast Asia.<sup>72</sup> However, it was Acheson's famous National Press Club speech of January 12, 1950 that contained the Truman Administration's fundamental policy for the Far East. It was in this speech that Acheson traced the United States defense perimeter in the Far East. The area the United States proposed to defend did not include South Korea, the island of Taiwan, nor Southeast Asia--except for the Philippines. The speech contained a warning to aggressors along with an appeal to the United Nations should aggression take place. As for United States policy, Mr. Acheson said that its interest lay in supporting the aspirations of Asian nationalism, but that the United States "cannot furnish determination, it cannot furnish the will, and it cannot furnish the loyalty of a people to its government."<sup>73</sup>

Where these components were absent, United States help would be wasted. This seemed to imply that the United States could afford to aid some countries, but not others; that, as Hans Morgenthau has written, the Truman Doctrine was being "cut down to size" in the Far East at least.<sup>74</sup> Taking Acheson's formula objectively and at face value, one might have concluded that Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic

---

<sup>72</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXII (March 27, 1950).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., January 23, 1950, 111.

<sup>74</sup>Hans Morgenthau, Vietnam and the United States (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 83.

of Vietnam was a better candidate for support than was Bao Dai's State of Vietnam, which was held together only by force of French arms. But the single most important qualification for American help was that a recipient be non-Communist. Indeed, the struggle against Communism was the context in which these decisions were being made. Communism versus anti-Communism was, in Beard's terms, the U. S. policymakers' image of the world.

So the U. S. policymakers were far from sure that the aid to France and Vietnam would achieve the desired results. This uncertainty reflected at least some understanding of the political and military weakness of the French position in Indochina. With some apparent chronological confusion, the Pentagon historians state that "the situation in which the decision was made was completely dominated by the takeover of and consolidation of power in China by the Communists . . . . This period (1949) was the high watermark of U. S. fears of direct Chinese intervention in Indochina . . . ." <sup>75</sup> But by April, 1950, the instrumentality of containment in Indochina was established in NSC-68.

Implementation of the policy did at least prevent a French rout by the Vietminh before the Democratic Administration ended in January, 1953 and enabled the French to hold out until early summer, 1954 as the new Republican Administration continued the aid. But as the Pentagon

---

<sup>75</sup>Pentagon History, SLPD, June 30, 1970.

History concludes, this military assistance "was by and large a failure as an instrument of U. S. policy: The United States neither assured the French a military success, influenced the political situation to advantage, nor prevented the loss of North Vietnam to the Communists at Geneva."<sup>76</sup> The same source also indicates that U. S. policy-makers apparently considered the decisions regarding Indochina of relatively minor importance in 1950. Other problems--Europe, the Korean War, and China itself--occupied most of their time and thought: "There was no evidence of any high U. S. official arguing that any significant commitment threshold was being crossed."<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### JOHN FOSTER DULLES AND HIS WORLD

#### What Manner of Man?

Charles Beard's statement that foreign policy rests on an image of the world is a neutralist statement. One's image of the world may be relatively accurate or quite out of focus, helpful or unhelpful to policy formation and execution. Winston Churchill was more positive when he said:

Those who are possessed of a definite body of doctrine and of deeply rooted convictions upon it will be in a much better position to deal with the shifts and surprises of daily affairs than those who are merely taking short views, and indulging their natural impulses as they are evoked by what they read from day to day.<sup>1</sup>

John Foster Dulles replaced Dean Acheson as United States Secretary of State in January, 1953. Mr. Acheson's image of the world, and his doctrine or impulses, have been at least indirectly indicated in the previous chapter. What was Mr. Dulles's image of the world? Was he armed with a body of doctrine, or was he a creature of impulses? Since

---

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Hans Morgenthau, A New Foreign Policy for the United States (New York: Praeger for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1969), viii.

Mr. Dulles's general reputation is that of a staunch moralist and cold war anti-Communist, one might simply accept this popular view as the answer to the question raised here. But such an answer would be inadequate. The nature of Mr. Dulles's moralism and anti-Communism is complex and requires some elucidation.

Dulles was indeed a man with some kind of moral vision. He was a fascinating man, and often a pathetic man. It was often said that people were never indifferent to Dulles. They tended to "love" or "hate" him. This is usually the case with men who are called great, although Winston Churchill and Woodrow Wilson may be exceptions. And there were those who called John Foster Dulles great. Others would say that a good case can be made that Dulles lacked, in the precise sense of the word, integrity.

Over the course of his public career Dulles enunciated no consistent theory of politics or international relations.<sup>2</sup> He impressed some observers as a shrewd political realist who did not see the world in simple moral terms, but who knew that "the espousal of moral principles could be a useful weapon." According to this interpretation,

---

<sup>2</sup>Two scholars have made use of a Dulles speech only as a point of departure for a theoretical investigation of the nature of the international system. See Fred W. Riggs, "International Relations as a Prismatic System," World Politics, XIV (1961), 144-81; and Chadwick F. Alger, "Comparison of Intranational and International Politics," American Political Science Review, LVII (June, 1963), 406-19.

the view of Dulles as "another Woodrow Wilson or Cordell Hull, raised to the nth degree of moralistic and legalistic rigidity" is a "European stereotype."<sup>3</sup> Such an appraisal was accepted in part by others who, nevertheless, regarded Dulles as essentially an opportunist who adjusted himself to events but who hardly managed to control them.<sup>4</sup> Even the viability of his notorious moral principles is questionable,<sup>5</sup> and his random ideas seemed oftentimes scarcely connected. There were certain recurring formulations that appeared in his speaking and writing, but these seemed to be more verbal patterns than reflections of formal political or moral ideas. Perhaps Dulles's most notable characteristic was inconsistency or contradiction: the proponents of the containment policy were cowardly, he charged, yet they were too militaristic; the Communists had a powerful and attractive creed, yet they were no more than depraved seekers after power; our policy must be based on Christian principles, yet we shall have massive nuclear retaliation; we may have to resort to war, but our allies may not do so; the Democratic policies between 1945 and 1952 were "curative and creative programs" against which "Soviet Communist tactics cannot prevail," yet those same policies (he said on a later

---

<sup>3</sup>Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 88.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph C. Harsch, "John Foster Dulles: A Very Complicated Man," Harper's, September 1956, 28-34.

<sup>5</sup>See Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Moral World of John Foster Dulles," The New Republic, December 1, 1958, 8.

occasion) "squandered the unprecedented power and prestige which were ours" and thus "Russia . . . proceeds confidently with its plan for world conquest."<sup>6</sup>

In addition to his penchant for self-contradiction, Dulles had one other undisputed quality: a penchant for self-congratulation. A typical comment is that Dulles's self-esteem was "collosal."<sup>7</sup> Almost any Dulles speech or writing will confirm this impression. Dulles so personalized his official activities that many came to speak of him as carrying the State Department under his hat. Though this was an exaggeration, Dulles did call such attention to himself that considering any of his policies or actions almost inevitably calls forth a consideration of the personality of Mr. Dulles himself.

All statesmen tend to obscure, to a greater or lesser extent, their true thinking and their real actions by dressing these in a verbal garb that will have the maximum desired effect upon their audience or constituency. But with Mr. Dulles, the distinction between the action and the verbal dressing was harder to make than with most statesmen. This is not necessarily to say that Mr. Dulles was more given to obfuscation than other public servants, nor is it

---

<sup>6</sup>The quotation is taken from Richard H. Rovere, The Eisenhower Years (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956), 60.

<sup>7</sup>Herman Finer, Dulles Over Suez (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), x.

to say that he was more straightforward. It seems rather that for him the verbal utterance, whether warning or proclamation, denial or affirmation, was less distinguishable from substantive policy than for others. Indeed, it seems that the public statement was the major component of Mr. Dulles's foreign policy. To put it bluntly, Dulles was mostly talk.<sup>8</sup> He could quote George Washington's "Farewell Address" to the effect that our guiding principle should always be that of "exalted justice" and proclaim that "what we stand for is right," without so much as a hint as to what positive actions might constitute justice in the context in which he spoke, and with no reference to any "right" action he had stood for or would stand for. His speeches invoke positivism and dynamism without cease; his actual policies were almost totally negative.<sup>9</sup> As one surveys Mr. Dulles's career in office he might well be tempted toward amusement if it were not so perplexing. The sober American is more

---

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Decline and Fall of American Foreign Policy," The New Republic, December 10, 1956, 11-16. Referring to the Eisenhower-Dulles style, Morgenthau said, "when we heard spokesmen for the government propound the legal and moral platitudes which had passed for foreign policy in the interwar period, we thought that this was the way in which the government--as all governments must--tried to make the stark facts of foreign policy palatable to the people . . . . We were mistaken. Those platitudes are the foreign policy of the United States."

<sup>9</sup>The quotations are from Department of-State Bulletin, March 8, 1954, 346. One may recall the occasion on which one of Mr. Dulles's greatest admirers stated firmly that he had taken a "strong position" on "not taking a stand" on a current issue. The admirer was Richard M. Nixon.

likely to be saddened upon encountering the witty appraisal of Winston Churchill. Mr. Churchill was quoted as saying, "I am told that on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays Mr. Dulles makes a speech. And that on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, he holds a press conference. And that on Sundays he is a lay preacher. With such a regimen, there is bound to be a certain attenuation of thought."<sup>10</sup>

Probably the supreme irony of Dulles's life is that he entered upon his career as Secretary of State determined to avoid the kind of controversy that surrounded Dean Acheson, but was unable to accomplish this. The Acheson controversy has largely abated, or has been transformed into one led by his critics from the left; the Dulles controversy still lingers.

#### Background and Qualifications

John Foster Dulles was born into a family which was known for public service. His grandfather, John W. Foster, and his uncle, Robert Lansing, had been Secretaries of State. His father was a Presbyterian minister and Foster, as he was known to his family and friends, was undecided upon graduation from Princeton whether to go into the ministry or into international affairs. He "took a year off" and went to the Sorbonne in Paris where he tried to make a decision. While a student at Princeton he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and

---

<sup>10</sup>"Who Likes Dulles; who doesn't," Newsweek, January 27, 1958, 28.

in 1907 he attended the Second Hague Peace Conference with his Grandfather Foster, who represented the Chinese Government. He was apparently much influenced by the personality of his grandfather, whose Diplomatic Memoirs was among his favorite reading, and after returning from Paris he entered the George Washington University Law School. There he completed the three year course in two years and, through the influence of his grandfather, entered the Wall Street law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell as a clerk in 1911. He rose rapidly in the firm and began to acquire significant diplomatic experience.<sup>11</sup>

Highlights of this experience were attendance at the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress in 1917, serving as a special agent of the Department of State in Central America, and acting as counsel to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace after World War I. In 1945 he was a member of the American delegation to the San Francisco Conference and in 1946, 1947, 1948 and 1950 a member of the American delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. He served as adviser and consultant to the American Secretary of State

---

<sup>11</sup>Andrew H. Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1965), 11-12; Louis L. Gerson, The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, John Foster Dulles (Vol. 17), (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1967), Cpt. 1, hereafter cited as Gerson, John Foster Dulles; Hans J. Morgenthau, "John Foster Dulles," in Norman A. Graebner, ed., An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961). 289-308.

on various occasions between 1945 and 1950, and as a special representative of the President with the rank of ambassador he negotiated the peace treaty with Japan and security treaties with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan in 1950-1951. Actively identifying himself with the Republican Party, he was regarded as Thomas E. Dewey's choice for Secretary of State when Dewey ran for the Presidency in 1944 and 1948.

Whether Dulles was "trained for diplomacy as Nijinsky was for the ballet"<sup>12</sup> is a matter of dispute. One member of the State Department who served under Dulles considered him a skillful debator, defender and advocate, but so lacking in knowledge and genuine experience that he was compelled to shun contact with his subordinates in the Department for fear of revealing his shortcomings.<sup>13</sup> He was generally regarded, however, as a man with tremendous self-confidence and belief in his own destiny as a man of affairs. This was evident in the statement he made to the employees of the State Department upon taking office:

I don't suppose that there is any family in the United States which has for so long been identified with the Foreign Service and the State Department as my family. I go back a long ways--I'd have to stop and think of the date--when a great-great uncle of mine,

---

<sup>12</sup>Frank Gotham, "John Foster Dulles: The Cartels' Choice," The Nation, October 18, 1952, 320.

<sup>13</sup>Louis J. Halle, in a review of Richard Gould-Adams' John Foster Dulles: A Reappraisal, The New Republic, December 8, 1962, 17-18.

Mr. Welsh, was one of our early Ministers to the Court of St. James. In those days, you know, they were Ministers, not Ambassadors.

My grandfather, John W. Foster, was for a long time in the diplomatic service and then ended up as Secretary of State under President Harrison. His son-in-law, my uncle, Robert Lansing, was Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson.

Coming down to my own generation, my brother Allen W. Dulles, was for many years in the Foreign Service of the United States. My sister, Eleanor Lansing Dulles, is today in the State Department and has been for several years. I, myself, have had at least sporadic association with the Department of State and with the Foreign Service throughout most of my life. So you can see, from the standpoint of background and tradition, it is to me an exciting and thrilling thing to be with you here today, as Secretary of State.<sup>14</sup>

Yet Dulles denied that his desire to be Secretary of State was his exclusive ambition. He told his subordinate and confidant Andrew Berding: "I know there's been a lot of talk that I always wanted to be Secretary of State. It's more exact to say I wanted to be qualified to be Secretary of State. Anybody would be foolish who wanted to be in one particular spot and felt that his life would be a failure if he didn't achieve it."<sup>15</sup>

The evidence is conclusive, however, that Dulles expected to be named Secretary of State if the Republicans won the presidential election in 1952, whether the nominee was Taft or Eisenhower.<sup>16</sup> But like so much else about

---

<sup>14</sup>Department of State Bulletin, January 28, 1953, 239.

<sup>15</sup>Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy, 8.

<sup>16</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 70. Eisenhower wrote that Dulles knew that he would be appointed if Eisenhower

Dulles, the nature of the role he expected to play is difficult to determine. On the one hand there is evidence that Dulles was prepared to accept the post only on his own terms, which included a favored and special relationship with the President, relief from much if not all departmental administrative work, and an opportunity to lead rather than to follow public opinion in matters of foreign policy.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, there is evidence that Mr. Dulles paused, if he did not quaver, when finally offered the position, and that he assumed the Secretaryship in a mood to go to almost any length to satisfy the new President and to mollify public and especially congressional opinion.<sup>18</sup>

President-elect Eisenhower's appointment of Dulles

---

were elected. Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 85.

<sup>17</sup>Dean Acheson has written that he was told by friends that, "before accepting the post of Secretary, Dulles hesitated in favor of a room in the White House and the historical role of personal and private adviser to the President on Foreign affairs," and that Dulles told Acheson that "he would save himself for policy decisions and not spend the time I had done on personnel and organizational matters." Acheson doubted that the two could be so easily separated. Dean Acheson, "The Eclipse of the State Department," Foreign Affairs, July, 1970, 593. See also Joseph C. Harsch in Harper's, September, 1956 and Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy, 139 and 140-143.

<sup>18</sup>Nomination of John Foster Dulles - Secretary of State-Designate. Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 83rd Congress, 1st Session. January 15, 1953 (Washington; U. S. Government Printing Office, 1953). Hereafter cited as Nomination Hearing. See also Morgenthau in An Uncertain Tradition and Finer, Dulles Over Suez, 49.

to the Cabinet did not come as promptly as Dulles and many others probably expected.<sup>19</sup> But we have Mr. Eisenhower's own word that Dulles knew he would be appointed.<sup>20</sup> When the appointment was tendered, Mr. Dulles "accepted, saying something approximately as follows: 'With your prestige and respect and my knowledge and experience in diplomacy, we should make an excellent combination.'"<sup>21</sup> Thus began an association characterized by mutual respect and admiration and, one may say, mutual flattery. The President and the Secretary of State were, in many respects, the same type of man. Each was in a sense apolitical: Dulles exhibiting a belief that power politics must at some point give way to moral exhortation, and Eisenhower seemingly of the belief that good will and his own personal attractiveness could overleap the hurdles of national and international rivalries. But it was in their respective self-appraisals that the two men were most alike. Dulles's "naive vanity" is revealed in practically every speech he made and article he wrote. Mr. Eisenhower's two-volume memoirs reveal a man of boundless self-confidence and little or no introspection.

---

<sup>19</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 92-94. This fact may well illustrate a trait of Eisenhower's that has been little discussed, a tendency to maintain his "options" in such a way as to establish a clear psychological advantage over those with whom he dealt, especially subordinates.

<sup>20</sup>See note 16 above.

<sup>21</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 97.

Relations between the President and the Secretary "became close and even intimate." Mr. Eisenhower even found an attribute of Dulles's that others had overlooked: a sense of humor.<sup>22</sup> The two men apparently had a very good understanding and were in almost constant communication with one another. But contrary to the rather popular view that Dulles had almost completely free rein in the formulation and conduct of foreign policy, the fact seems rather to be that Dulles had a great deal of freedom to speak, but not nearly so much freedom to act. This probably accounts for the unusual level of confusion under Dulles's tenure in the State Department. But on several crucial occasions, Mr. Dulles was restrained by the President, the most important instance being in 1954 when Eisenhower refused to sanction military intervention in Indochina. "What his /Dulles's/ critics did not know was that he was more emphatic than they in his insistence that ultimate and personal responsibility for all major decisions in the field of foreign relations belong exclusively to the President, an attitude he meticulously maintained throughout our service together."<sup>23</sup>

Still, Mr. Eisenhower's praise for Dulles was extravagant. He called him "one of the greatest of our

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>23</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years - Waging Peace (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 365. Mr. Eisenhower said that he read, edited and approved all of Mr. Dulles's speeches. Ibid.

Secretaries of State" and upon the occasion of Dulles's resignation the President stated: "I personally believe that he has filled his office with greater distinction than any other man our country has known--a man of tremendous character and courage, intelligence and wisdom."<sup>24</sup> Others might consider Dulles "legalistic, arrogant, sanctimonious, and arbitrary," but "such descriptions never occurred to those who knew Foster Dulles as I did."<sup>25</sup> Ultimately, the nearly ideal working relationship between the two men resulted from the fact that their personalities and ideologies were so similar. Each had attained success and regarded it as well-deserved. Each seemed to think of himself as above politics. Each saw the world in the same way. Once the relationship was established, they reinforced one-another. They often conversed "in a somewhat philosophical vein," and were concerned to understand the nature and cause of the current world crisis that is called the cold war: "'Why?' Foster would ask, 'why?'" They mutually concluded that "one element was the ideological gulf between a government which is atheistic and one which is religiously based. All our laws are rooted in values very different from the Soviets'. For example, we speak of 'good faith'; they believe as part of their creed, in any form of deceit and

---

<sup>24</sup> New York Times, April 19, 1959.

<sup>25</sup> Eisenhower, Waging Peace, 265.

treachery which advances the cause of Communist domination. Foster was intensely aware of this ideological difference. In all our dealings with the Kremlin, we concluded that only a pragmatic approach was useful."<sup>26</sup>

Dulles built a firm reputation as being a skillful advocate, and this was not diminished by his performance as Secretary of State, though there is doubt that such ability is the prime requisite for a successful diplomat. Even at Sullivan and Cromwell, however, he "exhibited more than usual aversion to administrative work."<sup>27</sup> While he was not able to acquire his "ivory tower" office in the White House, he spent relatively less time at the State Department dealing with administrative matters than other contemporary Secretaries. He made sparse use of the Policy Planning Staff, a unit created under the Acheson tenure, and it was said that, subject to presidential reversal, policy began and ended in Mr. Dulles's own mind.<sup>28</sup> Others said that "it was not unusual for the Secretary to consult with State Department officers from all echelons, high and low."<sup>29</sup> Whatever his role in administrative work, he was otherwise a prodigious worker who "luxuriated" in being Secretary of

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 368.

<sup>27</sup>Joseph C. Harsch in Harper's, September, 1956.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Relman Morin, Dwight D. Eisenhower, A Gauge of Greatness (The Associated Press, 1969), 177.

State, dedicated himself "body and soul to his tasks," and often worked a 12-hour or longer day.<sup>30</sup>

Whether Dulles had, prior to the 1952 election, oversold himself and his policies, or whether, as others have thought, he simply lacked the ability for which he had a reputation, some degree of insecurity apparently accounts for the relationship that Dulles sought to establish with Congress upon taking office. When the Senate Foreign Relations Committee questioned Dulles prior to Senate confirmation of his appointment, he told the committee: "I believe in executive-congressional cooperation. I believe in bipartisan cooperation." And he pointed out to the committee that most of his international public service had been under Democratic Presidents. He hoped that such cooperation would continue.<sup>31</sup> But Mr. Dulles was soon to learn, if he did not already know, that the congressional elements he would find most difficult to please would be members of his own party. Dulles's mode of dealing with the problem calls into question his often-stated view that moral principle rather than political expediency or personal considerations of gain should govern all the decisions of leaders. One author sums up his predicament as follows:

Dulles's task of making his position and policies secure with public opinion and Congress was greatly complicated by his uncertainty about the extent to which public opinion and Congress were willing to endorse him

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Nomination Hearings, 18.

as Secretary of State and to support his policies. It was this uncertainty, amounting in Dulles's mind to extreme doubt, which resulted not only in his opening the gates of the State Department to the potential opposition and allowing it to influence substantive policies but also in his making pronouncements on foreign policy that contrasted with the policies he actually pursued.<sup>32</sup>

It was a fact that Dulles had little political power on his own. He had been defeated when he campaigned for the Senate in 1949. According to one of his biographers he was constrained to appease the Republican right-wing regardless of what his own inclinations might have been. At an early Cabinet meeting, President Eisenhower directed that there be "one hundred percent co-operation" with Congress, including Senator McCarthy. Dulles passed this along to the State Department.<sup>33</sup> He appointed McCarthy's friend, Scott McLeod, as the State Department Security Chief; fired a number of high-ranking members of the foreign service who had been identified with Democratic policies, including John Carter Vincent, telling the latter "that he suffered from one fatal weakness: his critics in the Senate talked louder than his supporters";<sup>34</sup> and refused to take a stand against the romp of McCarthy aides Cohn and Schine through United States

---

<sup>32</sup>Morgenthau in An Uncertain Tradition, 302.

<sup>33</sup>John R. Beal, John Foster Dulles (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 132. See also Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower: The Inside Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), 85-95.

<sup>34</sup>Joseph C. Harsch in Harper's, September, 1956.

Information Libraries in Europe.<sup>35</sup> Dulles's policy of appeasing McCarthy did win him the confidence of his potential critics in the Senate. Ironically, this confidence was needed so that Eisenhower and Dulles could carry out essentially the Truman-Acheson policies they had so severely criticized. Only on two important occasions did Dulles buck significant congressional opposition: the successful campaign against the Bricker amendment, and the appointment of Charles Bohlen as Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Yet even in the struggle over the Bricker amendment, Mr. Dulles would have temporized with the proponents. He had, before taking office, favored some constitutional change in the treaty-making power of the President, and was prepared to tell the Congress that under a different administration the amendment might be desirable. Eisenhower overruled this argument and instructed Dulles to oppose the amendment on principle: "indeed, if Dulles did believe that future Presidents might be unwise and dishonest he should support the Bricker amendment."<sup>36</sup> In formally opposing the Bricker amendment, Mr. Dulles sought further to mollify its advocates by

---

<sup>35</sup> See The New York Times, June 14-July 10, 1953.

<sup>36</sup> Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 119-121. This episode reveals more than just Mr. Dulles's partisanship. It reveals intellectual if not moral confusion. In Waging Peace, Eisenhower writes that Dulles thought the Bricker amendment was so unwise that its adoption "could do nothing less than eventually wreck the Constitution and our nation." See page 372.

promising not to push for ratification of the United Nations genocide conventions, and he disavowed support for the women's rights and human rights conventions.<sup>37</sup>

Mr. Dulles was also at some pains to cooperate with the military establishment. One of his first acts as Secretary was to invite the Joint Chiefs of Staff to lunch at the State Department. He told them that there must be teamwork and quoted Admiral Mahan to the effect that "it is the role of power to give moral ideas the time to take root. Where moral ideas are already well-rooted /as in "our own communities"/ there is little occasion for much military or police force."<sup>38</sup>

Dulles was, then, technically qualified to be Secretary of State. His temperament left much to be desired, and whether or not his concept of the office was bold, his performance from the start was timid, and at times worse than that.

#### Dulles and Moralism

Dulles was the only religious leader ever to become Secretary of State. He was a prominent Presbyterian layman and he attended a number of international church conferences. Upon becoming Secretary, he remarked, "nobody in the

---

<sup>37</sup>"Dulles vs. Bricker," The Nation, April 18, 1953, 318.

<sup>38</sup>"Morals and Power," Department of State Bulletin, June 29, 1953, 895-7.

Department knows as much about the Bible as I do."<sup>39</sup> In 1937 he attended the Oxford Conference on Church and State. That conference persuaded him, he said, "that there was no way to solve the great perplexing international problems except by bringing to bear upon them the force of Christianity."<sup>40</sup> In 1939, he wrote in favor of peaceful change in the international system,<sup>41</sup> but had virtually abandoned hope for it. He now thought that political devices were useless as long as "millions of people look upon the State, rather than God, as their supreme ideal."<sup>42</sup> He thought that righteousness should not be identified with any national cause. (Later, in the 1950's, he struggled to put forth such a principle, but seemed always to identify righteousness with the United States national cause, as long as it was under the right administration. As we shall see, when he seemed to advocate the threatened use of nuclear weapons, it was not to be in the cause of the interests of the state, nor indeed by any ordinary human force.)

So much has been written about John Foster Dulles's moral and religious concepts and their application to his

---

<sup>39</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, xi.

<sup>40</sup>Quoted in Rovere, The Eisenhower Years, 59.

<sup>41</sup>John Foster Dulles, War, Peace and Change (New York: Macmillan, 1939).

<sup>42</sup>John Foster Dulles, "The Church's Contribution Toward a Warless World," Religion and Life (Winter, 1939). Quoted in Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 17.

policies that the subject has become rather tiresome. Yet this is still probably the key to the meaning of his public career. Dulles's moralism is usually viewed as having been applied in a context of Communism versus anti-Communism, although, as Reinhold Niebuhr wrote with stern derision, "Mr. Dulles is as moral in dealing with our allies as he is with our foes."<sup>43</sup> This was most startlingly revealed in the stance Dulles took in the Suez crisis of 1956. But as regards relations with the Communist adversary and United States allies, the interpretation of how and why Dulles appealed to moral principles may have been superficial and distorted. At one extreme is the possibility that Dulles's appeal to morality was a simple substitute for the practice of politics in any realistic sense. Politics as an autonomous sphere of human activity, having its own standards and requirements did not exist in Dulles's mind. In such case he would have to be viewed as a kind of caretaker Secretary of State between two active, political Democratic administrations. At another extreme, Mr. Dulles can be and has been viewed as an active and thoroughly Machiavellian statesman who did not see the world simply in moral terms but who knew that "the espousal of moral principles could be a useful weapon."<sup>44</sup>

The latter interpretation is difficult to refute,

---

<sup>43</sup>Niebuhr in The New Republic, December 1, 1958.

<sup>44</sup>See page 2 and note 3 above.

especially when applied to Dulles's policy on Indochina in the mid 1950's. But, given the contradictions of Dulles's statements and activities, if one is not to conclude that the man was utterly cynical and unprincipled, one is led to the conclusion that Dulles's character partook of both extremes. To say that Mr. Dulles was a complicated man is an understatement. He was, in fact, a prime example of the American conservative whose chief intellectual characteristic is a kind of Manichaeian outlook on life. He believed that there were two moral essences in the world, "two huge combinations": Those within the moral law, and those outside of it.<sup>45</sup> But there was a certain ambiguity in the concept of being inside and outside of the moral law. Dulles often suggested that it was a personal rather than a national position to occupy. Coral Bell has suggested that Mr. Dulles deliberately used ambiguity and had it well under control.<sup>46</sup> If this is correct, it would be likely that the technique was applied within a domestic political context as well as in an international one. The question is whether it was a conscious technique of political maneuver, or merely reflective of Dulles's essentially apolitical approach to human affairs.

In spite of all that has been said and written about

---

<sup>45</sup>"Morals and Power," Department of State Bulletin, June 29, 1953. The "huge combinations" were, of course, Soviet Communism and American democracy.

<sup>46</sup>Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 91.

Dulles's anti-Communism, there is an abundance of evidence that this was not the fundamental driving force of his public career. Dulles was a special example of that phenomenon which D. W. Brogan called "the illusion of American omnipotence."<sup>47</sup> Dulles took the jeremiadic position that the evil of Communism was possible only because of the moral degeneration of certain political forces in the United States. There are numerous illustrations of this; a few should suffice.

At least as early as 1950, Dulles had begun to sound a theme which he was to repeat many times before the 1952 election. Dulles was an opponent of the New Deal and the Truman Fair Deal domestic policies. He had run against these in his campaign for the Senate from New York in 1949. In typical conservative Republican fashion, he wrote in his 1950 book that man should not seek personal security as an end in itself. It can only be "a by-product of great endeavor." This was true of individuals and of nations. Curiously and rather incongruously, the Communists seemed, according to Dulles, to understand this. Their "creed" and policy are all penetrating, he said. As a form of political influence it was thoroughly un-traditional. It bore little relationship to traditional diplomacy and power politics, though it was far more insidious. Soviet Communist policy

---

<sup>47</sup>See Dennis W. Brogan, "The Illusion of American Omnipotence," Harper's, December, 1952, 21-28.

did not place primary reliance on military power or economic subsidy. They appealed rather "to the imagination of the people of the world, just as we did in the nineteenth century with our 'great American experiment.'"<sup>48</sup> But now, the United States was reduced, because of the weakening of its spiritual fibre, which Dulles seemed to blame on the liberal Democratic programs, to seeking influence in the world through "material things--guns and goods."<sup>49</sup>

One of the most thorough statements of Dulles's position was his article, "A Policy of Boldness," in Life magazine, May 19, 1952. In it he wrote that the moral law

has been trampled by the Soviet rulers, and for that violation they can and should be made to pay. /The wording suggests that the judgement and punishment are to be carried out by some earthly power or instrument, rather than by the Author of the moral law./ This will happen when we ourselves keep faith with the law in our practical decisions of policy.<sup>50</sup>

In the same article Dulles wrote that if the "catastrophe /of nuclear war/ occurs, it will be because we have allowed these new and awesome forces to become the ordinary killing tools of the soldier when, in the hands of the statesman, they could serve as effective political weapons in defense of the peace."<sup>51</sup> This sentence appears in a paragraph where

---

<sup>48</sup>John Foster Dulles, War or Peace (New York: Mac-Millan, 1950), 256.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 259.

<sup>50</sup>John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness," Life, May 19, 1952. 154.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 151.

Dulles explains the relationship of nuclear weapons to his doctrine of instant retaliation. It suggests several things about that doctrine and the peculiar Dullesian thought on which it rested. It seems purely deterrent: nuclear policy should be aimed primarily at preventing, not planning for, a nuclear war. But how could this be accomplished? Just who are the "soldiers" and who the "statesmen"? The sentence seems to be more than a snide reference to Democratic policymakers. It is another reference to the lack of faith and righteous determination of those policymakers, a shortcoming which left them, along with the Communist adversary, at the mercy of crude weapons of mass destruction. Yet ironically, since there is evidence that Dulles was prepared to see the United States use nuclear weapons under some conditions, the sentence suggests that Dulles saw nuclear destruction as good or bad in terms of who used it and in the service of what ideology or relationship to the True Faith. Obviously, it would be evil for the Soviet Communists to use nuclear weapons. Also the faithless, futile, negativistic and militaristic "containers" of Communism would only demonstrate their moral impotence if they were forced to resort to nuclear weapons. No, modern technology and its weapons of destruction were safe only in the hands and at the service of the true believers. The true guardians of the great American heritage could meld their moral strength and modern technology to create a new world order. Here was an element

of deterrence which the weapons and political scientists had never considered: the moral qualities of the deterrer. And irony of ironies, the Communists, having usurped the spiritual appeal rightfully possessed only by the proper Americans, could do their nefarious work without resort to nuclear weapons! Wilsonian Calvinism rather pales by comparison.<sup>52</sup>

The extent to which Dulles personalized his essays on moral versus immoral political action can be seen in his comments on the role he played in negotiating the peace treaty with Japan in 1951. The treaty was, he thought, the first significant international agreement which incorporated and expressed the "moral law." The peace conference had succeeded because there had been "no spiritual vacuum. The

---

<sup>52</sup> Among the many commentaries on America's Puritan heritage is the following by Senator J. William Fulbright: "The intolerant, witch-hunting Puritanism of seventeenth century Massachusetts was not a major religious movement in America. It eventually became modified and as a source of ethical standards made a worthy contribution to American life. But the Puritan way of thinking, harsh and intolerant, permeated the political and economic life of the country and became a major secular force in America. Coexisting uneasily with our English heritage of tolerance and moderation, the Puritan way of thinking has injected an absolutist strand into American thought--a strand of stern moralism in our public policy and in our standards of personal behavior . . . .

The Puritan way of thinking has had a powerful impact on our foreign policy. It is reflected in our traditional vacillation between self-righteous isolation and total involvement and in our attitude toward foreign policy as a series of idealistic crusades rather than as a continuing defense of the national interest." See Alpheus Thomas Mason, Free Government in the Making (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 906.

atmosphere was charged with the power of the moral law, and those who denied moral law were ignominiously put to rout." Even Dean Acheson of the faithless and immoral containment policy was moved to pronounce a religious benediction on the conference.<sup>53</sup> This is very typical of the Dulles style, but also of the Dulles thought. Most men would have said simply that there was constructive effort which produced a just result. Mr. Dulles seemed to take personal credit not so much for the gratifying result as for the charged moral atmosphere which had made the result possible.

The Japanese peace treaty won almost unanimous approval among the non-Communist nations. It was, of course, negotiated under a Democratic administration, but Dulles was given much credit for the success, credit which he more than readily accepted. There was far less approval of the Korean War by 1952, and Mr. Dulles wanted to disassociate himself from that entirely. He centered his attack especially upon the actions that he thought had led to the war: the withdrawal of troops from Korea in compliance with a United Nations resolution, and Dean Acheson's January, 1950 speech placing Korea outside the United States Pacific "defense perimeter." Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois pointed out that, since Dulles had argued for passage of the withdrawal resolution in the General Assembly, his criticism of it

---

<sup>53</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Diplomat and His Faith," Christian Century, March 19, 1952, 336-8.

seemed at least questionable. Dulles's defense was that under the United Nations Participation Act, a delegate must follow the orders of the President whether he likes them or not. The withdrawal of troops was unwise, but no blame could attach to him for his arguments in favor of it in the United Nations, for he was only an agent. Dulles was correct about the United Nations Participation Act, but one may wonder how having a moral basis for all political activity fits into the picture in this instance.<sup>54</sup>

In his Present at the Creation, Dean Acheson records an amusing example of Dulles's disinclination to be associated with unpopular or unsuccessful decisions. At the Paris Foreign Ministers Conference in May-June, 1949, Soviet-Western agreement on Berlin was complicated by a dispute over barge and railway traffic in the German city. Acheson thought first of some kind of ultimatum to the Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Vishinsky, as regards the Berlin problem. He proposed rather to the British and French ministers that the council sessions be terminated if the Russians did not come to heel. "Foster Dulles asked to be recorded in the minutes as opposing the idea," Acheson writes. Vishinsky first rejected the Western proposal for ending the traffic dispute, and then upon hearing the threat to end the sessions, accepted the proposal--all at the same session. Acheson writes: "When we got back to the Chancery after the

---

<sup>54</sup>Richard H. Rovere, The Eisenhower Years, 62.

meeting, Foster Dulles was waiting to see me. He had, he thought, been hasty in wishing to have recorded his dissent from our démarche; might it be deleted from the minutes? This was done."<sup>55</sup>

Well before he became Secretary of State, the substantive nature of Dulles's moral makeup had become a question mark. Just before his appointment, Richard H. Rovere wrote of Dulles that his

chief moral and intellectual characteristic appears to be a thin and achromatic spirituality. Looking every inch the worldling . . . he nevertheless hankers after what he calls "the spiritual society." In his books . . . he is constantly belaboring us, his countrymen, for false values. Americans of recent times, he wrote . . . seem "to be less concerned with conducting a great experiment for the benefit of mankind and to be more concerned with piling up for ourselves material advantages." (In the Republican platform, Dulles, who has himself piled up an enviable quantity of material advantages, wrote that we should "measure our foreign commitments so that they can be borne without endangering the . . . sound finances of the United States.") Sometimes he is given to saying that none of our problems are essentially political or economic: "The trouble is not material . . . . What we lack is a righteous and dynamic faith . . . . There is confusion in men's minds and corrosion in their souls." He has not gone much beyond advising us of our general sinfulness and we cannot know much of his own righteous and dynamic faith until he tells us which of the Dulleses embodies it. Perhaps we will unveil the mysteries when and if he becomes Secretary of State.<sup>56</sup>

But the mystery was not solved, and Dulles could not clear up the matter. Shortly before his death he wrote to his brother-in-law, a minister: "The church people have been

---

<sup>55</sup> Acheson, Present at the Creation, 299.

<sup>56</sup> Rovere, The Eisenhower Years, 63.

clamoring for a long time for the application of moral principles to public affairs and to foreign relations. Now when we try to do that, and explain what we are doing--and foreign policy has to be explained--we are accused of hypocrisy."<sup>57</sup>

#### Dulles as Partisan

Although Dulles served only under Democratic administrations prior to 1952 and cultivated his reputation for bipartisanship,<sup>58</sup> Rovere could say of him that he was "every bit as fervent in his Republicanism as in his Calvinism."<sup>59</sup> Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., National Chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action was to charge in 1955 that the Republican Party had, in its desperation, produced and cultivated McCarthyism in 1952. The party had no issues on which to appeal to the voters and had therefore used Senator McCarthy and the fear of Communism in a cynical appeal. Dulles, Rauh thought, was implicated in this.<sup>60</sup>

Certainly Dulles himself had seemed to affirm that bipartisanship did not apply at election time. Party spokesmen present their case, and if it is inconsistent with the facts or positions one has taken previously, this is just

---

<sup>57</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 303.

<sup>58</sup>See his book, War or Peace, and Frank Gotham in The Nation, October 11 and 18, 1952.

<sup>59</sup>Rovere, The Eisenhower Years, 57.

<sup>60</sup>Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., "The McCarthy Era is Over," U. S. News and World Report, August 26, 1955, 68-70.

part of the game, and should not be taken seriously or questioned. When confronted with statements in the 1952 Republican platform, the foreign policy portions of which Dulles had written, and having pointed out to him the inconsistency of these statements with positions Dulles had previously taken, he blandly replied: "My job as a lawyer is to present the case for my client. Your job is to present the case for your client. It is not my job to present your case, and it is not your job to present mine. That is a posture we get into every four years when we have a national election."<sup>61</sup> This may be dismissed as mere cynicism, and in others it probably would be. But Dulles, as Thomas E. Dewey once said, was "no ordinary mortal." His use of the "agent" or lawyer explanation once again was consistent with Mr. Dulles's general approach to his opposition: one may use all devices at one's disposal to outwit the other side. The Communists had understood this and had gained a considerable propaganda advantage, he seemed to think. As we have seen, Dulles tended to regard all opposition foreign and domestic, in pretty much the same light. And his application of morality to politics placed less emphasis on means than on having a righteous cause. Dulles preferred to use the word "righteous" rather than "right" in referring to political actions. Well before the 1952 campaign he had described President Truman's decision to send forces to

---

<sup>61</sup>Nomination Hearing, 15.

Korea as a "courageous, righteous" decision.<sup>62</sup> In the Republican platform Dulles had condemned the entire Korean adventure, though his strictures centered on what he regarded as Democratic errors of failing to deter the Communist assault.<sup>63</sup> This leads back to Dulles's own role in the United Nations General Assembly where he supported the withdrawal resolution. But as noted above, he was only an agent and would accept no responsibility.<sup>64</sup> To say the least, Dulles demonstrated little regard for the educative value of presidential campaigns. But this is after all a political consideration, albeit a democratic one, and Dulles was, in a sense, above politics.

History also was a somewhat irrelevant consideration for Dulles. At the nomination hearing before the Senate

---

<sup>62</sup>Dulles in Life, May 19, 1952.

<sup>63</sup>See Nomination Hearing and Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy, 128.

<sup>64</sup>Actually, Dulles was even less secure on the Korean issue than the account here given would indicate. According to "Frank Gotham" (a pseudonym for "one of the best and most experienced of American foreign correspondents.") in The Nation, October 18, 1952: "On the eve of the 1948 elections Dulles--then regarded as about to become Secretary of State--had thought out a way of attempting to negotiate a general settlement with Russia. It was to be a give-and-take business. One of the concessions he was ready to grant was that the United States should write off all Korea; he thought Korea strategically indefensible anyway." Noting the 1952 Dulles criticism of the handling of the Korean issue, the author continued: "This contrast between Dulles-in-private and Dulles-in-public is a recurrent phenomenon. Freed of political motivation, his inclination is to be temperate toward Russia--not an appeaser of course, but a negotiator."

Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Hubert Humphrey asked Dulles about the 1952 Republican platform statement that the Democratic administrations had "abandoned" the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, to Communist aggression. Yes, Dulles said, this had been done "through the so-called policy of containment which was interpreted at least as meaning that we were satisfied so long as the Communists didn't actually get into our front yard . . . ." Humphrey noted that the Republican platform had mentioned these Baltic states along with Poland and Czechoslovakia, and had implied that Democratic policy was in some degree responsible for their being under Communist control. Humphrey remarked that surely Mr. Dulles knew his European history well enough to know that the Baltic states had been absorbed by Russia in 1940 as a result of the Hitler-Stalin nonaggression pact, while Poland and Czechoslovakia had become Communist at a later time and by a different process. Mr. Dulles replied that the Democratic platform had mentioned all these states "in the same breath." The exchange continued:

Senator Humphrey: But I don't believe you will find there the term "abandoned."

Mr. Dulles: No, but I thought your point was that chronologically we should have made a difference in date between Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and the others.

All I point out is that if that was an error, it was an error committed equally by the Democratic platform, and I think that we both assumed that there was enough historical knowledge so that the people would not actually think that Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania,

which had been lost in 1940, were lost at the same time that Czechoslovakia was.<sup>65</sup>

So Dulles chose to airily and elaborately miss the point. He was ever the clever advocate, able to turn a point to his advantage, or try to, by blunting it.

Yet Dulles was no ordinary partisan. When one is saving the world from those outside the moral law, one need not be bound by conventional restrictions on human conduct. Dulles's philosophy and his partisanship were inseparable. The platform statements he wrote might be exaggerated, a lawyer's brief for his client. They should be forgotten and cooperation restored now that the election was over. But he insisted that there were no inaccuracies in what he had written when prompted by Senator Homer Ferguson, Republican, to return to the defense.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup>Nomination Hearing, 23-24. Dulles's use of the word "lost" in this passage significantly reveals the mode of thought, or kind of political tactic, current at the time.

Louis J. Halle thought that Dulles lacked the intellectual ability to concentrate on more than one matter at a time, to see the interrelatedness of things: "If it is true," Halle wrote, "that he stopped at nothing to gain his objectives, there was a sort of innocence in his ruthlessness; he betrayed allies, for instance, because he was not looking their way at the moment." The exchange with Humphrey probably represents one of Dulles's strengths for which Halle did have respect: "No one . . . was better at the necessary dodge . . .," and Halle remembered "press conferences at which unanswerable questions about the most delicate matters were flung at him" and Halle remembers thinking to himself that he would "need a month . . . to think up answers as smart as those Mr. Dulles gave without having to pause for thought." Halle in The New Republic, December 8, 1962, 18.

<sup>66</sup>Nomination Hearing, 26.

Dulles and Communism

John Foster Dulles's attitude toward what are usually called totalitarian ideologies was remarkably ambivalent. In his 1939 book, War, Peace and Change, he sought to find a way to peace among nations by drawing lessons from the way peace is maintained within countries. This would call for some kind of international authority which could alter the status quo from time to time so as to strike a balance between static forces and dynamic forces which spring from a demand for change. "Change," Dulles wrote, "is the ultimate fact to which we must accommodate ourselves," and the international developments of the 1930's revealed a struggle "between the dynamic and the static--the urge to acquire and the desire to retain." He thought national boundaries were too restrictive, and he singled out for attack the United States, Britain and France as representative of status quo forces. He attacked Franklin Roosevelt specifically for a disposition to give economic and military aid to Britain and France "to repress the dynamic forces which are at work." He accused Roosevelt and Winston Churchill of encouraging hatred of Germany and he opposed the United States getting involved in the war that was starting, saying that if this happened "our democracy would vanish."<sup>67</sup> "I see no justification for our participation in the senseless cyclical

---

<sup>67</sup>These quotations are from Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 14-19.

struggle," he wrote in 1939.<sup>68</sup>

In War, Peace and Change, Dulles also wrote quite realistically on the subject of diplomatic recognition policy, saying that non-recognition as a form of moral condemnation was of dubious value, that the non-recognizing power was likely to be simply a status quo power, and that "no moral judgement is involved."<sup>69</sup> On the subject of international agreements he wrote: "In the absence of any central authority to pass judgement one cannot consider treaties, as such, to be sacred, nor can we identify treaty observance in the abstract with law and order. If we do not realize that treaties as such are neither 'law' nor 'sacred' we will fall into the common error of thinking that treaties provide a mechanism whereby international peace can be assured."<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup>Gotham in The Nation, October 11, 1952. According to this author, "the New York branch of America First was reported to have been organized in his office, and Mrs. Dulles was said to have contributed money to it." Rovere states: "Though he took no active part in the America First Committee, he gave money to it as late as November, 1941, and his speeches of the period reflect its torpid dogma." The Eisenhower Years, 58. Finer writes: "Dulles was an America Firster in the sense that America's interests and America's will in world affairs--'We want it this way!'--came overbearing in his mind as soon as any practical problem presented itself." Dulles over Suez, 81. In a footnote on this remark Finer explains: "Of course, I do not refer to an utterly unproven charge by Harold L. Ikes, New Republic, January 19, 1950, p. 130, that Dulles had helped to organize the New York branch of America First. There is not the vestige of support for this in the best study of the organization (all records open) in Wayne S. Cole, America First (Madison, Wisc., 1953)." See page 520 in Finer.

<sup>69</sup>Dulles, War, Peace and Change, 88.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 47.

A review in Foreign Affairs noted that Dulles favored "diminishing the economic and political isolation of each nation" and a "live and let live policy" as far as ideologies are concerned."<sup>71</sup>

This was as close as Dulles ever got to the discrete school of political realism. It would be rash to maintain that these 1939-40 statements add up to a position of sympathy for fascism. Yet it is a fact that Dulles moved away from the views in the 1940's, and scarcely a trace of them remained by 1952. One set of European and Asian dynamic forces was defeated by 1945, and a new set emerged. Simultaneously, Dulles developed, in conventional philosophical terms, a liberal approach to international relations.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup>Foreign Affairs, April, 1939, 628.

<sup>72</sup>The "liberal approach" referred to here is that defined by Hans Morgenthau: "The difference between liberal and nonliberal aims in the international field does not lie in the fact that the former are ideological whereas the latter are not. The ideological character is common to both, since men will support only political aims which they are persuaded are justified before reason and morality. Yet while nonliberal political concepts, such as "Roman Empire," "new order," "living space," "encirclement," "national security," "haves vs. have-nots," and the like, show an immediately recognizable relationship to concrete political aims; liberal concepts, such as "collective security," "democracy," "national self-determination," "justice," "peace," are abstract generalities which may be applied to any political situation but which are not peculiar to any particular one. This difference has far-reaching practical consequences. Since the nonliberal aims are the product of a concrete political situation, they will necessarily disappear and be replaced by others as soon as they have fulfilled their temporary political function; thus, they will be relatively immune from the danger of being at variance with reality and therefore of falling into disrepute.

The liberal ideologies, on the other hand, are

There remained some ambivalence in Dulles's position, but rather consistently he was to call for politically and economically isolating the new dynamic force. And its ideology was obviously, to him, far more pernicious than that of fascism. It could not be ignored. It presented the greatest "threat that ever faced the United States, but also the gravest threat that has ever faced what we call western civilization, or, indeed, any civilization which was dominated by a spiritual faith."<sup>73</sup>

In 1942 Dulles wrote a paper on the prospects of peace for the Federal Council of Churches in which he had said that Communism had "moved into a spiritual vacuum which had resulted from the loss elsewhere of a dynamic faith."<sup>74</sup> This sounded a theme which Dulles was to stress until his death: the moral and spiritual challenge of Communism. He

---

bound, because of their very abstractness, generality, and claim for absolute validity, to be kept alive after they have outlived their political usefulness and thus to be disavowed by the realities of international politics, which, by their very nature, are concrete, specific, and dependent upon time and place. Collective security, universal democracy, permanent and just peace are in the nature of ultimate, ideal goals which may inspire the actions of men and supply standards for the judgement of philosophy and ethics but which are not capable of immediate complete realization through political action. Between them and the political reality there is bound to be a permanent gap. Yet the liberals believe in the possibility of their immediate realization here and now." Scientific Man vs. Power Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 72-73.

<sup>73</sup> Nomination Hearing, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Dulles in Christian Century, March 19, 1952.

stressed this so much that, for him, the political threat of Communism at times seemed not to exist at all. Occasionally he would portray Communism in the harshest of power political terms. But this was not his principal approach. In 1948 he wrote:

What has given Soviet Communism its tremendous influence everywhere in the world? It is the moral slogans which they have adopted and expressed . . . . What are those slogans of which they have seized hold? They are nothing but the same slogans--the same beliefs, I say here--for which America has stood as a Christian nation and for which the Church of Christ stands . . . the leaders of the Soviet Communist party have been smart enough to see that the way to get influence in the world is to sponsor great moral principles.<sup>75</sup>

The emphasis Dulles placed on proclamation and sponsorship of slogans is significant. In 1950 he wrote that, "as a nation, although still religious . . . we can no longer generate a spiritual power which will flow throughout the world . . . . We have no message to send to captive peoples to keep their faith and hope alive."<sup>76</sup> And in his 1952 Life article, Dulles declared, "it is . . . ironic and wrong that we who so proudly profess regard for the spiritual should rely so utterly on material defenses while the avowed materialists have been waging a winning war with social ideas, stirring humanity everywhere."<sup>77</sup> In a brief item for the

---

<sup>75</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Moral Force in World Affairs," Presbyterian Life, April 10, 1948.

<sup>76</sup> Dulles, War or Peace, 259.

<sup>77</sup> Dulles in Life, May 19, 1952, 151.

Readers Digest in 1951 Dulles argued that the Communist strategy was a peaceful strategy: "Communists invariably refer to themselves as 'the peace-loving peoples of the world.' By their logic, they are peace-loving, because they would much prefer to take us over by peaceful means, as they took over Czechoslovakia . . . . The United States and its spokesmen are 'warmongers' because, faced with the choice of submission or resistance, we have chosen to resist."<sup>78</sup> The logic seems specious. (To what are non-Communist nations expected to submit? What, precisely, is it they are to resist?) But the statement serves to illustrate the point that Dulles regarded Communism less as a political-military threat than as a spiritual challenge, though fraudulent. Perhaps, like many Americans, Dulles attributed some quasi-magical qualities to Communism.

It is impossible to know whether Dulles actually had studied or understood much of Marxist theory. If he had done so he could hardly have constantly repeated his claim that "Communist doctrine . . . denies morality."<sup>79</sup> Marx had attempted to arrive at a new morality. Although Dulles probably understood that Lenin and Stalin and other wielders of Soviet power had seriously corrupted whatever humanism remained in Marxism after Marx himself had subordinated his

---

<sup>78</sup>John Foster Dulles, "Why the Communists Really Believe Their Own Lies, Readers Digest, May, 1951, 130.

<sup>79</sup>See Reinhold Niebuhr's introduction to Marx and Engels on Religion (New York: Schocken, 1964), vii-xiv.

humanism to what Niebuhr calls his "apocalyptic . . . new religion,"<sup>80</sup> Dulles seemed to fear most the new religion's possible appeal. "The Communists believe they represent the wave of the future. They are fanatic in promoting this idea. We must have people on our side who believe that our way of life is the way of the future. They must also be tough, like the Communists."<sup>81</sup>

It was never quite clear what Dulles was admonishing his fellow countrymen to do. Did he really want fanaticism in the United States? How could Americans "be tough, like the Communists"? It is significant that President Truman and Secretary Acheson did not make such statements as this. They despised Communism no less. They may well have been "tougher" than Dulles in their practical opposition to it. But they had a kind of equanimity that Dulles lacked. Perhaps they were more able to view Communism in human, political terms, whereas Dulles took a religious or moral view. Truman and Acheson were not without ideology. But Dulles's ideology was of a different stripe.

In 1945 Dulles hailed the Yalta Conference because it meant "the end of aloofness and beginning of Soviet acceptance of 'joint action on matters that it had the physical power to settle for itself.'"<sup>82</sup> But at some point

---

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy, 63.

<sup>82</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 41.

after 1945 Dulles underwent a change of attitude as to Soviet policy. According to Louis Gerson, Dulles did not become "sure of his conclusions about the aims of Soviet foreign policy" until the spring of 1946.<sup>83</sup> It was about this time that he read Stalin's Problems of Leninism, and this became a source that he consulted often, along with his grandfather's Diplomatic Memoirs, The Federalist Papers, and the Bible.<sup>84</sup> He concluded that Soviet policy was aimed at worldwide social revolution and national expansion. He compared Stalin's work to Mein Kampf, and he now began to attack the Yalta Conference. Yet he cautioned against using economic and military coercion against the Russians. He began to favor military deterrent power, and he also recommended open competition with the Soviet Union, apparently referring to a propaganda campaign. But he continued to assert the need for a religious solution. America must above all, he said, have "righteous convictions." He drafted a lengthy statement on his views and sent copies of these "evangelical remarks" to President Truman, Senator Arthur Vandenberg, his brother Allen, Dean Acheson, Walter Lippmann, and Andrei Gromyko.<sup>85</sup> Allen Dulles replied, indicating that

---

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 44. Herman Finer says that the turning point in Dulles's attitude toward the Soviet Union came as a result of the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948. Dulles Over Suez, 78.

<sup>84</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 44-45.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 45-49.

he favored a Kennanesque approach to the Soviet Union, yet he was less sanguine about "some arrangement between the Soviet system and the American" than was Foster.<sup>86</sup>

Dulles's attitude toward Communism continued to be characterized by a note of flexibility. He voiced the opinion that the United States had no need to feel intimidated by the Communists,<sup>87</sup> yet by 1952 he had come to feel that its threat was unsurpassed. By 1950 Dean Acheson had begun to enunciate his policy of "negotiation from strength." The Acheson policy seemed to have most of the earmarks of power politics, and was somewhat more "tough" than that of Kennan or Dulles.<sup>88</sup> Kennan's policy had been one involving a hope for "domestic change" in the Soviet Union, while Acheson's policy was one of "diplomatic adjustment." Dulles at some point after 1946 lost his faith in diplomatic adjustment and adopted a variant of the Kennan domestic change thesis. But where Kennan had hoped only for "an erosion from despotism," Dulles was at times prepared to predict the collapse of the Soviet domestic system.<sup>89</sup> (It is significant that this prediction came while Dulles was Secretary of State.)

By 1952 Dulles had voiced such a strong challenge to the Truman-Acheson foreign policy that he took office as

---

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 50-51.      <sup>87</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>88</sup>See page 7, chapter 1.

<sup>89</sup>Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 24.

Secretary of State amid heady expectations of triumph over Communism among Republican conservatives, and much apprehension among more moderate people in the United States and United States allies in Europe.<sup>90</sup> Both were, in different ways, disappointed.

So Dulles accepted the view of monolithic Communism that apparently underlay American foreign policy in the 1950's and 1960's. Andrew Berding recorded him as saying: "International Communism is in effect a single party . . . I've never believed in the possibility of complete Titoism in Communist China. The Chinese are dependent on the Soviet Union. Their regime couldn't control China if it were not for Russia."<sup>91</sup> At some later point Dulles apparently came to understand that there were potential sources of cleavage between the Soviet Union and China. He even speculated that the Soviet Union might have desired a war between China and the United States over the island of Quemoy in 1958, to make the Chinese more dependent upon them and because "such a war would kill off several hundred million Chinese." But Dulles drew no power-political conclusions from these observations and seemed willing to oblige the Soviets rather than let the Chinese Communists have Quemoy. He said that "if an

---

<sup>90</sup>Anthony Eden had forthrightly asked Eisenhower not to name Dulles as Secretary. See Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 142.

<sup>91</sup>Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy, 63-64.

earthquake were to swallow up Quemoy and we lost it that way, that would not be so bad as losing it by having to turn it over to the Communists."<sup>92</sup>

Dulles may have backed himself into a corner on the matter of refusing to negotiate with the Communist countries. But more precisely, Dulles became intimidated by and was fearful of negotiating with the Communists. At the Berlin Foreign Ministers Conference in February, 1954, he resisted agreement to negotiate on Indochina, finally agreed to the Geneva Conference, but tried to reassure potential Congressional critics by telling them that the United States would not actually be negotiating with China, but that the latter would come to Geneva to account before the bar of world justice.<sup>93</sup> He wound up walking out on the Geneva negotiations. Before the summit meeting of 1955, he seemed to predict, before the House Appropriations Committee, a Soviet collapse. He implied on this and other occasions that conference negotiations were safe because of the growing weakness of Russia.<sup>94</sup>

Shortly more than a year before his retirement and death, Dulles wrote of Communism that "its basic doctrine precludes its changing of its own accord . . . self

---

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>93</sup>See page 12, chapter 4.

<sup>94</sup>See The New York Times, May 19, 1955 and Time, July 18, 1955.

advertised changes must be considered as mere strategems."

But "international Communism is subject to change even against its will. It is not impervious to the erosion of time and circumstance . . . . The yeast of change is at work."<sup>95</sup>

### Dulles's Strategic Concepts

Dulles wrote in 1950 against a peace that would leave the United States "as an oasis in a totalitarian desert . . . . It is time to think in terms of taking the offensive in the world struggle for freedom and of rolling back the engulfing tide of despotism. It is time to think less of fission bombs and more of establishing justice and ending terrorism in the world."<sup>96</sup> In his remarkable Life article in May, 1952 Dulles criticized the Democratic security policies for costing \$60 billion "of which 99

---

<sup>95</sup> Foreign Affairs, October, 1957, 27-28. Here Dulles even adopts Kennan's word "erosion" to describe Soviet change.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Paul Peeters, Massive Retaliation - The Policy and its Critics (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959), 216. This curious book is highly laudatory of Dulles and condemns his critics utterly. On the Dulles statement quoted here, Peeters observes: "This statement is remarkable in that it shows that there is a manner of relying on fission bombs and massive retaliation that is appeasement. The policy of containment was a policy of 'massive retaliation'--understood as passive reliance on atomic power . . . . much of the criticism of massive retaliation is relevant to containment. The critics, in other words, criticize themselves." Still Mr. Peeters does not quite make clear the difference between Dulles's policy and that of Truman and Acheson. Was it a matter of coordinating military policy with public statements and propaganda about one's own determination and confidence? Dulles was not able to make this clear either.

percent goes for military purposes and for equipment which will quickly become obsolete and demand replacement indefinitely." He continued:

. . . this concentration on military matters is--to use George Washington's words--"inauspicious to liberty." It leads to encroachments on civil rights and transfers from the civilian to the military decisions which profoundly affect our domestic life and our foreign relations.

and

our far-flung, extravagant and surreptitious military projects are frightening many who feel that we are conducting a private feud with Russia, which may endanger them rather than performing a public service for peace.<sup>97</sup>

The "Truman Doctrine," Marshall Plan, NATO, the Military Assistance Program and even our own postwar rearmament program were, wrote Dulles, "merely reactions to some of the many Soviet threats" and, as such, were "reasonably successful." But they had not prevented the extension of Soviet control over "all or parts of 12 countries in Asia and Central Europe with populations of about 600 million."<sup>98</sup>

Dulles postulated a kind of global domino theory in 1952: The Soviet "mood today is one of triumphant expectancy: 'which will be the next addition to our camp?' The free world is full of foreboding: 'which of us will be the next victim?'" And he was firmly against isolationism, if that meant ignoring the Soviet threat. "Such policies as isolationism would really give 100% cooperation to the Soviet Communist effort to encircle and isolate us, as a

---

<sup>97</sup>Dulles in Life, May 19, 1952, 146.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

preliminary to final assault. Once Asia, Europe, Africa and probably South America were consolidated against us, our plight would be desperate."<sup>99</sup> But even the isolationist sentiment, he thought, was traceable to the defeatist Democratic policies. If we had made better use of our strengths, there would be no temptation toward isolationism.

Dulles's own strategic alternative began with a concept of a 20,000 mile Soviet bloc military perimeter behind which were concentrated land armies some 7,000,000 strong. "These forces poised in a central area could strike with massive power east, south or west at any one of more than 20 nations . . . ." Thus, a policy of arming and garrisoning Europe was very inadequate, for "even the line thus made defensible would be only 500 of the 20,000 miles which is the length of the free world's frontier with the Soviet world."<sup>100</sup> Dulles indirectly accused the Democrats of being Europe-firsters, a charge voiced frequently by the most conservative of Republicans, and of entirely neglecting Asia: "Policies that do not defend freedom in Asia are fatally defective."<sup>101</sup>

We could not build, Dulles wrote, "a 20,000 mile Maginot Line or match the Russian armies, man for man, gun for gun and tank for tank." At this point he broached his instant or massive retaliation idea:

---

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

There is one solution and only one: that is for the free world to develop the will and organize the means to retaliate instantly against open aggression by Red armies, so that, if it occurred anywhere, we could and would strike back where it hurts, by means of our choosing.<sup>102</sup>

It was a simple policy of deterrence, but one wonders if it could have actually been as simple in Mr. Dulles's mind as he expressed it in print:

The principle involved is as simple as that of our municipal police forces. We do not station armed guards at every house to stop aggressors--that would be economic suicide--but we deter potential aggressors by making it probable that if they aggress, they will lose in punishment more than they can gain by aggression.

By analogy the free world, for its common defense, needs community punishing power.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. In 1956 Mr. Dulles listed in a speech six characteristics of the nation-state, and pointed out that the international system lacks these characteristics: (1) laws which "reflect the moral judgement of the community"; (2) political machinery to revise these laws as needed; (3) an executive body able to administer the laws; (4) judicial machinery to settle disputes in accord with the laws; (5) superior force to deter violence by enforcing the law upon those who defy it; and (6) sufficient well-being so that people are not driven by desperation to ways of violence. See Department of State Bulletin, May 7, 1956, 740, and Fred W. Riggs in World Politics, XIV (1961), note 2, page 2 above. Riggs noted that "Mr. Dulles sadly reported that, despite notable progress in the development of international law and judicial machinery, the desired international order does not, as yet, exist." He also noted that in Dulles's view, world government and world law are "ideal forms" of world politics and that failure to achieve them "reflects a pathological condition which must be changed as quickly as possible." Mr. Dulles portrayed a "world state" as a United States policy goal. He apparently had some view of an evolving international state system, but could not articulate the role the United States would play. Riggs noted that many nation-states lack the attributes Dulles listed, and that his view revealed especially a Western nation-state bias. Dulles' concept of the inter-state system was a juridical one, even an "idealistic" one, which contrasted

What or who was to be punished?: "If, but only if, the Red armies of the Soviet Union or its satellites, including China, engage in open armed attack."<sup>104</sup>

After castigating the Democrats for too great reliance on nuclear weapons, Dulles was now placing exclusive emphasis on them. But most curiously, this was not only morally correct under the right personnel, but it was also safe and not an invitation to nuclear war because, as we have seen, Dulles did not see the Communist threat as a military one. He wrote:

The plainest of . . . facts is that the Kremlin has not used its Red armies for open military conquest even in these past years when there were no military obstacles in their path. The truth is that there are sound reasons why the Soviet leaders have not used--and may not use--their armies in open aggression.<sup>105</sup>

Why? Because the Soviet Union is subject to world opinion and lacks, while the free nations have, industrial superiority. Also they cannot count on the loyalty of their

---

with, if it did not contradict, the facts of power in the world. But this contrast or contradiction may have been manifested more in Dulles's writing than in his mind or in his actions as a power-wielding statesman. His remarks to Anthony Eden on international law (see chapter 2, page 6) and Guatemala, his policies of massive retaliation and brinkmanship, and of organizing alliances that went under the name of collective security but which lacked many of the precise aspects of collective security may have indicated that he expected the powerful United States to play a role in the world that was analogous to the "superior force /which was/ to deter violence by enforcing the law upon those who defy it" which Dulles had listed as an attribute of the nation-state alone. But he denied such a role for the British and French allies in 1956.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

soldiers, so the Soviets "give priority to political rather than military methods." The Politburo "fears an atomic attack on Russia's fragile communications system" and destruction of its "sources of oil." But a resolute and well-advertised "community punishing force" could further lessen the threat of Soviet attack. Atomic energy and strategic air and sea power could reduce the threat of general war "to the vanishing point."<sup>106</sup>

Since the threat of attack was for Dulles so remote, we are forced to look for some significance beyond that of contingency military planning in his policies. They seemed designed to rally the American people and restore what Dulles saw as a flagging anti-Communist morale. His proposed policy may also have been a bow to the Taftites, the budget-cutters in the Republican Party. There was, in fact, more than a faint trace of isolationist sentiment in Dulles's views. He expressed the opinion that too great a reliance on conventional systems of defense would lead to "the twin evils of militarism and bankruptcy." He was given to using euphemisms for nuclear weapons. Usually he referred to "new methods of defense."<sup>107</sup>

At his nomination hearing Dulles took up a favorite Republican theme: the Communist threat in Asia. Having nursed a residual attitude of disdain for decadent European society and power politics since the American Revolution,

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

the more sentimental elements of American opinion had long seemed to regard the Orient as an open field for our benevolent and liberal cultivation. The "loss" of China had in some respects only stimulated this feeling. Another possible explanation for Dulles's attention to Asia was the fact that Democratic policy had attended to Europe, and rather successfully, and Republican arguments must perforce point to supposed failures in Asia. Dulles told the Senators:

Now, the Soviet Communist strategy is global . . . .  
/and/ I think we have been neglectful in failing to take account of the fact that Soviet Communist policy has, from the first time it was laid out fully, I think it was by Stalin in 1924, in a lecture he gave called the Foundations of Leninism, and the charter on strategy and tactics is one of the most fruitful things to study that I know of, and there he makes perfectly clear that in the first instance, the program is to dominate what he calls the colonial and dependent areas, China, India, the Middle East, and that if he can get control of what he calls these reserves of the west, then the west will be weakened and so encircled, itself, that it will fall almost without a struggle to the Communists.<sup>108</sup>

In a Foreign Affairs article earlier in 1952 Dulles had outlined his general approach to Asian security. He looked forward to Japan playing a major role, but essentially he called for a series of bilateral and multilateral security treaties (not broadly multilateral because some--Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines--were reluctant to be allied with the recently aggressive Japan). He wanted a Pacific defense based in an island chain--Japan, the Ryukus, the Philippines, thence to Australia and New Zealand--but

---

<sup>108</sup>Nomination Hearing, 11.

the geographical area the United States would defend should be left indistinct. He did not want to invite another Korea by drawing a distinct line. Beyond this "indistinct line, presumably the nuclear deterrent would be operative in the case of overt military aggression across international boundaries. What would be done in the case of colonial wars led by Communist forces, within established frontiers, Dulles did not say. Most interestingly, he was essentially correct that the political appeal and strength of Communists, in some areas at least, would make military force almost unnecessary. Certainly this was the case in Vietnam after 1954, and would have become the case at any point the French might have decided to withdraw between 1945 and 1954. But Dulles and the new administration had in effect promised that no more territory and no more people would come under Communist rule once they took office. They faced a situation in 1954 for which they really had no policy. They had only an ideological stance.

#### Massive Retaliation and Liberation

Mr. Dulles formally announced his policy of what came to be called "massive retaliation" or the "new look" in military policy on January 12, 1954 in a speech before the Council on Foreign Relations. As we have seen, he had called for some such policy before becoming Secretary of State in May, 1952. He began the January 12 speech by pointing to what he considered to be the unsoundness of

committing United States land forces to Asia. He also pointed to the expense of conventional military forces, which he said could lead to "practical bankruptcy."<sup>109</sup> The new policy would provide "more basic security at less cost, even though at some times and some places there may be setbacks to the cause of freedom." The doctrine raised more questions than it answered. A chief criticism of it was that it was simply new words to describe an old policy (since Dulles and his defenders were quick to explain that the policy did not mean abandoning the United States effort to fight some local and conventional wars), but nevertheless words which would have a mischievous effect. Dean Acheson allowed that "strategic atomic bombing is not our first but our last resort . . . . If it is said, as it sometimes has been, that we cannot afford another war like Korea, the answer is that such a war is the only kind that we or anyone else can afford."<sup>110</sup>

Dulles answered his critics by stating that he had advocated only that the United States have a "capacity" to retaliate, not that it actually be done. (Of course the United States already had the capacity, and so did the

---

<sup>109</sup> The text of the speech may be found in Department of State Bulletin, January 25, 1954, 107-110. It is also printed along with a critical statement by Adlai Stevenson and Mr. Dulles's explanatory press conference of March 16, 1954 and his March 20 statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Current History, May 1954, 308-314.

<sup>110</sup> Article in The New York Times, March 28, 1954.

Soviet Union.) Dulles spoke of Pearl Harbor, and insisted that it was essential to leave the enemy guessing as to when retaliation would take place. So the policy was designed essentially to be some kind of warning, although it had some of the earmarks of the international police system Dulles longed for. He used this term, in fact, saying that it would supplement the United States NATO commitment.<sup>111</sup>

Dulles recognized a constitutional "twilight zone" regarding the President's power as Commander-in-Chief to take military action without a declaration of war by Congress; he now sought to create a twilight zone of uncertainty as to when or under what circumstances the United States would massively retaliate.<sup>112</sup> Appearing in March before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Dulles, as Hans Morgenthau puts it, "for all practical purposes buried the 'new look' under the cover of military secrecy:"

Senator Mansfield: Do you consider this new policy a new policy?

Secretary Dulles: It certainly has new aspects.

Senator Mansfield: What are they?

Secretary Dulles: Well, I am sorry I cannot go into that here. All I can say to you, and you will have to take it on faith, is that a series of new decisions have been taken by the National Security Council and many have been involved, close, and difficult decisions, but there is today on the record a series of decisions which are largely derived from this basic philosophy which were not there a year and a half ago.

Morgenthau observed that the sweeping announcements of general military principles was not as serious as the official

---

<sup>111</sup> See Current History, May 1954.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

declarations concerning the Indochina War, for the latter dealt with a concrete situation.<sup>113</sup> The precise relationship between the "new look" policies and the Indochina pronouncements cannot be stated with certainty at this point by one who lacks access to all secret governmental information. Chapters 2 and 3 show the likelihood that Dulles, had he been making the decision alone, would at some point have been driven by desperation to use nuclear weapons in Indochina. But he was restrained by Congressional leaders, by Anthony Eden, and most especially by President Eisenhower. In announcing the massive retaliation doctrine, Dulles seemed to be attempting to do by words what he was unwilling to do by military force. The words did not succeed. President Eisenhower vetoed military force. And the decision was put off until another time when another administration was willing to return to the use of massive conventional military forces which Dulles had planned not to employ again.

Dulles's policy of "liberation" was, in the words of Coral Bell, "the most intransigent" and the "least viable of American aspirations" of the cold war period.<sup>114</sup> Dulles had begun to speak of liberation, and massive retaliation, in his 1952 Life article. He continued to speak of it during the 1952 electoral campaign, and he steadfastly stuck to it

---

<sup>113</sup>Morgenthau in An Uncertain Tradition, 295. The exchange between Mansfield and Dulles is quoted here also.

<sup>114</sup>Bell, Negotiation from Strength, 218.

when questioned by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations prior to his confirmation by the Senate. He told the committee that "we shall never have a secure peace or a happy world so long as Soviet communism dominates one-third of all of the peoples that there are, and is in the process of trying at least to extend its rule to many others." Captive peoples could "eventually be welded into a force which will be highly dangerous to ourselves and to all of the free world. Therefore we must always have in mind the liberation of these captive peoples." But liberation does not mean war. "Liberation can be accomplished by processes short of war." He cited as a "not . . . ideal example" Tito's Yugoslavia. "Certainly," Dulles stated, "we cannot tolerate a continuance of the unholy arrangement" whereby "the 450 million people of China" become "the servile instruments of Soviet aggression." Containment is "bound to fail because a purely defensive policy never wins against an aggressive policy. If our only policy is to stay where we are, we will be driven back."<sup>115</sup>

But liberation "can be done and must be done in ways that will not provoke a general war, or in ways which will not provoke an insurrection which would be crushed with bloody violence." We had underestimated the efficacy of "moral pressures" and "the weight of propaganda." After all,

---

<sup>115</sup>Nomination Hearing, 5-6.

Soviet communism had spread "by methods of political warfare psychological warfare and propaganda" and not by the Red army.<sup>116</sup>

Of course Dulles was soon to learn that in the real world the principle task that he had created for himself was not to liberate countries from Communism, but to try to prevent others from "going Communist." Real policy, not just talk, would be required.

#### Dulles and Indochina

In his 1950 book Dulles had written of Indochina that "there is a civil war in which we have, for better or worse, involved our prestige. Since that is so, we must help the government we back. Its defeat, coming after the reverses suffered by the National Government of China, would have further serious repercussions on the whole situation in Asia and the Pacific. It would make even more people in the East feel that friendship with the United States is a liability."<sup>117</sup> In his 1952 Life article he obliquely referred to Indochina when he spoke of the need for a "roll-back": "Even the present lines will not hold unless our purpose goes beyond confining Soviet Communism within its present orbit."<sup>118</sup> This was indeed a "policy of boldness." Though Dulles's concepts were peculiarly apolitical and the term

---

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 6.      <sup>117</sup>Dulles, War or Peace, 231.

<sup>118</sup>Dulles in Life, May 19, 1952.

dynamic, so much a part of his vocabulary, remained undefined, the concepts and terms were presented in a political context. Mr. Dulles put himself in the service of a political party during a presidential campaign, helping to write a party platform which he himself confessed was traditionally one-sided in its presentation of partisan advocacy. After his party won the election he assumed an even more powerful and authoritative position in the new administration than most Secretaries of State ever achieved. Mr. Dulles's bold proclamations combined with the prestige of General Eisenhower and the mandate of their impressive electoral victory were bound to raise expectations that would be difficult to fulfill. But because of Dulles's own promises, diplomatic or cold war reverses for the United States under his leadership would be not merely embarrassing; they would be impossible. To say that the prospect of a Geneva settlement of the Indochina War in 1954 which left even part of Indochina under Communist control presented Dulles with a cruel dilemma is to underestimate the case.

Dulles is said to have thought that the original United States blunder in Indochina was in allowing the French to return to the area in 1945.<sup>119</sup> The French had had to use military force to reestablish and hold their position. But they were never quite successful in this and by 1954 they were faced with two stark choices: either get out, or ask

---

<sup>119</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 152.

for direct American military involvement. Mr. Dulles had tried as early as 1951, and into 1954, to use a propaganda technique to which the situation in Indochina would not yield: he stated frequently that Indochina "won, and won peacefully" political independence.<sup>120</sup> Before congressional committees he argued as late as 1954 that "the conditions there /in Indochina/ are not highly favorable to give, in fact, a total independence to people who have had no experience in exercising it, and developing political institutions." He continued:

If, in fact, the French were to pull entirely out of Indochina today, and just leave them absolutely alone, there would be very little stability left in the country, and their independence, while it might look very nice on paper, probably would not last more than a few weeks.

\* \* \*

All our advices are--and those come both from my own talks, for example, in Paris and Geneva, with representatives of the governments who are there; also the advices from our diplomatic people in Saigon--that there seems to be rather complete satisfaction with the degree of independence which has now been made available by the French.<sup>121</sup>

But many natives of Indochina were not consulted by Mr. Dulles or his informers.

Dulles denied at his Senate Foreign Relations Committee nomination hearing that he would give priority to one area of the world over another. It is significant that the

---

<sup>120</sup>"Strategy for the Pacific," Department of State Bulletin, March 26, 1951, 483-5.

<sup>121</sup>Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee printed in U. S. News and World Report, July 23, 1954, 76.

subject even came up. On a number of occasions he expressed the view that the Russians had some kind of "Asia first" policy. He never missed an opportunity to point out that, according to Stalin, the road to Europe lay through the Far East.<sup>122</sup> But while Dulles thought that the Communists were making their greatest effort in the Far East, he seriously underestimated the depth of the problem in Indochina. He thought that the only difference between the Vietminh and their opponents was one of leadership. What might have been considered a handicap for the Vietnamese Army, i.e., that they were led by and associated with the colonial French, was to Dulles apparently cancelled out by the association the Vietminh had with the Russians and the Chinese Communists.<sup>123</sup> When the problem proved to be much more serious and intractable than this, Dulles thought that the United States should take steps to resist the "imposition" of the Communist system on Indochina "by any means." When his plans for doing so failed to materialize, Dulles and Eisenhower found that the roads to a negotiated settlement of the war that might have prevented a revival of it had been cut off.

---

<sup>122</sup>Dulles in Life, May 19, 1952, 157.

<sup>123</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 162.

## CHAPTER III

### 1954--THE YEAR OF THE NEGATIVE DECISION

#### The Effort to Avert Negotiations

Throughout the 1952 presidential campaign, United States foreign policy was discussed heatedly, though not, perhaps, very constructively. Certain new elements were introduced into the debate. The Republican spokesmen attacked the Democratic policy of containing Communism and suggested a more positive policy involving, perhaps, a shrinkage of territory already controlled by Communist governments. The public was left somewhat in doubt as to whether this might include the adoption by a new Republican administration of General Douglas MacArthur's proposals for a more offensive military endeavor in the Far East.

This question was sidestepped, if not entirely laid to rest, by General Eisenhower's famous pledge to go to Korea if he were elected, a promise which was interpreted by the public to presage a negotiated settlement of the Korean conflict. And indeed a Korean armistice was accepted by the United States in July, 1953. Previously, in February, 1953, President Eisenhower had announced the "unleashing" of Chiang

Kai-shek's forces on the island of Taiwan, and subsequently, in October, 1953, the administration signed a mutual security pact with the government of Syngman Rhee in South Korea. These were the major efforts, as of 1953, to halt the spread of Communism in the Far East.

By 1954, however, those responsible for American foreign policy were face to face with the threat of Communist expansion in another part of Asia. The eight year-old war in Indochina, a perpetual political and military crisis for the French for several years, had suddenly become a grave diplomatic crisis for the administration in Washington. After months of talk about the futility and even immorality of the containment policy, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was faced with the task of devising a policy that would help to achieve containment of the Communist forces in Indochina. There were clear indications that the French would not be able or willing to continue for any considerable time their military effort against the Vietminh forces without a great infusion of American assistance.

The war had taken an especially bad turn for the French between 1950 and 1954. Large-scale American aid had not been able to turn the tide, and the French were growing weary of a war in which they suffered ever higher casualties and spent ever higher sums.<sup>1</sup> Prominent non-Communist

---

<sup>1</sup>In January, 1952 General Juin informed officials in the Pentagon that more French officers were being killed in Indochina each year than Saint Cyr, the French Military

politicians, such as Pierre Mendes-France, began to call for an end to the war. Even conservative French newspapers, such as Le Monde and Le Figaro, referred to the struggle in Indochina as "la sale guerre," ("the dirty war").

The reaction of Washington officials to the prospect of a French withdrawal in Indochina seems not to have been one of dismay but of increased pessimism and frustration, for the prospect was not entirely new. Some evidence exists that the French might have preferred to quit the war in 1952 or 1953, but that the heavy American aid kept them involved.<sup>2</sup> One non-Communist French newspaper even commented that "the Indochina War had become France's number one dollar-earning export."<sup>3</sup> Whatever the case, the atmosphere in Washington in early 1954 clearly showed that United States foreign

---

Academy, was graduating. In October, 1952 French President Vincent Auriol stated that France had spent twice as much on the war as she had received in Marshall Plan aid. See column by James Reston, The New York Times, January 14, 1952 and The New York Times, October 26, 1952. For figures on U. S. aid, see page 110, below.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard B. Fall, the Austria-born French scholar who distinguished himself by his research and writings on Southeast Asian military and political affairs, thought that France and the United States reached some agreement in 1952 to co-ordinate their military strategy in the Far East. It seems quite possible that "the two allies realized that the Korean and Indochinese theaters of operations were inter-dependent battlefields, since in both, the enemy forces drew upon Red China for their major support." No documentary evidence is yet available to prove that a formal agreement was reached that neither would conclude a peace without the other. Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 122-24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 459.

policymakers had a far more intense concern for developments in Indochina than had been previously admitted. But that concern was characterized by confusion and was revealed to the public in a series of contrasting and often contradictory statements.

At the Berlin Conference of the Big Four Council of Foreign Ministers in January and February, 1954, French Foreign Minister Bidault was compelled to call for a conference on Indochina. The war weariness of the French people and the desire to prolong the life of the Laniel Government were influential in Bidault's appeal. Consequently, the announcement of another conference, to meet at Geneva on April 26 to discuss Korea and Indochina, was the only important result of the Berlin Conference. Secretary Dulles agreed, apparently with some trepidation, to the Geneva Conference. Those attending the meeting would include the United States, Britain, France, South Korea and 13 other nations represented in the U. N. Korean Command and also the Soviet Union, Communist China and North Korea. At Dulles's insistence, the meeting together of these nations would not "imply diplomatic recognition in any case where it has not already been accorded."<sup>4</sup> When Dulles returned from Berlin on February 19, he sought to reassure Congressional leaders on this latter point. But steps were already being taken in

---

<sup>4</sup>Congressional Quarterly Service, China and U. S. Far East Policy, 1945-1966, Washington, D. C., 1966, 67. Hereafter cited as China and U. S. Far East Policy.

Washington that would lead to an attempt at undermining the Geneva conference.

The ensuing developments constitute what one writer has called "one of the most confused chapters of recent American diplomatic history."<sup>5</sup> In retrospect, this seems almost an understatement. The melange of speeches, statements to the press, travels, discussions with foreign diplomats, and hurriedly called meetings with selected members of Congress during that spring of 1954 can best be summed up in a term used at the time by James Reston--"instant diplomacy."

On February 1, 1954, a conference was held in Washington, attended by President Eisenhower, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council, and a special committee of representatives from the State Department headed by Under Secretary Walter Bedell Smith. The purpose of this conference was to study the alternatives facing the United States and to attempt to answer such questions as whether Indochina might be "the key to all Southeast Asia." Press reports a few days thereafter indicated that these studies were only exploratory in nature, and that "the government's immediate efforts were directed toward strengthening the French militarily in Indo-China and stiffening them politically in Europe to prevent a negotiated peace."<sup>6</sup> In his

---

<sup>5</sup>Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 226.

<sup>6</sup>Hanson Baldwin, The New York Times, February 7, 1954, E 5. For quadripartite Communique on proposed Asia conference, See Department of State Bulletin, XXX (March 1, 1954), 317-318.

column in The New York Times on February 4, 1954, James Reston reported that "in Berlin the French are urging the United States to agree to a Big Five conference with the Soviet and Chinese Communists on Asian problems . . . . The United States thinks it would be a disaster to negotiate a truce."<sup>7</sup> It appeared that the United States' actions, aside from continuing to pay approximately eighty per cent of the cost of the war,<sup>8</sup> would involve nothing more than some diplomatic pressure on France to continue it. At a press conference on February 3, President Eisenhower seemed almost resigned to whatever might happen. In response to a question as to how things were going in Indochina, he answered that "the heart and soul of the population" usually became the biggest factor of success or failure in situations such as that in Southeast Asia. He rather blandly suggested that if the people there truly wanted to be free, they would find a way to preserve their freedom.<sup>9</sup>

In early February, the United States sent "a certain number" of B-26s to Indochina and a mission of 200 technicians to serve as maintenance personnel for the aircraft.

---

<sup>7</sup>The New York Times, February 4, 1954.

<sup>8</sup>On March 16, 1954, Edouard Frederic Dupont, Reporting for the French Union Committee on the budget, told the French Assembly that for 1954 the United States would pay \$1,421,000,000 to France's \$394,000,000 to support the war. The New York Times, March 17, and April 7, 1954. See also Congressional Quarterly Service, China and U. S. Far East Policy, 67, 106.

<sup>9</sup>The New York Times, February 4, 1954.

Several members of Congress, including Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, raised questions about the wisdom of this step, and at his news conference on February 10, the President felt it necessary to allay the fears of the legislators and the public. He said that he "could conceive of no greater tragedy" than for the United States to become involved in an all-out war in Indochina. He promised to withdraw the technicians not later than June 15, 1954.<sup>10</sup>

On the same day a Presidential cable to Secretary Dulles in Berlin said "it is true that certain legislators have expressed uneasiness concerning any use of American maintenance personnel in Indochina. They fear that this may be opening the door to increased and unwise introduction of American troops into that area. Administration has given assurances to guard against such developments."<sup>11</sup>

Still, in Berlin, Secretary Dulles was attempting to discourage Bidault's anxiousness to negotiate with the Asians, if for no other reason than the possibility that "this could lead to further deterioration of morale in Indochina and France itself."<sup>12</sup> And in Washington, the British ambassador was told at the State Department that the United States government was "perturbed by the fact that the French were

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., February 11, 1954. Also, China and U. S. Far East Policy, 67.

<sup>11</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 343.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

aiming not to win the war, but to get into a position from which they could negotiate."<sup>13</sup> On the surface it may have seemed that administration thinking at this time went no further than the consideration of ways to keep France fighting, perhaps with still greater military and financial aid. But plans of a rather different order were actually in the works. General Matthew B. Ridgway, then Army Chief of Staff, has written that about this time he became "deeply concerned to hear individuals of great influence, both in and out of government, raising the cry that now was the time, and here, in Indo-China, was the place to 'test the New Look,' for us to intervene, to come to the aid of France with arms."<sup>14</sup> General Ridgway was especially disturbed over the talk for he thought that Korea had shown that air and sea power alone, the proposed mode of intervention, could not win a war. Could it be that this lesson had been so soon forgotten? On March 10, at another news conference, President Eisenhower said that he would not involve the United States in any conflict, including Indochina, unless Congress declared war. On March 9, Senator John C. Stennis of Mississippi had demanded that U. S. Air Force technicians be withdrawn from Indochina. In his view the U. S. was "taking steps that lead our men directly into combat. Soon

---

<sup>13</sup>Sir Anthony Eden, Full Circle (London: A. S. Cassell Co., 1961), 100.

<sup>14</sup>General Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier: Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 276.

we may have to fight or run."<sup>15</sup>

Neither General Ridgway nor any other responsible United States official has ever said explicitly that the use of nuclear bombs was contemplated in the Indochina crisis. But some observers thought that Secretary Dulles's speeches of February-April, 1954 were designed to get the Chinese to associate further aid to the Vietminh with his earlier threat of massive retaliation. And there were several notable voices of protest at the course of Washington's policies. Prime Minister Nehru of India stated that United States efforts were "disrupting Asia." And in a speech on March 23, George F. Kennan complained that many Americans had become "wholly absorbed with power values to a point where they were impatient of any discussion of international affairs that tried to take account of anything else--inclined to dismiss references to any other problems as frivolous and inconsequential."<sup>16</sup> As to a military campaign in Indochina involving United States ground forces, General Ridgway took steps to prevent that. He sent a team of experts to the area to make an extensive investigation of the various military factors involved. His report to President Eisenhower was probably instrumental in ultimately preventing intervention.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>China and U. S. Far East Policy, 67.

<sup>16</sup>The New York Times, March 24, 1954.

<sup>17</sup>Ridgway, Soldier, 277.

The campaign to avert negotiations and continue the war was not to die easily, however. And Washington found, or seemed to find, some cause for optimism. On March 20 the French chief of staff, General Paul Ely, came to Washington. He was met at the airport by his American counterpart, Admiral Arthur B. Radford, and he told the press that the "crushing Viet Minh losses in the battle of Dien Bien Phu gave rise to a hope for a major French victory. If the Communists continue to suffer the losses they have been taking, I don't know how they can stay in the battle."<sup>18</sup> Privately, he told Admiral Radford and other high American officials that the total destruction of Dien Bien Phu was likely, and he warned of the grave consequences for Indochina and perhaps all of Southeast Asia.<sup>19</sup> The private pessimism was reflected in newspaper reports that began to suggest a new element in the troubled relations between the United States and her allies over the Indochina situation. On March 21, The New York Times reported that "influential United States sources believe that loss of Dien Bien Phu could bring a sense of frustration and defeatism to France, seriously threatening any decision to participate in the defense of Europe." Subsequent events proved that this fear on the part of American policymakers was justifiable,

---

<sup>18</sup>The New York Times, March 21, 1954.

<sup>19</sup>Edgar Kemler, "The Asia-First Admiral," The Nation, July 17, 1954, 45.

although the specific grounds on which it was based seem to have been faulty, as will be shown below.

The confusion and frustration that existed among Washington officials was well exhibited by two pronouncements that followed fast on General Ely's visit. On March 22 Admiral Radford declared that "the French /italics mine/ are going to win this war." And on March 24, Walter H. Waggoner reported in The New York Times that "the United States offered France today whatever additional assistance she required in the Indochina fighting. It made clear, however, that an 'aggressive' training program for the Vietnamese /italics mine/ forces was expected in return."<sup>20</sup>

Diplomatic pressure on the French alone seemed insufficient to accomplish Secretary Dulles's purpose. A situation existed in fact which Mr. Dulles was very reluctant to accept. The Vietminh were defeating the French without Chinese military intervention. China had been branded an aggressor by the United Nations for her entry into the Korean War, and it is possible that Dulles believed that if this fact could be associated with the struggle in Indochina, and the colonial aspects of the war de-emphasized, the allies could be exerted to a greater effort. On the evening of March 29, Mr. Dulles made a speech which appeared to be designed for this purpose. He warned that open entry of the Chinese into the war "would result in grave conse-

---

<sup>20</sup>The New York Times, March 24, 1954.

quences which might not be confined to Indochina." He added that "under the conditions of today, the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of Communist Russia and its Chinese Communist ally, by whatever means, would be a grave threat to the whole free community." And he called for "united action" to prevent it.<sup>21</sup>

But the policies and expectations of the United States and her major European allies were obviously at cross purposes. The French actually seem to have felt that the United States might have to make some concessions to Peiping to get the war ended. A good deal of effort was required of Bidault in persuading Dulles to allow the Communist Chinese to attend the Geneva Conference. Dulles had finally relented, but as James Reston wrote: "Mr. Dulles . . . is a stubborn man. He is determined to prove that he can find a formula for Southeast Asia that will win the acquiescence, if not the enthusiasm, of France, the Associated States (of Indochina), Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India and the various factions in Congress."<sup>22</sup> New York Times correspondent Harold Callender, in a dispatch from Paris, wrote that "Secretary of State Dulles's speech . . . on United States policy in Southeast Asia was considered here to have been designed partly to discourage hopes in France of gaining

---

<sup>21</sup>The Department of State Bulletin, XXX, No. 772 (April 12, 1954), 540.

<sup>22</sup>The New York Times, March 31, 1954.

peace in Indochina by United States concessions to Communist China."<sup>23</sup>

The British reaction was scarcely less favorable. In a note, dated April 1, to the British ambassador in Washington, Foreign Secretary Eden wrote:

Your recent reports indicate that the United States Government, while rejecting (rightly in our view) intervention by United States forces as means of defeating Vietminh, nevertheless hope that victory can still be achieved by FrancoVietnamese forces, given sufficient pressure, material aid and possibly political and technical advice from United States. Her Majesty's ambassador at Paris, however, has made it clear that such a policy is becoming increasingly unacceptable to the French.

We fully share United States' desire to see Indochina preserved from Communism and agree that, so long as there is any hope of success, the French should be urged to maintain their present effort. But after earnest study of military and political factors, we feel it would be unrealistic not to face the possibility that the conditions for a favorable solution in Indochina may no longer exist. Failure to consider this possibility now is likely to increase the difficulty of reaching tripartite agreement should we be forced at Geneva to accept a policy of compromise with the Communists in Indo-China.<sup>24</sup>

Apparently unaware, as yet, of the firmness of the British position, President Eisenhower sent a message on April 4 to Prime Minister Churchill asserting that "the situation in Southeast Asia requires us urgently to take serious and far-reaching decisions" to prevent the Geneva negotiations from being a "facesaving device to cover a Communist retirement." How this could be done under the military circumstances the President did not make clear. He

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 102.

contented himself by pointing to the statement of Dulles calling for united action.<sup>25</sup> A few days later, Mr. Eisenhower told his news conference that he agreed with Mr. Dulles that "with united will created it will diminish the need for united action."<sup>26</sup> A number of informed observers, among them Hanson Baldwin, military affairs editor of The New York Times, thought that Secretary Dulles was too optimistic about the strategic position of the French. The Vietminh already controlled a majority of the territory of the country. But Mr. Dulles seemingly chose to ignore or at least to de-emphasize this fact and concentrate attention on another fact which was not recognized as a fact by some of those most directly concerned: viz., the threat of Chinese intervention. On April 6, the Secretary again issued a warning to the Communist Chinese and made a fresh, top secret United States intelligence report that Chinese Communists were fighting with the Vietminh in Indochina. In testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee he said that the

---

<sup>25</sup> Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 346.

<sup>26</sup> The New York Times, April 8, 1954. Evidence existed that the drive for united will or united action was not being thwarted by France and the United Kingdom alone. A report from Saigon in The New York Times of April 4, 1954 stated that "an appreciable increase in Anti-Americanism" in South Viet-Nam was resulting from growing American influence and alleged interference. Many Vietnamese felt that the United States was keeping the war going. The dispatch maintained that "the majority of the Vietnamese people want peace at almost any price, and a large proportion, now as in the past, seem to want the Vietminh to win." The New York Times, April 4, 1954.

Communists were threatening all of Southeast Asia, and that the Chinese were "coming awfully close" to a new aggression in Indochina.<sup>27</sup> In Paris, the French reaction to this information from Mr. Dulles was mixed, but the official position of the French government was that "there was no proof of Chinese combatants in Indochina."<sup>28</sup>

To stress the Chinese Communist threat, while Mr. Eisenhower was expressing doubts about involving the United States more directly in the war, may have been the only course Mr. Dulles felt was open to him. Leaders in Congress, notably Senators Russell and Stennis, not to mention the attentive public, seemed confused and not very willing to follow Mr. Dulles's lead.<sup>29</sup> It is far from uncommon for statesmen to agree more in their public pronouncements than in their nonpublic words and actions. But curiously, the opposite seems to have been the case in Washington at this time. The Government of the United States was committed to intervention in Indochina, at least if certain conditions could be met. As Oliver E. Clubb has written: "In effect, the united action policy envisaged not an end to the Indochina war, a primary objective of the

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., April 7, 1954.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. Also, China and U. S. Far East Policy, 67.

<sup>29</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 343. See also Chester L. Cooper, The Lost Crusade (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1970), 70.

forthcoming Geneva negotiations, but its expansion."<sup>30</sup>

The Meeting With Congressional Leaders

On Saturday, April 3, 1954, President Eisenhower left Washington for Camp David, his mountain retreat in Maryland. His Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff remained in Washington and called to a secret meeting in the State Department three Representatives and five Senators from the United States Congress. They were Senate Majority Leader William Knowland of California; his fellow Republican, Senator Eugene Millikin; Senate Minority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson, and Democratic Senators Richard Russell and Earl Clements; House Republican Speaker Joseph Martin and two Democratic House leaders, John W. McCormack and J. Percy Priest.<sup>31</sup> In a serious tone the Secretary told the legislators that the President had asked him to call the meeting. The Administration wanted a joint resolution from Congress that would permit the President to use air and naval power in Indochina. Dulles and Radford went into some detail as to the urgency of the matter. Radford explained that the fortress of Dien Bien Phu might fall at any moment; indeed it might already have fallen and poor communications

---

<sup>30</sup>Oliver E. Clubb, The United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1962), 58.

<sup>31</sup>Others present at the conference were Under Secretary of Defense Roger Kyes; Navy Secretary Robert B. Anderson; and Thruston B. Morton, Secretary Dulles's assistant for Congressional Relations.

prevented our hearing about it. Dulles expressed skepticism about the French, indicating that they might use some disguised means of withdrawing from Indochina if they did not receive help soon. He hinted that the mere passage of the resolution might make the actual use of force unnecessary.<sup>32</sup> But Admiral Radford had a military plan ready if its use became necessary. Two aircraft carriers, the Essex and the Boxer were deployed in the South China Sea.<sup>33</sup> Planes from the carriers and from United States bases in Okinawa and the Philippines were ready to make a "one-shot" strike against the enemy at Dien Bien Phu. Because of its similarity to the single large-scale raid carried out by German and Italian aircraft to destroy the Spanish town of Guernica on April 26, 1936, the plan has been referred to as "Operation Guernica-Vulture."<sup>34</sup>

Under questioning by the legislators, Admiral Radford admitted that such a strike would mean that the United States would be at war, that if the strike did not succeed in

---

<sup>32</sup>This version of the meeting on April 3 is taken from Chalmers M. Roberts, "The Day We Didn't Go to War," The Reporter, September 14, 1954, pp. 31-35. This is the most detailed account in print and has never been denied, but see also Fletcher Knebel, "We Nearly Went to War Three Times Last Year," Look, February 8, 1955. Kemler, in The Nation, July 17, 1954, gives a sketchy account of the meeting and President Eisenhower alludes to it in Mandate for Change, 347.

<sup>33</sup>Kemler says in the Gulf of Tongking. Kemler, The Nation, July 17, 1954.

<sup>34</sup>Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 226. "Vulture" seems to have been the Pentagon's code designation for the operation.

relieving the fortress there would be a follow up, and that he was the only member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who approved of the proposed action. He evaded the question of whether ground forces would be required following such an air assault. Senator Johnson asked Dulles whether he had consulted the United States' allies on the proposal and Dulles replied that he had not. As the meeting continued for over two hours, all eight members of Congress concluded that the Secretary of State should seek allied concurrence before they could commit themselves on the resolution.

Dulles left one week later for London and Paris. He encountered a solid barrier of opposition to intervention in Foreign Secretary Eden and Prime Minister Churchill; and as Eden's note to the British ambassador in Washington had indicated, it was their understanding that the French were not enthusiastic about the idea either.<sup>35</sup> In London Dulles broached the subject of a Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. Eden indicates in his memoirs that Dulles had no written proposals for such an organization, but felt that some kind of ad hoc organization should be set up immediately without waiting for a formal treaty to be concluded.<sup>36</sup> It is not

---

<sup>35</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 102 and page 117 above. In his Life magazine article of January 16, 1956, James Shepley says that the French wanted unilateral American intervention, but were not willing to accept allied intervention. James Shepley, "How Dulles Averted War," Life, January 6, 1956, 70.

<sup>36</sup>In his April message to Churchill, *supra*, p. 12, Eisenhower had been unclear as to whether he was referring

possible to state precisely, without knowing what formal decisions had been made within the National Security Council, just what Dulles had in mind. He spoke to Eden of a joint warning of air and naval action against China. The proposal seems to have taken several forms, but at any rate, the ad hoc organization would provide the "united front" to cover whatever threats were made or action taken. Eden seemed baffled, and he was not convinced by Dulles's assertion that the situation in Indochina was analogous to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and to Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland. He explained that the British Chiefs of Staff did not believe that allied intervention could be limited to the air and the sea, a view with which all of the United States Chief of Staff, save Radford, and even President Eisenhower, at least in his memoirs, agreed. In a memorandum Eden wrote:

I cannot see what threat would be sufficiently potent to make China swallow so humiliating a rebuff as the abandonment of the Vietminh without any face-saving concession in return. If I am right in the view, the joint warning to China would have no effect, and the

---

to a long-range security arrangement for Southeast Asia or some device to save the immediate situation. But in his memoirs, the former President noted that "the important thing is that the coalition must be strong and it must be willing to join the fight if necessary." He refers to the United States-proposed organization as an "ad hoc grouping," and he notes that Churchill's brief answer "showed that the British had little enthusiasm for joining us in taking a firm position and it seemed clear that the Congress would not act favorably unless I could give assurances that the British would be on our side." Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 347.

coalition would then have to withdraw ignominiously or else embark on warlike action against China.<sup>37</sup>

In short, Britain would not join in any joint declaration or action before the Geneva Conference, and before some security arrangement was actually established. Dulles's timing was the major error of his proposals. And Congress would not authorize action unless the British, at least, went along.<sup>38</sup> In his column in The New York Times of April 11, 1954, James Reston reviewed the succession of developments from early February through March. While President Eisenhower had spoken of "no greater tragedy" than getting involved in a Southeast Asian war and later of the "transcendent importance" of Indochina, Mr. Dulles had called for "united action." Reston saw a sense of uncertainty and improvisation in United States diplomacy, "entirely out of keeping with the gravity of subjects concerned." He concluded:

There is an uneasy feeling here, even among Mr. Dulles' supporters in the State Department, that he is gambling an awful lot on his instinct. They don't know whether he is bluffing the Reds or getting the United States ready for military action in Indochina, and, after all the casual talk about "massive retaliation" they don't particularly like either course.<sup>39</sup>

#### The Senate Debate

Although eight members of Congress had been asked on

---

<sup>37</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 104.

<sup>38</sup>Roberts, The Reporter, September 14, 1954. Also Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 347.

<sup>39</sup>James Reston, The New York Times, April 11, 1954.

April 3 for a rush-job resolution to back United States intervention in Indochina (Chalmers Roberts wrote that "some of those at the meeting came away with the feeling that if they had agreed that Saturday to the resolution, planes would have been winging toward Dien Bien Phu without waiting for a vote of Congress or without a word in advance to the American people."<sup>40</sup>), Congress was not kept well informed by the administration on these matters. Senator Alexander Wiley, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had not been advised beforehand about the call for "united action." Members of the Senate, especially, became restive, curious, and even indignant as statements from administrators became more portentous and as rumors of the April 3 meeting began to spread around Washington. On April 6, Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts obtained the floor in the Senate and delivered a speech which, although it was not the first on the subject, touched off a significant debate.

"Mr. President," Senator Kennedy began, "the time has come for the American people to be told the blunt truth about Indochina . . . . The speeches of President Eisenhower, Secretary Dulles, and others have left too much unsaid."<sup>41</sup> The cautious tone of the Senator's remarks and the care he took to establish his personal abhorrence of a

---

<sup>40</sup> Roberts, The Reporter, September 14, 1954, 32.

<sup>41</sup> This and the following remarks in the United States Senate are from U. S., Congressional Record, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 1954, C, Part 4, 4672 et passim.

Communist-dominated Indochina set a kind of pattern that has been followed, almost without exception, even into the sparse debate on Vietnam policy in 1964-65. Still, Senator Kennedy has bolder than most. "Despite the wishful thinking to the contrary," he said, "it should be apparent that the popularity and prevalence of Ho Chi Minh and his following throughout Indochina would cause either partition or a coalition government to result in eventual domination by the Communists." The French were fighting a "valiant" struggle, and Kennedy endorsed Dulles's call for united action, even if that meant using American troops. However, this would probably not bring forth a victory. He traced a succession of optimistic statements by French and American officials from February, 1951 to February, 1954. Only two months earlier Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith had said: "The military situation in Indochina is favorable. . . . Contrary to some reports, the recent advances made by the Viet Minh are largely 'real estate' operations . . . . Tactically, the French position is solid and the officers in the field seem confident of their ability to deal with the situation." Admiral Radford had stated, also in February: "The French are going to win." In March, Mr. Dulles did not "expect that there is going to be a Communist victory in Indochina." This official optimism did not square with Senator Kennedy's personal estimate of the situation. He continued:

I am frankly of the belief that no amount of American military assistance in Indochina can conquer an enemy which is everywhere and at the same time nowhere, 'an enemy of the people' which has the sympathy and covert support of the people.<sup>42</sup>

And he concluded:

In an era of supersonic attack and atomic retaliation, extended public debate and education are of no avail, once such a policy must be implemented. The time to study, to doubt, to review, and revise is now, for upon our decisions now may well rest the peace and security of the world, and, indeed, the very continued existence of mankind.<sup>43</sup>

Senator Kennedy was especially concerned that the American people were insufficiently informed about the Indochina war to give firm and wise support to their leaders. He ended his speech with a famous quotation from Thomas Jefferson: "If we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education."

Most of the Senators who participated in the debate, Senator Kennedy included, were particularly interested in the reluctance of France to grant unequivocal independence to the people of Indochina, and the difficulty this posed for an effective United States policy. Senator Knowland followed Kennedy with a strong appeal for collective defense in Southeast Asia. He agreed with Kennedy that France should grant complete independence. A central purpose of collective security is, of course, to prevent or check

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 4672-4673.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 4674.

aggressive actions by one country against another. And Kennedy seemed quite unsure that such was applicable in the Indochina war. Touching on an aspect of the problem which has been studiously avoided or ignored in official United States policy throughout, Kennedy said that he felt Dulles was saying (in his Overseas Press Club speech) that the United States was ready to go to war, and further, that "it is to assist in civil war that the call for united action has been made." When Senator Kennedy became President, he was never to use the term "civil war" in this context again, but his public discussion of the problem frequently seemed to indicate that he had never completely forgotten this aspect.

Remarks by others in the Senate reflected the lopsided approach of the Executive branch in formulating a policy. Senator Symington of Missouri noted that "the amount of money given . . . to Indochina within the past twelve months, exceeds the total cost of the farm parity program in the United States since its inception." Echoing a theme which General Ridgway, General Maxwell Taylor, and others were to play on for several years thereafter, Symington further observed that it might be "rather extraordinary that we should be moving into this picture, and at the same time be further reducing heavily our own military strength."

Senator Henry Jackson of Washington urged that the President come before Congress and tell them what was needed.

He was sure that Congress would respond favorably, as they had in the case of President Truman's asking for aid to Greece to help fight Communist guerrillas there. Senator Kennedy replied by pointing out that in Greece "we went to the assistance of a regime or a Government which had the whole hearted support of the people against the Communist guerrillas." But in Indochina, he said, "many of us hesitate to enlist our men and our treasure in a struggle which may go on indefinitely, and in which the justice of the cause is not completely and clearly on our side, in the eyes of the people of that area." We were, in effect, fighting to protect French colonialism.

Senator Warren Magnuson of Washington said that the problem involved "basic issues," that if the French simply quit Indochina "The Vietnamese Government would soon become the Viet Minh Government, and communism would be established there." Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois revealed a quite remarkable ignorance of geographic and military facts when he commented that "we are talking here of fighting which is taking place in a localized area in the vicinity of the Red River Delta, at Hanoi, Hai-phong and along the Tonkin (sic)."

Throughout the debate there was in the Senate, as apparently there was in the high Executive councils, a quite stubborn refusal to consider, or even acknowledge, the fact that it was the Vietminh forces which

were fighting the battle for independence.<sup>44</sup> There was on the part of the Senators a great reluctance to contemplate the possibility that Communist leaders can be independent nationalists, that they may, in fact, virtually monopolize nationalist prestige in some situations and in some places. Senator Dirksen talked of setting up a target date for granting independence, to give the natives "something for which to fight." The simple fact to which Dirksen and many others seemed strangely oblivious was that a very large portion of the "natives," especially those who were armed and trained both politically and militarily, had already set their own goal of independence, were already fighting quite successfully for it, and in fact to all practical purposes were winning it.

Senator Dirksen disagreed with Kennedy that the Indochina problem should be elevated "to a national issue." He thought the situation not at all analogous to Greece where we were dealing with a sovereign state, and thus the Truman Doctrine did not apply.

But Senator Dirksen was unwilling to have the French withdraw, dump the Indochinese problem into the lap of the United Nations where it would become another Korea with the United States supplying 90 per cent of the expense and 90 per cent of the troops. "I would be the last to go along

---

<sup>44</sup>For an interesting comment on this point, see Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 104-105,

with a program of that sort," he said.<sup>45</sup>

Inability to agree upon a primary or basic approach to Indochina was perhaps the most vexing problem of American foreign policy as it attempted to deal with the former colonial and underdeveloped areas of the world. While some Senators were primarily concerned for Indochinese independence--from France, from China, from any outside agent--, Senator Jackson expressed the more prevalent view that "the reason we are concerned in Indochina, above everything else, is to prevent Indochina, and with it all of Southeast Asia, from falling into the hands of the Communists." But still he warned that "we should not reach a point from which we cannot withdraw, the only alternative being the possibility of all-out war." This warning was heeded in 1954 only to be called forth again in 1964, and then under circumstances that made the choice more terrible than on the first occasion. The issue raised by Dean Acheson in early 1950 became more complex as the years went by.

In a possible reference to General Ridgway, Senator John Stennis of Mississippi observed that he had it "on the very highest military authority--as high as it can be with the exception of the President of the United States himself--that a great deal of the trouble in Indochina is not a lack of men or a lack of material or a lack of weapons, but a lack of a proper will to fight and win." He said he didn't

---

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 4679.

think Congress would ever vote to go into Indochina on a unilateral basis: "To go in on a unilateral basis would be to go into a trap. It would be to send our men into a trap from which there could be no reasonable recovery and no chance of victory." He laid down a challenge to the President which the latter never became willing to accept:

I believe it is particularly incumbent upon the President of the United States. I accept his assurances in full good faith, and I know he means every word. However, the burden is on him and on his administration to develop the facts, and to not be too late in presenting them to us for consideration according to our responsibility and for the nation's consideration.<sup>46</sup>

The second major round of Senate discussion on Indochina took place on April 14. It began with a speech by Senator Mansfield of Montana. "In this shrunken world of ours," he began, "all events are interrelated. The decisions on Indochina taken at Geneva will echo not only throughout Asia but in Europe and our own country as well." Many in Washington were obviously concerned about how the settlement France obtained at Geneva would affect her decision to join or not join the suspended European Defense Community. Senator Mansfield complained that

The administration last week finally took several Members of Congress into its confidence. I regret to say, however, that, to the best of my knowledge, the administration has not yet seen fit to include the chairman and the ranking minority members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee or the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its trust.<sup>47</sup>

He commended the earlier speakers (Gillette, Kennedy,

---

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 4681.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 5111.

Knowland, Jackson, Stennis, and others) for "their penetrating analysis of the problem, their sincerity, and their forthright facing of the facts." This statement, as well as any, gave a clue to the confusion that reigned in this almost desperate attempt to arrive at some consensus on policy. For while the Senate was generally agreed on the unwisdom of unilateral American intervention, the various members were far from agreeing on the basic "facts" of the situation. Senator Mansfield gave expression to the tortured dilemma perceived by the more cautious men in the Government when he said that mere hopes for Mr. Dulles's success at Geneva were not enough to "prevent either a settlement of appeasement or our full military commitment in Indochina."

Senator Mansfield thought that the threat to Indochina emanated from Communist China, and that the U. S. purpose should be to assure Indochinese independence. Senator Mansfield has, since early in the 1950's, taken a special interest in the problems of Southeast Asia and American attempts to deal with those problems. He was, and is, surely one of the best informed members of the Senate. But he has not been immune from the virus of unrealism which has affected United States policy in certain areas. His Senate speech was revealing.

If Indochina emerges free, (he speculated) International Communism will be denied strategic military bases from which to launch . . . an aggression (presumably against the United States, since Senator Mansfield made a comparison with the Japanese occupation of Indochina at the beginning of World War II). It will be denied the

strategic raw materials of Indochina and the rest of Southeast Asia. It will be denied the surplus rice of the area--the rice on which the armies of Asia march.<sup>48</sup>

French withdrawal, in mid-April, 1954, "would bring about the immediate collapse of nationalist resistance," because "native armies have not yet been formed that can stand alone against the Communist-led Viet Minh." Senator Mansfield, a former Political Science teacher, was unwilling to concede that the Vietminh were nationalists. And that the Vietminh were also "natives" seemed not to impress him at all. Not a single voice challenged the disconcerting and almost overpowering incongruity of the implication that Vietnamese nationalism in 1954 depended on French support!

To be sure, the Communist armies were "heavily supported" from the Soviet Union and Communist China, but hardly to the extent that the anti-Communist side was supported by the United States.<sup>49</sup> The Vietminh were forced to pay the Chinese for materials received from them, while the other side got their far greater aid free. The Vietminh had no naval power and no air power. How could the Communist leaders elicit so much more loyalty and efficiency from their troops with false appeals than the anti-Communists could

---

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 5112.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 5113. Senator Mansfield supplied the information that military equipment from outside (i.e., China) to the Vietminh was some 5,000 tones per month, while that from outside (i.e., the U. S.) to the French was 50,000 tons per month. Thus the ratio of supplies was on the order of 10 to 1. The battles between the French and the Vietminh were essentially conventional warfare at this time.

elicit from their troops with the truth and assurances of genuine freedom in the future? Senator Mansfield had no answer. Nor was he, it appeared, able to see that from the standpoint of many Indochinese it was not "International Communism" that ate rice, but people.

Senator Mansfield was willing to concede that the Vietminh Communists had "wrapped themselves in the cloak of nationalism and social reform." The cloak was tattered by 1954 but still relatively intact. It would "take time for it to disintegrate." Where was genuine Vietnamese nationalism to be found if not among the Vietminh? Apparently there was none, for Senator Mansfield said that if either the French military effort or United States material aid were discontinued, "the resistance to Communism in Indochina would collapse." So went the chronic tendency to contrast nationalism and Communism in Indochina, to stress their antagonism. There was no willingness to face even the possibility that they might be more nearly identical than antagonistic. As Edgar Snow wrote later, the two were not Siamese twins, but twins of some sort they surely were.

Finally, Mansfield put his finger on what was probably, under the complicated circumstances, a minor if not an entirely irrelevant anomaly. He said that the United States Government had "never yet made clear in unequivocal terms . . . whether or not this country seeks the full independence of the three Associated States. It has hinted at this as

our policy. But it has never stated in clear-cut language that this is our policy."<sup>50</sup> And Senator Malone thought that the French were not fighting Communism at all, but merely to protect their colonial system. This conclusion has come to be accepted by many Americans since 1954.

Through all the confusion evinced by the Senate debate, there emerged one clear and important fact: the Congress would not support unilateral American intervention in Indochina without an emergency appeal from the President. And even with that, majority support might not have emerged. Senator Mansfield announced that he was opposed to the resolution proposed by Dulles and Radford on April 3. (He had only "heard of it.") At this late date Mansfield seemed to think that the United States would not need to send troops to win the war if France would grant full independence and Vietnamese nationalist leaders would somehow make themselves attractive to their people. Senator Kennedy replied: "I am afraid that guarantees of outside countries will have no appreciable effect on the struggle as it is presently being waged."<sup>51</sup>

The promise of President Eisenhower to end the war in Korea was on the minds of most Republicans. Senator Alexander Wiley probably expressed the feelings of most of

---

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 5117. Senator Hubert Humphrey voiced doubt that Secretary Dulles and others were fully committed to Indochinese independence.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 5120.

his colleagues when he said: "Mr. Speaker, if war comes under this Administration, it could be the end of the Republican Party." And Senator Edwin Johnson of Colorado expressed the view of a no doubt larger group by saying that he was "against sending American GI's into the mud and muck of Indochina on a bloodletting spree to perpetuate colonialism and white man's exploitation in Asia."<sup>52</sup>

### The President Speaks

In the eyes of the public, Dwight D. Eisenhower's comprehension of military strategy and tactics was probably unexcelled. One could scarcely imagine him borrowing military ideas from an admiral of the navy. Whether Mr. Eisenhower ever did borrow an overall military policy from Admiral Radford, and then return it unused, will never be known for certain. One highly publicized account of the early Eisenhower foreign and military policy the explanation of which gave to the American vocabulary such terms as "massive retaliation" and "brinkmanship") claims that Admiral Radford did indeed offer the policy in broad outline to the President-elect in December, 1952, and that the latter was a willing if not an enthusiastic recipient.<sup>53</sup> Certainly Mr. Eisenhower's own writings do not provide the answer.

In the memoirs of his White House years, the former

---

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 5281.

<sup>53</sup>Shepley, Life, January 16, 1956, 70.

President gives the following account of his thinking about possible military efforts in Indochina:

As I viewed the prospects of military intervention in the relative calm of early 1954, it seemed clear that if three basic requirements were fulfilled, the United States could properly and effectively render real help in winning the war. The first requirement was a legal right under international law; second, was a favorable climate of Free World opinion; and third, favorable action by the Congress. Employment of air strikes alone to support French forces in the jungle would create a double jeopardy; it would comprise an act of war and would also entail the risk of having intervened and lost. Air power might be temporarily beneficial to French morale, but I had no intention of using United States forces in any limited action when the force employed would probably not be decisively effective.<sup>54</sup>

Thus it can be assumed that, at one point at least, Mr. Eisenhower agreed with General Ridgway that the use of air power alone would be a mistake. As noted above, Mr. Eisenhower had publicly stated in early February that he could conceive of no greater tragedy than for the United States to become involved in a ground war in Indochina. And privately, in his February 10 note to Dulles in Berlin, he said that he had "given assurances" to Congress that American troops would not be sent to Indochina. Thus the President seemed to have ruled out any kind of military intervention. But such a conclusion, once all points are considered, is unwarranted. Mr. Eisenhower's statement that he had "given assurances" to Congress against involving United States troops in the Asian war can be taken to mean that he would not make such a commitment without the prior consent of

---

<sup>54</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 340-41.

Congress. But even this interpretation is probably not accurate. At a news conference on April 29, after the Geneva Conference had begun, the newsmen asked the President about a rider introduced in the House on an appropriations bill which would have limited the President's authority to send troops anywhere in the world without the consent of Congress. He told the reporters that "such an artificial restriction would damage the flexibility of the President in moving to sustain the interests of the United States wherever necessary." He added that he would veto the bill.<sup>55</sup>

At this same press conference Mr. Eisenhower denied that there had been any proposal for air intervention in Indochina. Yet in his memoirs he states that

The Churchill Government on April 25, Sunday, decided once and for all that unified action must wait until all possibility of settlement by negotiation had been tried and failed. This ended for the time being our efforts for any satisfactory method of allied intervention. I was disappointed . . .<sup>56</sup>

Regardless of how far specific plans may or may not have gone, it seems evident that Mr. Eisenhower was from time to time a proponent of intervention. What specific considerations finally brought him to rest on a decision for non-intervention, or the precise time at which he came to rest on this decision, may never be known.

---

<sup>55</sup> Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 353.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 351. See also Sherman Adams, Firsthand Report: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), 122.

At his news conference on April 7, Mr. Eisenhower in discussing the Indochina struggle introduced an interpretation that has become a major element in official policy on Vietnam, if not a kind of cornerstone in American cold war policy. It is the chain reaction idea, that if Indochina (now South Vietnam) should go Communist, no nation threatened by Communism would entrust its protection to the United States. Thus one nation after another would go Communist. As Hans Morgenthau has written, United States spokesmen have "even dignified this historic determinism with the name of a theory": the so-called "Domino Theory." Mr. Eisenhower said it was his belief that once Indochina had gone, Burma, Thailand, and the whole peninsula would go. "With these countries would be lost tin, and tungsten and rubber and other materials needed by the free world," the President said. And he added that Japan must have the Indochina region as a trading area, or else be forced to turn to China for trade. So at the least the President's emphasis had changed since his "no greater tragedy" statement.<sup>57</sup>

Mr. Eisenhower, as President and afterwards, made much of the team effort of his Cabinet and the other high officials in his administration. It therefore seems unlikely

---

<sup>57</sup> For President's news conference see The New York Times, April 8, 1954. Also, Victor Bator, Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1965), 55. For Morgenthau's view of the "domino theory" see Vietnam and the United States (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1965); 23, 39, 77.

that Vice President Richard Nixon could have made his famous April 16 "not for attribution" talk before the American Society of Newspaper Editors without some prior knowledge by the President. In his talk Nixon had advocated sending American troops to Vietnam "to avoid further Communist expansion in Asia and Indochina."<sup>58</sup>

Even in his memoirs Mr. Eisenhower could not make order of the confusion that surely reigned in Washington as the conference began in Geneva on April 26. On that same day the President told the press that the conference should be given a chance. He hoped it would "arrive at some situation that at least we could call a modus vivendi." Three days later he again met the press and told the reporters that the United States would accept a modus vivendi in Indochina. Although he had been working behind the scenes to prepare for intervention,<sup>59</sup> and while Secretary Dulles had been even more strenuously engaged in the same effort, the President now publicly stated that "there was no plausible reason for the United States to intervene; we could not even be sure that the Vietnamese population wanted us to do so."<sup>60</sup>

As the Geneva Conference continued, Under Secretary of State Smith met with ANZUS Pact deputies to see if perhaps

---

<sup>58</sup> China and U. S. Far East Policy, 68.

<sup>59</sup> Adams, Firsthand Report, 122.

<sup>60</sup> Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 353.

they would go along with intervention, even if the British would not. Meanwhile, Dulles met again with Eden and this time suggested that Britain had apparently gone back on her word to join an intervening alliance. Although Mr. Eisenhower's memoirs indicate that he had earlier considered it unwise to take "any limited action when the force employed would probably not be decisively effective," he says that Dulles told Eden that " . . . no matter what the British might have inferred from strong statements by any of our officials . . . the United States was not seeking large-scale intervention in Indochina or war with China."<sup>61</sup> It now began to look as if Dulles were merely trying to issue another "massive retaliation" threat, but this time it would be a joint allied threat. We have already seen what Eden thought of such bluffing.

As the negotiations began, the United States (Mr. Eisenhower says) was opposed to any proposals which would lead to partition in Indochina, and opposed to a cease fire "which would take effect in advance of an acceptable armistice agreement."<sup>62</sup> Intervention was still in the works, however.

We would (the President writes) "concur in initiation for negotiations" for the armistice itself. In the meantime, we would encourage the French Union Forces to continue the fight in Indochina while the conference progressed, would provide more aid, and would go on with

---

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 355.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 357-58.

our efforts "to organize and promptly activate a South-east Asia regional grouping . . . ." (italics mine)<sup>63</sup>

Finally, Mr. Eisenhower was willing to intervene along with the Associated States, the ANZUS States, and two other South-east Asian States even without the participation of the British. In a footnote he says that "with the understanding that Thailand and the Philippines would accept at once. Australia and New Zealand would probably accept following the Australian elections, and the United Kingdom would 'either participate or be aquiescent.'" The President instructed Ambassador Dillon at Paris to inform the Laniel Government. The United States assistance was to be "principally air and sea," with the above South and East Pacific States providing the multilateral sanction. Mr. Eisenhower noted: "Even if others were reluctant to act, we could not afford to sit on the side lines and do nothing."<sup>64</sup>

This latest proposal for intervention was conditioned on the French meeting certain requirements, e.g., the granting of complete independence to the Associated States. The French footdragging on this matter troubled Mr. Eisenhower greatly. In fact, with all factors considered, he probably over-emphasized the point in his thinking. The President relates a statement made by Walter Bedell Smith to Foreign Minister Bidault when the latter suggested that possibly General Navarre should be replaced in Indochina. Obviously

---

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 358.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 359.

approving, Mr. Eisenhower wrote: "Bedell gave a straight-forward answer: he told Bidault that any second-rate general should be able to win in Indochina if there were proper political atmosphere."<sup>65</sup> There seems to have been a basic undercurrent of agreement between Eisenhower, Churchill and Eden on this important point which they were never able to fruitfully convey to each other, perhaps because of the interposition of the Secretary of State. In a report to the Foreign Office on May 1 Eden wrote the following:

Mr. Robertson, (Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs) whose approach to these questions is so emotional as to be impervious to argument or indeed to facts, was keeping up a sort of "theme song" to the effect that there were in Indo-China some three hundred thousand men who were anxious to fight against the Vietminh and were looking to us for support and encouragement. I said that if they were so anxious to fight I could not understand why they did not do so. The Americans had put in nine times more supplies of materials than the Chinese, and plenty must be available for their use. I had no faith in this eagerness of the Vietnamese to fight for Bao Dai.<sup>66</sup>

But the shared misgivings about the wisdom of intervention could not prevent the surfacing once again of the contingent plans for intervention. The status of these plans in mid-May seems to have depended largely on their acceptance by the French. Sir Anthony Eden writes in his memoirs that, after having been surprised to see reports of the new Franco-American negotiations in the Swiss newspapers on the morning of May 15, he was informed about the conditions by Bidault's principal advisor, M. de Margerie. The conditions were "for

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 360.

<sup>66</sup> Eden, Full Circle, 126-27.

intervention either after the failure of Geneva, or earlier if the French so desired, and he emphasized that the American preference had been clearly expressed for the earlier date." Eden's primary concern at this point was for the success of the conference, and it was his view that the Communists feared the United States meant to undo the work of the conference. In a report to Prime Minister Churchill he said:

I myself fear that this new talk of intervention will have weakened what chances remain of agreement at this conference. The Chinese, and to a lesser extent the Russians, have all along suspected that the Americans intend to intervene in Indo-China whatever arrangements we try to arrive at here. The Chinese also believe that the Americans plan hostilities against them.<sup>67</sup>

Fainthearted or realistic, Eden was convinced that the strength of the Communist position in Indochina was such that continued threats of intervention would do a great deal more harm than good. If the negotiations could not bring about an agreement soon, "the military position would deteriorate and it would then become evident to the world that the Chinese had no need to bargain." Eden thought that the Chinese probably knew this already, but that they "might also be wise enough to reckon that it was not good politics to drive an enemy to despair."<sup>68</sup> United States leaders no doubt disagreed, but the French seem to have come finally to Eden's view. Two days later Bidault informed him that France would not request intervention while the conference was still in session.

---

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 134-35.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 137-38.

The Decision Not to Intervene

On May 28, President Eisenhower met with Dulles, Deputy Secretary of Defense Anderson, Admiral Radford and General Robert Cutler to discuss contingency planning should Communist China enter the war. The President did not expect it; still, the French seemed to be planning both to go on fighting and to negotiate a settlement. And General Ely, Mr. Eisenhower writes, "was pressing for a positive answer on automatic United States response so that he could plan on this support."<sup>69</sup> But did the French really intend to go on fighting? Mr. Eisenhower admits that there was misunderstanding. On June 3 he called a meeting of administration officials at which he undertook to clarify his own attitude. He told the assemblage:

If the United States should, by itself, and without the clear invitation of the Vietnamese people and satisfactory arrangements with the French, undertake to counter Chinese Communist aggression . . . this would, of course, mark the collapse of the American policy of united action. Moreover, if the nations of the Southeast Asian area show . . . a complete indifference to the fact of

---

<sup>69</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 361. This seems very curious since, as Mr. Eisenhower repeats again and again, United States intervention was contingent on French acceptance of American conditions. If the reference is to the possible overt intervention of the Chinese, General Ely's "pressing" was odd indeed, for while neither President Eisenhower nor the French expected such a move from China, the United States had made it quite clear that such a move would justify and bring forth prompt United States retaliation regardless of allied views. One must be careful to avoid nitpicking through a public man's personal recollections to expose minor inconsistencies. The degree of contradiction here, however, would seem to warrant a conclusion that American policymakers had the French quite as baffled as the British evidently were.

Indochina, it would be the signal for us to undertake a reappraisal of basic United States security policy . . . . If I should find it necessary to go to the Congress for authority to intervene in Indochina, I want . . . to say that we . . . have allies such as Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and above all, the bulk of the Vietnamese people, ready to join with us in resisting such aggression.<sup>70</sup>

General Gruenther sent the President a message from Paris on June 8 which stated that the French were discouraged. They feared losing the Red River Delta area unless allied assistance was forthcoming. This General Gruenther feared would cause an anti-British outburst in France because the French thought the British were blocking united action. Even worse, failure to aid France now would lead to an anti-NATO campaign in France that would do that organization much damage. In his reply, Mr. Eisenhower staunchly maintained that the United States had made every effort since 1951 to "put the Indochinese war on an international footing," but that the French had not been willing to make the concessions to independence that would have enabled this.<sup>71</sup>

If the American decision to intervene depended primarily on French acceptance, the decision became a negative one on June 12 when the Laniel Government fell, or else on June 18 when Pierre Mendes-France came into office on a promise to end the Indochinese war within a month. It seems more likely that the second date sealed the decision. If we can believe Anthony Eden's memoirs, there was still a spark

---

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 362.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 363.

of will to intervention remaining on June 15. On that date he found the Geneva Conference nearer to breakdown than it had ever been. Bedell Smith showed him a telegram from President Eisenhower advising him to do everything within his power to bring the Conference to an end as rapidly as possible, "on the grounds that the Communists were only spinning things out to suit their military purposes." This, Eden thought, "implied that to keep hostilities going would help the French and their allies." Eden was sure that the reverse was true.<sup>72</sup> Bedell Smith met with Mendes-France on the day he became Premier. Eisenhower reveals that Mendes-France had only one request: "that we use our influence with the Vietnamese Premier, Ngo Dinh Diem--newly appointed by Bao Dai--to prevent him from needlessly obstructing an honorable truce which the French might reach with the Vietminh."<sup>73</sup> Mr. Eisenhower does not say what answer Smith gave Mendes-France.

In late June, Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Secretary Eden came to Washington. The prestige of Winston Churchill must surely have played an important part in securing what seemed for the moment an Anglo-American meeting of minds. (Though Dulles and other high-ranking Republicans stood ready to accuse Democrats of weakness and appeasement, such a charge against Churchill was a tactical impossibility.)

---

<sup>72</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 144.

<sup>73</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 366.

When Churchill and Eden left Washington they thought they had secured from Eisenhower and Dulles a 7-point agreement as a basis on which both could support a settlement at Geneva. It agreed to a partition and looked forward to "peaceful reunification" in Vietnam.<sup>74</sup> Two weeks later the United States found itself unable to agree to a settlement that deviated in no substantial way from these proposals. But the temporary agreement in Washington had signified that Dulles and Eisenhower had finally come to agree on a decision not to intervene. As the Geneva Conference closed, the United States, unwilling to sign the accords reached, could only promise not to use force to disturb the settlement.

The thwarting of the Radford-Dulles campaign for intervention left the latter in a bitter mood. Soon he was heard making a speech in which he blamed America's allies for not engaging in united action before Geneva, and comparing himself to Henry L. Stimson in 1931 when the latter urged united action against Japan. James Reston called this defense "one of the most misleading oversimplifications ever uttered by an American Secretary of State."<sup>75</sup>

In a statement made on July 21, 1954, President Eisenhower warned that "any renewal of Communist aggression

---

<sup>74</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 368. Eden, Full Circle, 149.

<sup>75</sup>Note: Berding, Dulles on Diplomacy, 62; and Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 229. For Reston's remark, see The New York Times, June 16, 1954.

would be viewed by us as a matter of grave concern." This echoed the declaration made by the United States "observer," Mr. Smith, at Geneva on the same day. But had the war been a simple case of Communist aggression? There can be little doubt that if such had been the case the United States would not have been so hesitant to actively intervene. In reviewing the final reasons for not intervening, Mr. Eisenhower lists the following: The French would not co-operate. The British would not go along. But "the strongest reason of all for United States refusal to respond by itself to French pleas was our tradition of anti-colonialism."<sup>76</sup> In March, 1954, the President had explained that the United States "did not consider the war as a colonial war, but rather as a part of the general struggle against Communism."<sup>77</sup>

#### Sequela

As the last year of the Eisenhower Administration's first term approached, Secretary of State Dulles found it expedient to explain and defend his foreign policy for the public. His outlet was a highly laudatory article by James Shepley in Life magazine: "How Dulles Averted War."<sup>78</sup> Although any objective reading of the record would seem to reveal that it was Anthony Eden who was largely responsible

---

<sup>76</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 373.

<sup>77</sup>The New York Times, March 27, 1954.

<sup>78</sup>Supra, 122.

for preventing the spread of the First Indochina War into an even greater catastrophe, Mr. Shepley makes Dulles the hero of the events:

. . . the policy of boldness impressed the Communists. Dulles had seen to it that the Chinese and the Soviets knew that the United States was prepared to act decisively to prevent the fall of Southeast Asia. It was also clear to the Communists that the French and the British, if they were pushed too far, would accept Dulles' suggestion for united action. Thus, instead of negotiating from the extreme and undisguised weakness of the French position, Mendes-France and Eden found themselves able to bargain from Dulles' strength.

At best, such an appraisal obscures the real meaning of the 1954 events as they relate to the total picture of recent American foreign policy. Several years before the events, Professor Frederick Hartmann had put his finger on a major problem and a major challenge for United States foreign policy:

Despite the great events of the past decade and America's assumption of world-wide responsibilities, much of our unilateralist attitude continues to cling to us in an age when it has become obsolete. It is this attitude which is at the root of many of our diplomatic difficulties . . . interventionists, but into those who believe the United States should have a policy which it should pursue by itself and alone if need be (some even say, preferably by ourselves) and those who believe that America must solve its problems collectively with like-minded nations, in close and continued collaboration even though compromises are inevitably entailed.<sup>79</sup>

In spite of all the calls for "united action" in 1954, the American position was in the final analysis a unilateralist position. The best that can be said of the

---

<sup>79</sup>Frederich H. Hartmann, "Away With Unilateralism!," The Antioch Review, Spring, 1951, 3-9.

Eisenhower-Dulles efforts was written by Oliver E. Clubb:

The American Government's clear preference for allied intervention in Indochina over a compromise settlement undoubtedly strengthened the British-French negotiating hand at Geneva. The final result had not been intended nor was it approved by the United States.<sup>80</sup>

The worst that can be said was said at the time by Lyndon B. Johnson:

American foreign policy has never in all its history suffered such a stunning reversal. We have been caught bluffing by our enemies. Our allies and friends are frightened and wondering, as we do, where we are headed. We stand in clear danger of being left naked and alone in a hostile world.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Clubb, The United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia, 58-59.

<sup>81</sup> The New York Times, May 7, 1954. Quoted also in Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 233.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

#### The "New Look" in Foreign Policy and Red China

In the course of the 1952 Presidential campaign, the Democratic candidate, Adlai Stevenson, said:

No one can predict, and it would be foolish to try to predict, how and when the peaceful purpose of our power will succeed in creating a just and durable peace. But are our efforts conditional upon assurance of prompt success? To answer "yes" would be to accept the certainty of eventual defeat.

Co-existence is not a form of passive acceptance of things as they are. It is waging the contest between freedom and tyranny by peaceful means. It will involve negotiation and adjustment--compromise but not appeasement--and I will never shrink from these if they would advance the world toward a secure peace.<sup>1</sup>

It is not necessary to determine the limits Mr. Stevenson would have placed on negotiation, adjustment, and compromise--had he become responsible for United States foreign policy--to recognize that the opposition party's chief foreign policy spokesman had a very different outlook on world policy. The patience and calm determination of which Stevenson spoke was not popular with the American public at large. By 1952 Secretary of State Dean Acheson

---

<sup>1</sup>Adlai E. Stevenson, Major Campaign Speeches (New York: Random House, 1953), 93-94.

had become a kind of symbol of the policy favored by Stevenson. Even if Stevenson could somehow have been elected President, he would probably have had to replace Acheson, whose views he largely shared, for Acheson had become one of the most unpopular figures in American public life.

In May of 1952, Acheson's successor in office, John Foster Dulles, set forth his views favoring a policy of boldness in foreign affairs.<sup>2</sup> After becoming Secretary of State Mr. Dulles made many statements and speeches calling for a more aggressive foreign policy. These reached a kind of climax in January, 1954 when Dulles made his famous speech about "massive retaliation." In the April, 1954 issue of Foreign Affairs Dulles applied his new ideas explicitly to the situation in the Far East. He wrote:

The free world must devise a better strategy for its defense based on its own special assets. Its assets include, especially, air and naval power and atomic weapons which are now available in a wide range, suitable not only for strategic bombing but also for extensive tactical use.<sup>3</sup>

These were not the words of a man who cared much for patience in what President Kennedy later called a long twilight struggle. He agreed with the general public that quick results were not only desirable, but possible. Dulles had convinced himself, in fact, that his bold new policy had

---

<sup>2</sup> John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness," Life, May 19, 1952.

<sup>3</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Policy for Security and Peace," Foreign Affairs, April, 1954, 358.

already borne fruit. He seemed not to believe that the new administration for which he spoke on international matters had accepted a truce in Korea on terms which the previous Democratic administration would probably have found politically impossible. He chose to believe that the Korean truce had been attained in July, 1953 "on terms which had been proposed many months before," by the implied threat of spreading the war through aerial attacks on mainland China.<sup>4</sup> Now, in the spring of 1954, Dulles was ready to apply his new policy globally, and immediately in the Southeast Asian crisis.

If Dulles's talk sounded more like what one would expect from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Secretary of Defense, it is not surprising, for Dulles's plans were large and all-inclusive. To accompany his new strategic military policy the Secretary of State had a new diplomatic posture. It must be called a posture or a stance and not a policy, for it soon became apparent that traditional diplomacy was to be eshcewed in favor of a militant appeal to force or threatened force. The element of diplomacy was decidedly negative. For example, it was publicly announced that the United States Ambassador would no longer shake hands with Soviet bloc delegates at the United Nations. Dulles also reaffirmed and made more adamant the Truman administration's policy of the non-recognition of Communist

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 360.

China and the opposition to seating that country in the United Nations. The non-recognition policy is not, of course, original with Dulles. It recalls the policies of both President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, who applied it to specific States out of opposition to specific internal and external actions of those States. With Dulles, it was more far reaching. It was a part of a program to halt a world political movement.

This constriction of United States foreign policy came at a most inopportune time. The country and its leaders had not yet had adequate time to determine just what their basic interests in Asia were, and how to secure them. As one authority on the Far East contemplated these decisions he concluded that

a virtual taboo has been built up against any serious consideration of the bases of our policies in Asia. These should instead be the central theme of a great debate.<sup>5</sup>

But for Secretary Dulles, President Eisenhower, and a Republican Party greatly influenced by its conservative wing there was little or no need for further debate. There was need for action--or at least talk of action. As the administration officials gradually came to the realization that the United States' allies did not favor the kind of action that was being proposed, and as the consequences of that proposed action were vaguely perceived, a kind of lethargy

---

<sup>5</sup>Edwin O. Reischauer, Wanted: An Asian Policy (New York: Knopf, 1955), 5.

set in. It was to virtually immobilize American foreign policy for weeks to come. Before the Geneva Conference on Far Eastern problems had ended this sullen immobility had grown into outright obstructionism.

The central position of the United States on Far Eastern problems in 1954--the position which accounted for the split that began to appear in Western unity at the Berlin Foreign Ministers Conference in February--is succinctly put in the following statement:

Through the greater part of 1954, the United States was to stand virtually alone among the major non-Communist nations in its central policy of out-and-out resistance to Chinese Communist political (as distinguished from territorial) ambitions.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, United States policy in the Far East was handicapped by the general view among most European as well as Asian States that the Communists in China had a legal right to rule there and to be recognized. Two other factors tended to separate American from general European positions. Although Dulles and Eisenhower led many Americans in thinking that the United States' desires to keep Indochina free of Communism were handicapped by vestiges of French colonialism, the revulsion against Western colonialism, though perhaps exaggerated, was better understood in Europe than in the United States. The second factor was that a general fear of nuclear war, heightened somewhat by Dulles's talk of

---

<sup>6</sup>Richard P. Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Harper & Brothers, 1956), 202.

"massive retaliation," was more prevalent in Europe than in the United States.

Soon after Stalin's death, the Soviet leaders began to call for a five-power conference to "lessen international tension." This was somewhat soothing to the frayed nerves of many leaders in Europe and in Asia. Indian leaders let it be known that they favored a "round table conference." And Indian views, of course, had some influence on the views of the British.

The new administration in Washington presented a veritable picture of opposition to such proposals. The Russians could not be trusted to offer any constructive suggestions or to negotiate in good faith. The Peking regime was "illegitimate." And the political problems that existed were not amenable to negotiation. Long before the phrase was coined by President Kennedy, Republican leaders had come to believe that the unshakable Communist position was "what's mine is mine, and what's yours is negotiable." President Eisenhower felt that the British were anxious to negotiate with the Communists on "nearly any . . . sort of terms." He professed inability to understand such an attitude, but he condescended to think that it was apparently borne of the historical British diplomacy and the knowledge that today's enemy may be tomorrow's friend. But Mr. Eisenhower could not be so cynical. For him the old diplomacy would not work: "To my knowledge the fact that Communists

were to participate in any international conference never implied that they would either make concessions or keep promises."<sup>7</sup> Anthony Eden relates how Dulles once indicated to him his feeling that traditional relations among nations had been revolutionized by the Communists. In discussing the presence of a left-wing government in Guatemala, a condition which prompted rather drastic action by the United States, Dulles remarked that "in the cold-war conditions of today, the rules applicable in the past no longer seem . . . to meet the situation and require . . . to be revised or flexibly applied."<sup>8</sup> Dulles was apparently referring to general rules of international law, but his serious questioning of the efficacy of these basic principles makes the point even more clearly that the more mundane practices of diplomacy were almost totally useless to Dulles at this time.

Finally, there was in the American leadership a deep fear and suspicion of negotiation. D. W. Brogan and others have analyzed this as a concomitant of "the illusion of American omnipotence." The theory is that the power and position of the United States are so great that any reverses it suffers in international affairs are the result of unwise or even treacherous negotiations with a clever enemy. That which belongs to the United States or those principles which

---

<sup>7</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 349.

<sup>8</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 152.

it seeks to uphold cannot be taken away by force of arms, but they can be given away willy-nilly by those foolish or unpatriotic enough to think that negotiations with Communists can be worthwhile. It was through this course of thought that the term Yalta came to symbolize for many a spineless knuckling under to the wily Communists.

There would be no more Yaltas under the Republicans, who fully appreciated the great power of the United States and were determined to use it. The fear of the inevitability of losses through negotiation must have been all the more keen as a result of the terms of the Korean truce. Those terms were surely not what Dulles and others would have wished them to be. And, psychologically at least, something close to panic may set in when one comes so close to committing an unpardonable sin which he has accused others of committing. The Korean settlement, which was short of complete victory, must not be allowed to presage another compromise that could be interpreted as at least a partial victory for Communism in Southeast Asia.

#### The Berlin Conference

If this analysis of an attitude comes at least close to describing the thought patterns of John Foster Dulles or those to whom he had to answer in the Republican Party, it will go a long way toward explaining Mr. Dulles's performance at the Berlin Foreign Ministers Conference in February, 1954, and his subsequent nonperformance at the Geneva Conference

in April-July, 1954.

It is a commentary on the fear of American leaders and the fear and intransigence of the Soviet leaders that the Big Four Foreign Ministers had not met since 1949. But the death of Stalin, on March 6, 1953, and the subsequent professions of peaceful intent by the new Soviet leaders, had facilitated the calling of a new conference for the major purpose of seeing if a settlement of the German problem could be attained. Deadlock soon developed, however, as the Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, indicated that the Soviet Union was yet unwilling to permit a unified Germany with the power to ally with the Western powers. On this issue, and the demand by Molotov that a Five-power conference, including Communist China, be called to deal with cold war problems, the United States, Britain and France held firmly together. Dulles was accorded major credit for this. Anne O'Hare McCormick of The New York Times wrote that Dulles, Eden and Bidault had "played together like well-drilled members of a single cast, as if they had rehearsed their lines."<sup>9</sup>

The Western unity was, to some extent, on the surface however. While Eden and Bidault had indeed backed Dulles in virtually all that he said at the Berlin Conference, the special feature of the conference was a wrangle between Molotov and Dulles, with the two other participants

---

<sup>9</sup>The New York Times, February 20, 1954.

speaking in far milder terms. On one point, Eden and Bidault were not at all in agreement with Dulles. In the first place, Eden's Government had recognized the Chinese Communist regime. Eden was willing to support Dulles in rejecting a conference on general cold war problems that would include China, but he thought that Eisenhower and Dulles would agree to a conference on Far Eastern problems that would include China, for the Americans might welcome a chance to assure peace in Korea. Since a chief motive for Molotov seemingly was to bring about further recognition of the Chinese Government, Eden thought he could "obtain the consent of Dulles and Molotov to include Indochina on the agenda of what became the 1954 Geneva Conference."<sup>10</sup> Eden readily undertook the task of persuasion.

For Bidault's part, although his Government did not recognize the Chinese Communists, he was even more anxious to negotiate with the Chinese, if that was what was required to get peace in Indochina, than was Eden. In October, 1953, the Laniel Government had been given a vote of confidence only on the condition that it make every effort to end the fighting in Indochina. In November, the Laniel Government had gone even further by indicating that France would even accept a Korea-type settlement, short of a total victory and a complete surrender of all Indochina to the Communist

---

<sup>10</sup>Victor Bator, Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1965), 16. Eden, Full Circle, 97.

forces.<sup>11</sup> It is at this point that an intriguing and as yet unsettled question was raised. It is perhaps best introduced in the text by Donald Lancaster:

. . . Bidault appears to have had some reason to suppose that the ostensible purpose of the /Berlin/ Conference was a secondary consideration to Vyacheslav Molotov, who was proposing to offer the good offices of his Government to arrange an armistice in Indochina in exchange for a French undertaking to abandon EDC.<sup>12</sup>

No evidence has yet been made public that Premier Laniel or Foreign Minister Bidault ever acceded to such an agreement with the Soviet Leaders. The question of whether Laniel's successor in office did so will be considered shortly. In any case, Bidault knew that the life of the Laniel Government might well depend on some progress being made at Berlin toward negotiations on the Indochina war. And Bidault and Eden were aware that the successor to Laniel's Government might be cool to the European Defense Community and perhaps even neutral in the cold war. Eden was thus greatly strengthened in his task of persuading Dulles to agree to a conference that would consider the problem of Indochina.

Still Dulles had need to show great reluctance in public. James Reston reported on February 4 that the French in Berlin were urging the United States to agree to a Big Five Conference with the Soviet and Chinese Communists on

---

<sup>11</sup>Jean Lacouture and Philippe Devillers, La Fin D'une Guerre (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1960), 43.

<sup>12</sup>Donald Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indo-China (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 290.

Asian problems, but that the United States thought "it would be a disaster to negotiate a truce."<sup>13</sup> Probably even more basic to the United States position than the reluctance to participate in truce negotiations before a complete defeat of the Vietminh was effected, was the reluctance to sit at a conference table with Chinese Communist representatives. Not until after he had delivered himself of a gratuitous lecture to Eden and Bidault on the wickedness of Communist China did Dulles finally relent and agree to a Geneva conference that would include the Chinese. "It is . . . one thing," Dulles told the foreign ministers, "to recognize evil as a fact. It is another thing to take evil to one's breast and call it good."<sup>14</sup>

Molotov's willingness to compromise, no less than Dulles's, helped to assure the meeting. It was agreed that a conference would begin in Geneva on April 26 "for the purpose of reaching a peaceful settlement of the Korean question." Members would consist of the Big Four, the Chinese People's Republic, the governments of North and South Korea, "and the other countries the armed forces of which participated in the hostilities in Korea, and which desire to attend." Also to be discussed was "the problem of restoring peace in Indochina." This, supposedly a secondary

---

<sup>13</sup>James Reston, The New York Times, February 4, 1954.

<sup>14</sup>Foreign Ministers Meeting--Berlin Discussions, Department of State Publication 5399, March, 1954, 28.

purpose of the conference, was actually the primary purpose. An understanding was reached at Berlin, and incorporated in the final resolution of the conference, that "neither the invitation to, nor the holding of, the . . . conference shall be deemed to imply diplomatic recognition in any case where it has not actually been accorded."<sup>15</sup>

Dulles was very proud that he had been able to get this last concession from Molotov. Whether or not it was indeed a worthwhile achievement would have to be considered in its relation to the overall American position, which included the contention that the Soviets would make no concessions to advance the cause of peace.

But Communist China participated in the conference on an equal basis with others, and ultimately had more effect on the outcome than did the United States. At this point it was unclear just what the United States expected to get out of the conference. Was it a minimum goal of continued allied solidarity? And if so, for what purpose as far as Southeast Asia was concerned? If it was any consolation, Dulles had proved that the United States did not have to recognize the Chinese Government. And the Secretary found it necessary, for domestic political purposes, not only to stress this point, but to exaggerate it beyond its

---

<sup>15</sup> Quadrapartite communique on the Berlin Conference, February 18, 1954, in Documents on American Foreign Relations 1954, Peter V. Curl, editor (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Harper & Brothers, 1955), 218-19.

intrinsic importance. Many Democrats and Republicans were unfavorable in their evaluation of the Berlin Conference. The cry of "Munich" was in the air. Dulles found himself defending the negotiations, pointing to the final resolution of the conference and explaining that "under that resolution the /Chinese/ Communist regime will not come to Geneva to be honored by us, but rather to account before the bar of world opinion."<sup>16</sup> He even thought that the Soviet Union "might in fact want peace in Asia." So when Molotov had accepted the non-recognition proviso, and when other matters relating to representation had been settled,<sup>17</sup> Dulles found the pressure irresistible. Pressure from Bidault alone made inclusion of Indochina on the agenda mandatory.

#### The Allies Disagree

Although Dulles had thought that he was firmly in control of the situation at Berlin,<sup>18</sup> his public utterances

---

<sup>16</sup>Department of State Publication 5399, xi.

<sup>17</sup>In his report on the Berlin Conference Dulles boasted that "It was agreed that a conference will be held at Geneva, as we had long proposed, and that the composition will be precisely that which the United States, the Republic of Korea, and the United Nations General Assembly had sought. There will be no Asian 'neutrals' there." Ibid., x.

<sup>18</sup>In addition to his reassuring report to the nation upon returning to Washington, Dulles had seen to it that reporters in Berlin were encouraged to report favorably on his performance there. According to two knowledgeable correspondents "one of Dulles' then best-known assistants privately treated correspondents to the following phraseology: 'At this conference, Dulles is the stalwart warrior, clearing the way with great blows of his saber. Eden, close to his side, is the skilled duelist, parrying the enemy's

and actions prior to the Geneva Conference would seem to indicate that he feared matters were beginning to slip out of his hands. Even before the second conference got underway the unity of Berlin, in which Dulles had taken such pride, was all but shattered. This underlying disunity was sensed and Dulles and United Nations Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge began to make even stronger statements about not allowing China into the United Nations. A General Assembly resolution of 1951 had established restrictions on trade with Communist China. These controls had not restrained China in Korea, nor prevented her from aiding the Vietminh. Therefore Dulles knew--and it may well have been his greatest fear--that others in the West considered that, should concessions have to be made at Geneva, United Nations membership for China or a revocation of the trade restrictions, or both, would not be illogical.

It is doubtful, however, that possible concessions along these lines were the immediate cause for Dulles's apprehension. And in the event, such concessions proved unnecessary. But concessions there had to be if the war in Indochina were to be brought to an end. Militarily and politically the Communists in Southeast Asia were on the offensive. The British and the French understood this. The

---

thrusts with an elegant rapier. Bidault is the courageous scrappy Scotch terrier, dauntlessly aiding Dulles and Eden." Roscoe Drummond and Gaston Coblents, Duel at the Brink (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 88.

only course for the United States, if it was not to use the processes of diplomacy at Geneva, was to broaden and prolong the war--or to threaten to do so. Dulles pursued the latter course until he was blocked by the French and British Governments, and by the United States Congress.

Much has been written and said, in praise and in damnation, of the Dulles policy of "brinkmanship." Many critics have dismissed the mere idea of such a policy with horror, whereas by other interpretations the concept was neither so horrific nor so new as many, including Dulles himself, claimed it to be. Dulles was never able to satisfactorily explain and defend the policy himself. Before the term "brinkmanship" was brought into the American vocabulary by the Life magazine article in January, 1956, but while it was presumably being practiced, Dulles variously described his purpose as one of "keeping the enemy guessing" and assuring "that a potential aggressor be left in no doubt that he would be certain to suffer damage outweighing any possible gains from aggression."<sup>19</sup>

Those who have viewed Mr. Dulles's career sympathetically have not helped to dispell the confusion. To briefly examine one friendly interpretation, however, might help to illustrate why the policy was not applicable to the crisis in Indochina, and how it contributed in a major way

---

<sup>19</sup>The New York Times, March 17, 1954. Dulles, Foreign Affairs, April, 1954.

to the disunity of the allies as they approached the Geneva Conference. Roscoe Drummond and Gaston Coblentz have written of the Secretary's policy that "what he meant, what he stood for, what he practiced . . . was not taking the country recklessly to the brink of war, but a policy of preventing war by refusing to retreat in the face of threats and bluffs, by avoiding the slippery, fatal slope of appeasement."<sup>20</sup> None could disagree with such a policy in principle, though in practice statesmen have failed to uphold the principle. But the military and political situation in Indochina, which called forth the Geneva Conference, was not a "threat" or a "bluff" on the part of "International Communism." It was a solid fact--a fact produced largely by the objective situation within French Indochina itself.

This fact was perceived quite differently by the British and French leaders on the one hand and by the American leaders on the other. For propaganda and rather superficial political purposes, Eden and Bidault might refer to "Communist aggression" in Southeast Asia. But the situation there was for them a disagreeable, difficult fact, hardly amenable to mere military force--a reality which called for compromise and negotiation. For Dulles, however, the Indochina problem was not a reality of this kind. The term "Communist aggression" had genuine, substantive meaning for him. And it could be dealt with militarily. It was a

---

<sup>20</sup> Drummond and Coblentz, Duel at the Brink, 70.

threat which ought to be exposed. It was a bluff which ought to be called. It was a problem of naked force, unalloyed by any complicated political or philosophical elements, and which could be successfully countered by "united action."

That the British and French faced Geneva with some optimism and hope, while the United States faced it with opposition and great foreboding is explained by this basic disagreement on the nature of the problem to be considered, as well as the different perceptions of the situation in Indochina.

Bad feeling between Secretary Dulles and Foreign Secretary Eden further complicated the question of allied unity. Each man had his domestic political situation to consider, and this led each to make statements for domestic political consumption which would have been rephrased or left unsaid in any private conversations between the two, or around a conference table. Numerous statements by United States officials--including President Eisenhower's advancement of his "domino theory," Vice President Nixon's trial balloon on sending troops to Indochina, and above all Dulles's speech on March 29 calling for united action, a speech which had not been "cleared" with those who were to make the action united--all had been brought up to Secretary Eden for explanation in the House of Commons.<sup>21</sup> He continually reassured

---

<sup>21</sup>One author has written that: "During 1953 and the first half of 1954, according to one study, the British Government was placed on the defensive before Parliament on

the members that his Government meant to negotiate in earnest at Geneva, and would do nothing that would prejudice the efforts of the conference. But so determined was Dulles to have Eden see things his way that he, having convinced himself at one point that Eden did in fact agree with his procedure, was reduced to accusing Eden of bad faith when the latter made it clear beyond doubt that he did not support Dulles's actions.

As we have seen, when Dulles and Admiral Radford failed to get Congressional concurrence for United States action in Indochina without allied support, Dulles flew to London, on April 10, and thence to Paris, to try to obtain such support. The British having been interested for some time in a mutual security agreement for Southeast Asia, agreed with Dulles to "take part, with the other countries principally concerned, in an examination of the possibility */italics mine/* of establishing a collective defense . . . to assure the peace, security and freedom of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific."<sup>22</sup> Following a meeting with Bidault, a similar communique was issued in Paris. Eden makes clear in his memoirs<sup>23</sup> that he and Dulles had serious

---

eleven different occasions because the United States Government announced policies or proposals intimately involving Britain without full prior consultation." Ernest Warren Lefever, Ethics and United States Foreign Policy (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 46.

<sup>22</sup>Communique issued following the talks between Dulles and Eden in London, April 13, 1954, in Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954, 257.

<sup>23</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 106-111.

differences of opinion concerning the timing and membership of a Southeast Asia treaty organization, and he made clear in the House of Commons that no commitment had been made to establish such a grouping prior to the outcome of the Geneva Conference. An official statement of the French Government made the point even plainer:

No effort should be spared to make the Geneva Conference a success . . . the joint proposed defense arrangement would not follow the pattern of NATO and, in any case, would be profoundly conditioned by the outcome of the conference.<sup>24</sup>

But Mr. Dulles came back to Washington convinced that he had won agreement on the formation of a grouping that would itself help to determine the outcome of the Geneva Conference, or perhaps merely obviate the conference. Dulles issued almost immediately an invitation to nine nations to meet in Washington on April 20. Not only was the sending of the invitations precipitate, but Dulles's choice of participants was purely his own and reflected his opposition to the Asian neutrals, especially India, he so distrusted.

Eden immediately instructed the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Roger Makins, not to attend the meeting. His anger was aroused and in his cable he told the Ambassador:

Americans may think the time past when they need consider the feelings and difficulties of their allies. It is the conviction that the tendency becomes more pronounced every week that is creating mounting difficulties for anyone in this country who wants to maintain close Anglo-American relations. We, at least, have

---

<sup>24</sup>Bator, Vietnam, 62. Quoted from London Times, April 15, 1954.

constantly to bear in mind all our Commonwealth partners even if the United States does not like some of them.<sup>25</sup>

Thus the ill feeling between Dulles and Eden was all but out in the open before the conference in Geneva was begun. Two days before the conference Dulles was, in effect, to accuse Eden face to face of having gone back on his word. Both Eden and Bidault denied that they had agreed to united action in Indochina prior to Geneva.<sup>26</sup>

It is worthwhile to note that Dulles's conception of the purpose of a Southeast Asia defense organization prior to Geneva was that it would serve as a shield for his plan of united military action. The disagreement on timing, purpose, and membership is more than adequate to explain the lack of unity among the allies at this point. One British writer has gone so far, however, as to assert that Eden feared (but did not say so to Dulles) that the United States would get the British involved in Indochina and then withdraw its own support! " . . . It was basically Eden's rooted distrust of Dulles which made him go all the way and thwart the American plan /for united action/."<sup>27</sup> Such an assumption, by the author Richard Goold-Adams or by Secretary Eden, seems unwarranted and unfair to Mr. Dulles, in view of the latter's several attempts to get British support

---

<sup>25</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 110.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>27</sup>Richard Goold-Adams, John Foster Dulles, A Reappraisal (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1962), 126.

for purely American action. Dulles's biographer John R. Beal wrote that on the London visit "the talks were not concerned with the American military strike--that was for U. S. decision--but with the fundamental conditions which had to precede it: the sound collective security basis which would make it worthwhile to commit the prestige of the United States with some prospects of success."<sup>28</sup>

In his frustration over the abortive Washington conference, Dulles sought to explain the British action to President Eisenhower by telling him that Indian Prime Minister Nehru had brought pressure on Eden to reverse himself. Life magazine, which acted on occasion as a kind of personal sounding board for Mr. Dulles, was soon asking if the United Kingdom could exercise a veto over United States policy, and commenting that "if so, then we are trapped by Communist policy."<sup>29</sup> The origin of this bizarre notion was soon exposed. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on June 4, Mr. Dulles suggested that his difficulties with the British resulted from a chain of vetoes: the Russians could veto the Chinese; the Chinese could veto the Indians; the Indians could veto the British; and the British, if they were allowed to, could veto the United States.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> John R. Beal, John Foster Dulles (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 210.

<sup>29</sup> Life, May 31, 1954.

<sup>30</sup> Congressional Hearings, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 4, 1954, 24.

For his part, Mr. Eisenhower felt that the British were, as noted above, anxious to negotiate with the Communists "on nearly any sort of terms." Thus they wanted no part of any "united action." Mr. Eisenhower makes clear that he thought this was a defeatist, perhaps craven, response but merely symptomatic of the historical, cynical British diplomatic tradition.<sup>31</sup> The President's evaluation of the British position, though still contemptuous of the British, was nearer to reality than Dulles's concept of a group of proud nations all robbed of their independence by a chain veto traceable to Moscow.

But Dulles was indeed thwarted, and, given the mood of United States officials, those gathering at Geneva could expect little in the way of an American contribution at the negotiations. Some observers were incredulous. The representative of the London News Chronicle wrote to his paper that "despite the Nixons and Knowlands, the McCarthys and the McCarrans there are far too many intelligent and liberal Americans around to make it believable that America can long remain suspended in angry negation."<sup>32</sup> But by 1954, the world was beginning to learn that in the arena of dogmatic Communism and myopic anti-Communism the unbelievable was becoming commonplace.

---

<sup>31</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 349.

<sup>32</sup>Quoted in Fleming, The Cold War and Its Origins, 695.

The Negotiations

In the April 8, 1954 issue of The New Yorker Richard H. Rovere wrote that "by April 26, when the Geneva Conference opens, Mr. Dulles must be armed not only with a policy but with a mandate." But Mr. Dulles sought no mandate from his government for genuine negotiations. And the mandate he sought for intervention in Indochina was denied him. On the day the conference began, President Eisenhower expressed his vague hope for a "modus vivendi" in Indochina. The United States could play no positive role in achieving it, however, and Dulles's only objective now was to prevent concessions by the allies to the Communists in Indochina.

Dulles's notion that British policy was determined in New Delhi was patently ill founded. But the Asian neutrals, India, Burma, and Indonesia, were to some degree opposed to United States policy. Indians were angry about United States aid to Pakistan and about the recent hydrogen bomb tests. This did have some influence on the British and so it was their objective to avert the spread of hostilities and to lessen tension. As Eden phrased it, his purpose was to "bring a relaxation toward better temper."

The French were desperate. They were willing to take a final chance on unilateral American intervention in Indochina, but even then only for the purpose of improving their negotiating possibilities, and not to reverse the tide and win a total victory. On April 23 Bidault "for the first

time officially, on behalf of the French government, . . . pleaded for a strike against the attackers /at Dien Bien Phu/ by U. S. power."<sup>33</sup> But the French would not meet the American conditions, and by this time the United States was wary of French intentions. Dulles's attitude, reflecting disgust with the French to match that with the British, is probably accurately summed up by his biographer Beal who wrote: "Dien Bien Phu was a psychological symbol blown up to mammoth size, entirely out of proportion to its military value had there been any spunk in the French national character."<sup>34</sup> Under these circumstances, the French entered the Geneva negotiations with the objective of ending the war at almost any honorable cost.

On the same evening, however, that Bidault had beseeched Dulles for help, after having received an urgent SOS message from General Navarre in Indochina, Dulles saw Eden in Paris and renewed his request for British cooperation in intervention. Having with him General Alfred M. Gruenther, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, the two men--according to Eden and in contrast to Beal's interpretation--tried to convince Eden that the collapse of Dien Bien Phu would be followed inevitably by a debacle in all Indochina. This might cause a crisis in France that would bring about a neutralist government. The following day, April 24, Admiral Radford joined Dulles in renewing the same argument before

---

<sup>33</sup>Beal, John Foster Dulles, 211.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 213.

Eden. Eden asked that, before giving an answer he be allowed to return to London for consultations with his Government. He flew to London that evening, drove directly from the airport to the residence of Winston Churchill, and reported to the Prime Minister that Dulles had now proposed that with only token British participation, Eisenhower would ask Congress to approve immediate action at Dien Bien Phu.

Churchill was evidently unfavorably impressed. He told Eden:

What we are being asked to do is to assist in misleading the Congress into approving a military operation which would be in itself ineffective, and might well bring the world to the verge of a major war.<sup>35</sup>

On Sunday the 25th, an emergency meeting of the British Cabinet was held at which the Dulles proposal was unanimously rejected. This was the final answer that Eden would carry back to Dulles. But much to Eden's irritation, it was revealed later that day that soon after he had left Paris, Dulles had approached Bidault with yet another proposal for an immediate declaration of united intent to use "eventual military means" in Indochina. The French Ambassador in London informed Eden of a letter Dulles had sent to the French Government. The letter again spoke of Eisenhower's going before Congress for approval of the action to be taken, and the French were urged in the letter to persuade the British to go along. Eden and Churchill again called the Cabinet into session, that same day, and they again stood

---

<sup>35</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 117.

adamantly against any action or declaration before the conference.<sup>36</sup> Before the Indochina phase of the conference, and before Dulles eventually left the conference, he made two more appeals to Eden for united Anglo-American action in Indochina.<sup>37</sup>

On April 25, the Vietnamese "Head of State" Bao Dai issued a communiqué deploring the fact that treaties granting and guaranteeing Vietnamese independence had not been concluded before the Geneva negotiations, and warning that, with respect to proposals for partition of Vietnam

neither the head of the state nor the Vietnamese Government will consider themselves bound by decisions which by running counter to national independence and unity would violate the rights of people and reward aggression, contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter and to democratic ideals.<sup>38</sup>

Initially, no representative of the anti-Communist Vietnamese was present at the conference. In the opinion of one authority Bao Dai's "conduct throughout the negotiations would seem to have been based on the belief that American opposition would prevent the conclusion of an armistice . . . ."<sup>39</sup> Evidence was beginning to show that a negative and furtive American diplomacy was at work on two levels: on the one to avert negotiations at Geneva, and on the other to lay the groundwork for thwarting such agreements as the

---

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>38</sup>Le Monde, April 27, 1954. Also quoted in Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indo-China, 308.

<sup>39</sup>Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indo-China, 317.

conference might produce.

On May 2, as the Korean phase of the conference was in progress, Dulles convened a special session of the ANZUS Council in Geneva to plan for military consultations in Singapore or Washington, further annoying the British. It was also on May 2, the world having learned of the British rejection of yet another proposal for intervention, that President Eisenhower announced to the press that the United States would take no action until it was seen what the conference could produce.<sup>40</sup> Dulles, possibly in annoyance with Eisenhower, and surely disappointed in his statement, left the Geneva Conference and was replaced by Walter Bedell Smith. The Secretary had been at Geneva just one week and he never returned, though Eden and Bidault begged him to do so. While there he studiously avoided Chou En-lai, refusing, according to some reports, to accept Chou's outstretched hand.<sup>41</sup>

The United States had persuaded the allies that China must not be a sponsor of the conference, and Dulles would take no active part. (It should be recognized that his negative role resulted from his own opposition to the

---

<sup>40</sup>Christian Science Monitor, May 3, 1954.

<sup>41</sup>Felix Greene, A Curtain of Ignorance (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 317. See also The New York Times, May 2 and 6, 1954. Robert F. Randle states that Dulles had decided "in February or March" not to remain long at Geneva. Robert F. Randle, Geneva 1954 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 171.

conference, but also was forced upon him by Republican politics and the general Congressional attitude.) It was readily decided that the plenary sessions on Indochina would be chaired alternately by Eden and Molotov. But Chinese Premier Chou En-lai and Molotov immediately took the initiative, with Chou doing most of the talking for the Communists. He began by demanding that all foreign bases on Asian soil be removed, that all troops be removed, and that Asians be allowed to settle their own problems.

Bidault offered French proposals that made some concessions to the Vietminh, and included a territorial division of Vietnam. He called for the disarming of all irregular forces, the liberation of prisoners and internees, the regrouping of the Vietminh above the 19th parallel--leaving the Southern threefourths of Vietnam and the Hanoi-Haiphong area "free." He demanded that the Communists get out of Laos and Cambodia, contending that there was no civil war there, but a mere invasion by the Vietminh. All of this was to be supervised by international commissions.<sup>42</sup>

Eden urged support for the French proposals. But as of May 10 Walter Bedell Smith was not sure that the United States could guarantee such a settlement, even if the Communists were willing to accept it.

---

<sup>42</sup>Documents relating to the Discussion of Korea and Indo-China at the Geneva Conference, Misc. No. 16 (1954), Command Doc. 9186 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954), 109.

The Communists were hard bargainers, and would not let the French off so easily. They proposed one government--that is, no division of the country--to be elected by "free general elections," with no external "interference."<sup>43</sup> The representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam /Viet-minh/, Pham Van Dong, insisted that the Khmer and Pathet Lao resistance governments of Cambodia and Laos be represented at the conference. He was willing to make some concessions to French economic and cultural interests in Vietnam. The Chinese seem ultimately to have pressed the Vietminh to accept regroupment in the north, forming a solid buffer area, and implying at least temporary division of the country.

The representatives of the Bao Dai government expressed opposition to partition and to the recognition of any government other than theirs in Vietnam. They also favored "free" elections, but made no further proposals for a settlement. It seemed almost as though they had been coached by John Foster Dulles himself.

But it was soon evident that there would be an armistice and a temporary partition. The major questions consequently became: (1) what would be the composition of

---

<sup>43</sup>In his memoirs, former President Eisenhower made a statement that by now is almost famous: "I have never talked or corresponded with a person knowledgeable in Indo-chinese affairs who did not agree that had elections been held as of the time of the fighting, possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader rather than Chief of State Bao Dai." Mandate for Change, 372.

the commissions that would supervise the agreements, and (2) what kind of international guarantee could be obtained for the agreements. On May 14, Molotov made a concession in suggesting that the cessation of hostilities be supervised by a commission composed of representatives of neutral countries. This came after Molotov had delivered a tirade against American aggressive purposes in Southeast Asia, and at least one American newspaper ascribed the credit for the concession to Eden rather than to Molotov.<sup>44</sup> It was, after all, only a minor concession. It is hardly surprising that the Russians held great suspicions as to the possibility of a concerted plan for intervention yet emerging as a result of United States efforts. It was on May 15 that Eden learned from the Swiss newspapers, and then later in the day from the New York Herald Tribune, that negotiations had again been revived between the Americans and the French.<sup>45</sup>

But still little progress was being made and on May 17 the conference went into restricted session, much to the relief of most of the delegates. Here, at last, some real progress might be made, and it was perhaps for that very reason that the United States delegation, under instructions from President Eisenhower, proposed two days later that the restricted sessions be ended and plenary sessions resumed. A plea from Eden and an assurance from Bidault

---

<sup>44</sup>Christian Science Monitor, May 14, 1954.

<sup>45</sup>Supra, 144.

that such a move would lead to the fall of the French Government dissuaded Bedell Smith from making the proposal.<sup>46</sup> In mid-May, French-Soviet relations were greatly strained over new United States intervention proposals, which had been increased in frequency and urgency after the fall of the Fortress of Dien Bien Phu on May 7, the day before the Indochinese phase of discussions began. On June 12, the Laniel Government failed to win a vote of confidence and resigned. Eden was obviously quite weary with both the Communists and the United States at this point. But he still saw some cause for hope, and he pressed forward.

On June 8, the representative of the Vietminh indicated that his side would agree to an armistice under favorable terms. A further glimmer of hope came as Chou En-lai implied that the Communists would not press their claims on behalf of the rebel movements in Cambodia and Laos, but would agree to the retention of the present governments in those two countries. And finally, when Pierre Mendes-France became French Premier he issued a promise to achieve a cease-fire within four weeks or else submit his resignation. With the Vietnamese Communists having agreed, in effect, to withdraw their forces from Laos and Cambodia, it was decided to leave the details of these matters in the hands of the military representatives at the negotiations, who would make a report within three weeks, and the conference

---

<sup>46</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 120.

itself was recessed.

Did the Russians "Bet a Little in Asia  
to Win a Lot in Europe"?

Much of what Americans have read about the Geneva Conference agreements on Indochina--in the popular press, in government documents, and even in text books--has pictured the settlement as a humiliating defeat for the West. The impression has been conveyed that the Communists were somehow able to bluff their way into possession of another chunk of territory that they need not have had if the Western powers had only held firm. Some writers have even found a weakness of French character responsible for the result at Geneva. This is a badly distorted picture, borne of the simplistic idea that a medium amount of military force is all that is required to throttle the politico-economic-psychological movement that is Communism. The confusion of military and political-psychological factors was a major handicap for United States policy in Asia and elsewhere during this period.

But taking the military situation by itself, the French were in desperate straits as they came to the negotiating table at Geneva. It is hardly surprising that some thought it not unreasonable that the United States, if she were not willing to provide open military assistance under conditions and with prospects much to her disliking, might be asked instead to make concessions toward recognition and United Nations membership for the Peking regime. It seemed

that only Anthony Eden and the Communists themselves knew how desperate were the French leaders. The day before the conference was to begin, Foreign Minister Bidault graphically described his weakness to Eden: "he had hardly a card in his hand," said Bidault, "perhaps just a two of clubs and a three of diamonds."<sup>47</sup> The situation was far different from that the Americans had faced in Korea, where the armistice reflected a genuine military stalemate.

So far from condemning the French for too easily "capitulating" to Communist demands, the question naturally arises as to how they were able to obtain an end to the war on terms so favorable as they ultimately were given. An answer which cannot be fully documented, but which seems more than plausible, is that a very shrewd Soviet leadership maneuvered the French into a tacit understanding that, in exchange for an agreeable settlement on Indochina, France would refrain from participation in the European Defense Community.

The best exposition of this theory /for it cannot be justifiably called a fact/ was written, shortly after the Geneva Conference was concluded, by the Trotskyist Soviet authority Isaac Deutscher.<sup>48</sup> A summation of Deutscher's view is roughly as follows: During the recess of the Geneva

---

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>48</sup>Isaac Deutscher, "How the Russians Bet a Little in Asia to Win a Lot in Europe," The Reporter, September 23, 1954, 19-22.

Conference, Chinese Premier and Foreign Minister Chou En-lai paid a visit to the Vietminh leader Ho Chi Minh. The Vietnamese Communist nationalist was told that "he must stop short and content himself with only half of the prize that lay within his grasp." A record of this meeting, if one was kept, would reveal that Chou's demand was to Ho a virtual betrayal of Indochinese Communism. The proposed partition, the vague promise of unification through elections, and the armistice itself "would create a political state of affairs that could be justified only by assuming the existence of a military stalemate."

But to Molotov and Chou En-lai it could be justified as a part of the "over-all strategy of the Soviet bloc." And that strategy "demanded that Moscow and Peking should give the Western world an object lesson in 'peaceful coexistence.'" There was, in fact, a new interpretation of peaceful coexistence. It must be recognized that local wars could grow into world-wide nuclear wars, and the Soviet bloc did not want such a war. The new strategy of half-victory in Asia would, moreover, reassure the Asian neutrals and turn them unalterably against any Southeast Asia treaty organization. But most important of all, "it was in Indochina, according to Molotov's scheme, that the European Defense Community was to die."

Molotov made a "tacit assumption" that France would cooperate in defeating the EDC in exchange for being helped

out of a "hopeless colonial war," although "Mendes-France may have said or done nothing to encourage such an assumption." There was a considerable risk, of course, involved in the Molotov scheme. After being released from the disastrous war in Indochina, France might have felt that she then had greater freedom of movement, that she could now afford to back EDC. But Molotov gambled that a "generous" armistice in Indochina would have an opposite effect. The Russians had come to the conclusion that an economically revived and re-militarized Germany would never be the threat to their security that it was before World Wars I and II. Russia had grown too strong; she now had nuclear weapons to deter attack. But the weaker France and Western Europe might still have cause for fear. All this thinking led Deutscher to conclude that

The real purpose of Soviet policy is therefore not so much to prevent German rearmament as to ensure that Germany's military power is not harnessed to the Atlantic alliance.<sup>49</sup>

Donald Lancaster, whose The Emancipation of French Indo-China reveals a pro-French and anti-Communist attitude, is drawn to the theory that Mendes-France "had given some undertaking in regard to France's proposed participation in EDC, a quid pro quo which Bidault had stoutly rejected."<sup>50</sup> Lancaster points out that Molotov had laid the groundwork

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>50</sup> Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indo-China, 336.

for his scheme by "making a virulent personal attack upon the French Foreign Minister, which was presumably designed to assist Mendes-France to overthrow the Laniel Government by persuading hesitant deputies that under the leadership of Bidault the French delegation would be incapable of reaching a settlement."<sup>51</sup> And Mendes-France took few pains to avoid the suspicions that had been aroused when he "arranged for a debate on the Paris Treaty to take place in the National Assembly on 30 August: during this debate the proposed European Defense Community was implicitly and ignominiously rejected on a mere question of procedure."<sup>52</sup> Others have contended that "the protagonists of the European Defense Community never forgave M. Mendes-France what they called 'the crime of 30 August' . . . . because they considered him responsible for the defeat of E.D.C."<sup>53</sup>

If such a "crime" was in fact committed as part of a sub rosa agreement to achieve a favorable settlement in Indochina, Pierre Mendes-France should not receive the sole blame. The vote was 319 to 264 to dismiss EDC without bothering to hear the arguments in its favor. And the Premier himself had, while trying to protect his own tenure in office, warned the proponents of EDC that they were in a minority, and that they should postpone a showdown. Mendes-France did

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 324-25.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 336-37.

<sup>53</sup>Daniel Lerner and Raymond Aron, France Defeats E.D.C. (New York: Praeger, 1957), 162-63.

not disguise the fact that he was personally opposed to EDC, but he was a firm proponent of Atlantic alliance.<sup>54</sup>

Negotiations Concluded--Innocence  
by Disassociation

As the Geneva Conference recessed, Mendes-France flew to Berne for a preliminary talk with Chou En-lai, and thence to Paris where he reported progress, and sketched before the National Assembly the broad outline of the final agreement. Eden returned to London where he again told the House of Commons that he had never made any agreement with Dulles on the formation of a Southeast Asia security pact. He still favored such a pact, he said, but "its relevance to current events must not be exaggerated." It could be a "future safeguard," but it "was not a present panacea." Eden and Prime Minister Churchill were preparing to come to Washington for a kind of reconciliation that would put the Anglo-American alliance on a more harmonious basis. This seemed generous enough, but a portion of Eden's report to the House of Commons was to make his task in Washington doubly difficult. Eden had stated:

I hope that we shall be able to agree to an international guarantee of any settlement that may emerge at Geneva. I also hope that it will be possible to agree on some system of Southeast Asian defense to guard against aggression. In other words, we could have a reciprocal arrangement in which both sides take part, such as

---

<sup>54</sup>Edmond Taylor, "The Long Weekend that Killed EDC," The Reporter, September 23, 1954, 23-25.

Locarno. We could also have a defensive alliance such as N.A.T.O. is in Europe.<sup>55</sup>

The outraged reaction with which this British suggestion was met in Washington gave new testimony to the existence of the widely divergent approaches of the two countries to the problem of relations with the Communist countries. The "unleashing" of Chiang Kai-shek might not have meant that the United States was prepared to sponsor a reconquest of mainland China, but the suggestion of a mutual guarantee involving a new Communist regime in Southeast Asia sent chills of anger through Washington. The word "Locarno" immediately took its place with "Munich" and "Yalta" as synonyms for betrayal. Congress, in passing the Mutual Security Act of 1954, attached an amendment calling for the withholding of military assistance from any Southeast Asian or Western Pacific government "committed by treaty to maintain Communist rule over any defined territory of Asia." Representative John McCormack of Massachusetts suspected that Churchill and Eden had made a deal with France and the Peoples Republic of China at Geneva. "Do they expect us to enter into a Locarno agreement, so called, which would mean at least a de facto recognition of Red China?," McCormack asked.<sup>56</sup>

Churchill and Eden arrived in Washington on June 25.

---

<sup>55</sup>Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 244.

<sup>56</sup>U. S., Congressional Record, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 1954, C, Part 7, 9206.

The Prime Minister used a characteristically British understatement to try to calm the troubled waters of Anglo-American relations: "I have come to talk over a few family matters and to make sure there are no misunderstandings," he said.<sup>57</sup> Representative Judd of Minnesota even objected to this statement of Churchill's, on the grounds that it associated the United States too closely with "European colonialism in Asia."<sup>58</sup>

But there was at least a partial reconciliation between the British and American chiefs of state and foreign ministers. Eden attempted to redefine his Locarno concept, saying that it only amounted to guaranteeing an armistice line in Indochina. This was a first step; a second would be "the gradual development of a Southeast Asia defense pact, limited to the anti-Communist powers."<sup>59</sup> Mr. Eisenhower thought that the talks were productive, and it is interesting to note the basis for his view:

Most significant [the President thought] was the formation of a seven-point joint position between our two nations as to what we would find acceptable in any settlement the French might make with the Indochinese. In essence we agreed that Laos and Cambodia would have to be left as free and independent states, able to maintain their integrity. If partition of Vietnam were to become a fact, approximately half of that country must remain non-Communist, south of the 18th Parallel.

---

<sup>57</sup> Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 368.

<sup>58</sup> U. S., Congressional Record, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 1954, C, Part 7, 9205.

<sup>59</sup> Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954, 245.

On one aspect only did our viewpoints differ. Churchill and Eden merely wished to state a "hope" that the French would settle for nothing less than our "seven points;" we wanted these as minimal.<sup>60</sup>

The four statesmen agreed to transmit this seven-point agreement<sup>61</sup> to Mendes-France as a kind of guide to what the large powers would be willing to accept and guarantee in the way of a settlement at Geneva. Eden was left with the distinct impression that he had advanced the cause of negotiations considerably and "was satisfied that the American Administration not only understood what the Locarno-type system of guarantees meant, but seemed to like the idea."<sup>62</sup>

However, before Eden and Churchill even arrived home they learned that the idea was not liked, and that it had been precluded by the passage of the amendment to the Mutual Security Act with the approval of the State Department.<sup>63</sup>

On June 30, Mr. Eisenhower stated to the press that he would "not be a party to any treaty that makes anybody a slave."<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 368.

<sup>61</sup>See Appendix I.

<sup>62</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 150.

<sup>63</sup>U. S., Congressional Record, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 1954, C, Part 7, 9204-9205.

<sup>64</sup>The difficulty which arises for any kind of meaningful adjustment and compromise in the midst of such propaganda statements, and the sophism inherent in them, is well illustrated in Mr. Eisenhower's memoirs. On page 357 he says that the United States was opposed to partition of Vietnam because "this would probably lead to Communist enslavement of millions in the northern partitioned area." On page 358 he says that "the enemy /in that same northern area/ had much popular sympathy, and many civilians aided them by providing

In the light of this it is interesting that in making his report to the House of Commons Prime Minister Churchill still seemed to believe that a Geneva settlement based substantially on the seven-points would receive the backing and guarantee of all major participants. On July 8 Dulles announced that neither he nor Smith would return to Geneva.

Eden returned to Geneva on July 12, and the same day he, Churchill and Mendes-France sent urgent messages to Dulles imploring him to return. Probably they had no effect on Dulles, but they seem to have influenced Eisenhower, for he "called Defense Secretary Wilson, asked him to have a Constellation available" and sent Dulles back to Europe.<sup>65</sup> But Dulles met Mendes-France in Paris, and not in Geneva, as the latter had desired. He dined with Mendes-France on the evening of the 14th. They were joined by Eden. One version of the meeting contains some of the hilarious elements of a scene out of Gilbert and Sullivan. Dulles, according to this version, was convinced that Mendes-France would "capitulate" to the Communists. The Frenchman assured him that he would not deviate from the seven-point Washington agreement. Arguing over a map of Indochina the French leader pointed to the partition line that he would demand at Geneva. It was the eighteenth parallel, farther to the north than the

---

both shelter and information . . . . But guerrilla warfare cannot work two ways; normally only one side can enjoy reliable citizen help. Mandate for Change, 357-58.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 369.

seventeenth which Dulles regarded as the best that could be hoped for. The Communists had demanded the thirteenth or fourteenth, and Dulles was so discomposed that he thought Mendes-France was looking at the map upside down. He turned the map around. Mendes-France righted it and once more carefully explained to Dulles what he proposed to ask for.

The scene concludes:

Dulles' demeanor was transformed. After another half hour of conversation, he told Mendes-France that the "abscess" of his suspicions had been pierced. Shortly afterwards, he said of Mendes-France to newspapermen waiting outside: "The guy is terrific."<sup>66</sup>

Would Dulles then return to the Geneva Conference? No, but he would send Bedell Smith. A different version of this meeting says that Mendes-France was willing to accept the 16th parallel, and that Dulles told him his price was not high enough. If he would increase his demands, the United States would "upgrade" its representation at Geneva, which now held only an "observer" status. Mendes-France therefore agreed to insist on the 18th parallel, and for this Dulles gave him the presence of Walter Bedell Smith at Geneva. But still the United States would sign no agreement that partitioned Vietnam.<sup>67</sup> In agreeing to the 17th parallel, Molotov at

---

<sup>66</sup>Drummond and Coblentz, Duel at the Brink, 123. This book, though not entirely uncritical, is generally quite sympathetic to Dulles. This depiction of the scene with Mendes-France, whatever its accuracy, could not have been designed to make the Secretary look ridiculous. Although published after Mr. Dulles's death, the book gives evidence of having benefited from some "inside" information.

<sup>67</sup>Beal, John Foster Dulles, 215.

first demanded that the United States sign the agreement. He and the others finally settled for an American declaration agreeing not to use force to disturb the agreements.

The agreements were finally signed on July 21, 1954, by all participants except the Bao Dai Government of Vietnam and the United States. Cambodia received the most favorable treatment under the agreements, from the non-Communist point of view. There had been less fighting on the Cambodian territory than in the two other divisions of Indochina. The few outside forces still there would all be removed. A few French troops would be allowed to remain in Laos, and the Pathet Lao forces were to be concentrated in two northern provinces of Sam Neao and Phong Sally.

For Vietnam the cease-fire was to take place on July 27 in the north, on August 1 in the center, and on August 11 in the south of the country. The respective military forces would regroup north and south of the 17th parallel, leaving a demilitarized zone of five kilometers on either side of the line. French forces were to move out of the north entirely; they would retain no enclave in the Red River Delta as hoped. No new troops or equipment was to be brought into either area; there could be no new military bases. The two sides could "not adhere to any military alliance and could not be used for the resumption of hostilities or to further an aggressive policy." A joint commission and a three-power International Commission for

Supervision and Control were to be set up.

As noted, the government of what was to become South Vietnam did not sign the agreements, and even protested that it reserved "complete freedom of action to guarantee the sacred right of the Vietnamese people to territorial unity, national independence and freedom."<sup>68</sup> In spite of the high sounding words contained therein, this declaration can only be considered as an act of shere bravado, encouraged and permitted by the actions of the United States. Recent Southeast Asian history can provide no evidence that Bao Dai, Ngo Dinh Diem, and those left in control of the southern government had made any substantial contribution to the cause of Vietnamese national independence. This simple and disagreeable fact has been probably the single most troublesome element in United States relations with, and actions in, Vietnam. This historical fact is trenchantly stated by Bernard B. Fall:

Ironically, South Viet-Nam's total liberation from French tutelage and replacement of the latter by an American protective shield in 1961 was brought about at bayonet point, not by the Vietnamese nationalists, but by their Viet-Minh opponents. Every political concession wrested by the nationalists from the French was first bought by a Vietnamese Communist victory on the battlefields of Tongking, Laos, or the Southern Highlands. There can be no doubt that this historical fact--no matter how well it may be camouflaged behind high-sounding slogans--accounts for the ambivalence of the southern leadership about its role in achieving its now embattled independence.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup>See Appendix II.

<sup>69</sup>Fall, The Two Viet-Nams, 104-05.

If United States policy is ultimately defeated in Vietnam, this fact will largely explain that defeat.

The final declaration of the conference<sup>70</sup> stated that the demarcation line was "provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary." It further called for free elections to be held to determine the "free expression of the national will" in July, 1956. This pleased the French, and presumably should have pleased the Americans, since it allowed two years to overcome the popular support for Ho Chi Minh in all Vietnam. Mr. Eisenhower, who was not exclusively but primarily responsible for United States foreign policy at this time, has offered two explanations for the refusal to sign these agreements and the final declaration: First, he would "not be a party to any treaty that makes anybody a slave," and second, "the United States had not been a belligerent in the war and the primary responsibility for the settlement in Indochina had rested with the nations participating in the fighting."<sup>71</sup>

Walter Bedell Smith made the announcement at Geneva that the United States would not sign the agreement, and he read a declaration stating that the United States would "refrain from the threat or the use of force" to disturb the agreements. The declaration further stated that the United

---

<sup>70</sup>See Appendix III.

<sup>71</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 371.

States "would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern," and that the United States favored elections in Vietnam supervised by the United Nations.<sup>72</sup>

Ho Chi Minh, in a statement broadcast over Peking radio on July 22, showed that he shared the Bao Dai government's lack of regard for the armistice agreements:

We must /Ho said/ devote all possible efforts during the peace to obtain the unification, independence and democratization of the entire nation . . . . We shall struggle infallibly, shoulder to shoulder, to obtain the peace, unification, independence, and democratization of all Vietnam, together with the peoples of the other sectors of the country. The struggle will be long and difficult; all the peoples and soldiers of the north and the south must unite to conquer victory.<sup>73</sup>

It can scarcely be doubted that the refusal of the United States to join in the Geneva settlement left the country's foreign policy in an awkward state. One writer has called the Dulles performance "innocence by disassociation."<sup>74</sup> But the disassociation later became a major factor in the United States' inability to preserve its innocence in Vietnam. Drummond and Coblentz raise the question: "Should Dulles share the blame for losing half of Viet-Nam to the Communists? Or should the accent be the opposite? Should

---

<sup>72</sup>See Appendix IV.

<sup>73</sup>Quoted in Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954, 256.

<sup>74</sup>Thomas J. Hamilton, quoted in Fleming, The Cold War and its Origins, 694.

the credit for saving half of Viet-Nam be assigned to him?"<sup>75</sup>  
The authors are unable to answer their own question, and the reason is obvious. For the answer to the question is neither. Dulles did disassociate United States policy from any agreement with her allies that could serve as a sound basis for future United States policy in Vietnam. What Dulles did through his non-diplomacy was to set the stage for the agony the United States was to face in Vietnam in the 1960's and 1970's.

---

<sup>75</sup>Drummond and Coblentz, Duel at the Brink, 115.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COLLECTIVE DEFENSE TREATY

#### Origins

In trying to find the true genesis of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, it is necessary to note a distinction between the agreement which came out of the Manila meeting of September, 1954, and other proposals for a collective defense arrangement covering Southeast Asia. Competent spokesmen in the United States, in Britain, and in France had advocated some kind of mutual security agreement to protect and advance the welfare of the people and the countries of Southeast Asia. Sir Anthony Eden noted that the genesis of the organization was a suggestion made by Foreign Minister Robert Schuman of France at a three-power meeting of Eden, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and Schuman in Paris in June, 1952.<sup>1</sup> In 1954 Eden himself welcomed such an organization because it "would contribute to the security of Malaya and Hong Kong and would remove the anomaly of our exclusion from the A.N.Z.U.S. Pact."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 104.

In the fall of 1951, the United States engaged in secret military staff talks with representatives from Great Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand. They considered joint plans for the military defense of Southeast Asia. There was further talk at the Lisbon Conference of 1952, and then the talks were permitted to lapse. Only nine more months of the Truman Administration remained, and they were apparently reluctant to pursue the matter with so little time left.<sup>3</sup> In the fall of 1953, a certain hesitancy on the part of the Eisenhower Administration was voiced by Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Walter S. Robertson who said that

Those both here and in the Far East who have recognized the desirability of a common defensive effort in the Asian-Pacific area have looked to the United States Government to exert its influence in favor of such a pact. We continue to believe, however, that any effective Asian-Pacific organization must come about as a result of the Asians' own initiative, that it must wait upon a general appreciation among the Asians of the desirability of collective action in attacking their common problems. This is clearly not a field in which outsiders can usefully assert themselves. We do not wish to give the impression that we are trying to hustle or joggle our friends across the Pacific, because we are not. Any moves to be made in the direction of regional organization are clearly up to them.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>Theodore H. White, "Indochina - The Long Trail of Errors," The Reporter, June 22, 1954, 8-15. White thought little of the project: "What is sought," he wrote, "is simply a statement from a number of partners of intent to defend themselves. This could be approved by the Congress in a joint resolution, avoiding the delay of treaty-making. It is to this end that Mr. Dulles's energies are bent . . . as a necessary prelude to any intervention."

<sup>4</sup>Department of State Press Release No. 549, Oct. 9, 1953.

But under altered circumstances the effort was revived by Secretary Dulles in the spring of 1954.

On April 14, 1954, prominent members in the United States Senate briefly discussed the possibilities of the security organization. On this occasion Senator Mansfield pointed out that to his knowledge there had been introduced over the previous four or five years, in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, bills seeking to establish a Pacific pact. Senator Mansfield did not detail his own concept of such a pact, but he wanted to carefully point out that the idea did not originate with John Foster Dulles:

Although the suggestion now made seems to be new, /Mansfield said/ it really is not new, for it has received serious consideration by Congress, or at least congressional committees, during the past 4 or 5 years . . . . A crisis is required to bring it to a head. The result will be that Mr. Dulles will come back and say, "We have won a victory. We are to have a Southeast Asia Pacific Pact, or a Southeast Asia NATO alliance." Let us hope it works out. It has been a long time in coming.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the variety and tension which came to characterize official and popular American opinion on the country's actions in and diplomacy regarding Southeast Asia could be seen evolving in the 1954 Senate observations. Senator Stennis stated that he "would not take an unyielding position against a so-called Pacific pact," but that he was opposed to a mere paper pact. "I do not want the result to be that we shall be underwriting the entire venture

---

<sup>5</sup>U. S., Congressional Record, 83d Cong., 2d sess., 1954, C, Part 4, 5118.

ourselves," he said.<sup>6</sup> As future events were to demonstrate, Senator Stennis' fears on this score were well founded, though his own idea of what would have constituted a feasible plan of collective security for the area of Southeast Asia may have been no clearer than that of those who negotiated the Manila pact.

A voice to which some attention had to be paid, and whose accents were expressive of much that troubled American foreign relations during this period, was that of the then Senate Majority Leader, William F. Knowland of California. He had his own particular fear of a "paper pact." It was one that would leave out South Korea and the Chinese on Formosa. To Senator Knowland, the problem was a simple one of using Asia's anti-Communist military forces against those under the command of the Communists. He seemed hardly at all troubled that the latter were far more numerous than the former, a problem which was only the most obvious of the many problems raised by Senator Knowland's position. As he put it:

If the time ever comes--and we all hope it will never come--when the chips are down in the Pacific, certainly it would not make sense that 1,000,000 troops in the Far East, anti-Communist in character, who are determined to maintain themselves outside the Iron Curtain, should be brushed aside and treated almost as though they did not exist, while we and other nations talk about a collective security system in the Pacific.<sup>7</sup>

Senator Knowland hoped that "our reliable allies in Europe"

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 5119.

(he seemed sure of only Greece and Turkey) would support his view and that "the prejudices of Her Majesty's Government . . . will not again be raised to eliminate the prompt consideration of the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China in connection with any pact in the Pacific." If these were eliminated, the proposed treaty would indeed be a "paper pact."<sup>8</sup>

A note of realistic pessimism was sounded by Senator John F. Kennedy. He thought that some poor and inaccurate thinking had been applied to the subject of a Southeast Asia pact. "Guarantees to come to the aid of Indochina if the Chinese Communist armies cross the northern frontier are helpful, but are not the primacy requirements as of now," the Massachusetts Senator said. What was needed in Indochina was "an effective native army to meet other native armies." Kennedy was afraid that, in concentrating attention on Thailand, the Philippines, New Zealand and Australia this need was being lost sight of. "I am afraid," he said, "that guarantees of outside countries will have no appreciable effect on the struggle as it is presently being waged."<sup>9</sup>

But neither the French nor British Foreign ministers, nor Senator Mansfield, nor even Senator Knowland got the kind of Southeast Asia defense treaty he desired. And Senator Kennedy's misgivings about the entire idea have

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

proved, for the most part, valid.

There was, in fact, a concern during part of the Indochina crisis of April-July, 1954 that the idea of a treaty had no future at all. This concern grew out of "a major controversy between the treaty's two principal architects," as Charles O. Lerche has written. And it was a controversy that had threatened "to weaken or destroy the solidarity of the two English-speaking nations."<sup>10</sup> Something of the nature of that controversy has been related in the previous chapters. That part of the controversy which relates directly to the negotiation and formation of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty will be considered in this chapter. The failure of the organization to perform its supposed main function is inextricably bound with the controversial origins of the treaty.

We have seen how John Foster Dulles's plan for united action to turn the military tide in Indochina failed to win the acceptance of the British, the French, and the United States Congress. The plan, as Dulles had envisioned it, was dead before the final days of the Geneva Conference. And the rejection of the plan was apparently the major reason for Dulles's boycotting the concluding Geneva sessions. But it is generally understood that the SEATO agreement as it finally emerged was a direct outgrowth of Dulles's united

---

<sup>10</sup>Charles O. Lerche, "The United States, Great Britain, and SEATO: A Case Study of the *Fait Accompli*," Journal of Politics, August, 1956, 459-478.

action plan, and bore little resemblance to the various ideas of Eden, Schuman, Senators Mansfield, Knowland, and others. To be sure, the timing was not as Dulles had wished, but the arrangement fit squarely into Dulles's concept of what United States foreign policy in the Far East should be.<sup>11</sup>

The technique which Dulles had employed to launch his drive for a unified effort in Southeast Asia in his March 29, 1954 Overseas Press Club speech was called "sudden diplomacy" by James Reston.<sup>12</sup> Charles O. Lerche has suggested that it might more accurately be termed diplomacy by fait accompli.<sup>13</sup> In any case it was a technique designed to jolt an ally, or allies, into accepting a policy which might otherwise have met with great resistance. As we know, the Dulles proposal received almost immediate resistance in London anyway, and won little enthusiasm in Paris. Anthony Eden could not believe that the United States would take such unwise military action as to spread the Indochina war into a great East Asian conflict with China.

Perhaps the first sign of a serious clash of United

---

<sup>11</sup>Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower: The Inside Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), 267-68. See also Amry Vandenbosch and Richard Butwell, Southeast Asia Among the World Powers (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1958), 299; Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954, 256-57; and Russell H. Fifield, Southeast Asia in United States Policy (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Praeger, 1963), 32.

<sup>12</sup>The New York Times, April 11, 1954.

<sup>13</sup>Lerche in Journal of Politics, August, 1956, 459.

States and British concepts of a Southeast Asia defence organization came just as the Geneva Conference began. On the same day the conference opened the Prime Ministers of what came to be known as the "Colombo powers (India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon) met at Colombo, Ceylon. This meeting was for the purpose of finding ways of promoting capital development in the respective countries, of protecting their independence and opposing colonialism, and--in general--of increasing "Asian solidarity." Reflecting a general suspicion of the motives behind such a pact, these countries' representatives were, with the exception of Pakistan, unfavorably disposed toward a defense agreement for any part of Asia that involved the powerful Western countries. And in the light of subsequent events, it seems that Pakistan's divergence of opinion from the other Colombo Powers was not as great as it seemed in 1954. The opposition of the Asian neutrals to a collective defense pact for Southeast Asia was later summed up by Prime Minister Nehru who observed that SEATO was "diplomacy by threats and an unwarranted intrusion into Asian affairs."<sup>14</sup>

Anthony Eden tried to head off this negative attitude and noncooperation of the non-Communist Asians. His explanation of just why he was concerned about this reveals that he was thinking in long-range political terms. He

---

<sup>14</sup>Quoted in Lennox A. Mills, Southeast Asia, Illusion and Reality in Politics and Economics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964), 166.

informed Dulles that he had been in touch with the Asian countries concerned and that he thought that he "had so far persuaded them to refrain from any unfavorable expression of opinion." He added that he

considered it very important that we should not issue any list of countries to be invited to join the proposed security system until we had been able to see more clearly the trend of Asian opinion.<sup>15</sup>

But it was probably easier to reassure the Asian neutrals than it was to reassure Mr. Dulles, who insisted upon going ahead with the "idea of launching S.E.A.T.O. with a small nucleus of members, and of doing this at the earliest possible moment."<sup>16</sup> Mr. Dulles was thinking in short-range military terms.

In an address before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York in January, 1954, Mr. Dulles had spoken of the need for more security at less cost. No doubt with Korea on his mind, he stated, "It is not sound military strategy permanently to commit U. S. land forces to Asia to a degree that leaves us no strategic reserves." And he continued:

It is not sound economics, or good foreign policy, to support permanently other countries; for in the long run, that creates as much ill will as good will. /Asian nations must provide their own security./ But there is no local defense which alone will contain the mighty land power of the Communist world. Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power. /We must be ready to fight/ with old weapons and with new weapons.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 111.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXX (January 25, 1954), 108.

Dulles evidently saw China as the significant threat and the proposed security pact as an expression of his "massive retaliation" policy, involving the possible use of nuclear bombs.<sup>18</sup> Certainly this was the view of Vice President Nixon who observed that, "As we look at China on the map, we can see that China is the basic cause of all our troubles in Asia. If China had not gone Communist, we would not have a war in Korea. If China were not Communist, there would be no war in Indochina, there would be no war in

---

<sup>18</sup>"Put into plain English this Dulles policy of collective defense for Southeast Asia meant that if the Peking government sent in its own army as in Korea or supplied equipment and personnel in the war against France in Vietnam, the American air force might carry out a nuclear bombing of China." Mills, Southeast Asia, 167. Mills added, "The efficacy of this policy was doubtful even at the date of its promulgation." Ibid.

In an address before the Laymen's Week-End Retreat League in Philadelphia on February 9, 1954, Undersecretary of State Smith had said, "Our government is seeking a national security system which will provide the maximum defense at a bearable cost, and our purpose is to make our relations with our allies more effective and less costly. Today we are placing more reliance on deterrent power and less on local defensive power." Under the Democrats, basic policy concepts had been "unclear and undecided." Consequently, "our enemies were able to choose the time and place and method of attack, while we met aggression by local opposition. The initiative lay with them, and we had to react wherever they chose to prod us." Now we could "retaliate instantly by means and at places of our own choosing." Department of State Bulletin, XXX (February 22, 1954), 264 and 265.

Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations Thruston B. Morton repeated a theme introduced after the Korean truce. If hostilities involving Chinese in Korea were revived, they might not be limited to the Korean peninsula. And "the Peiping regime was also advised that aggressive intervention in Indochina would 'have grave consequences which might not be confined to Indochina.'" Ibid., 291.

Malaya."<sup>19</sup> President Eisenhower, too, believed that the essential threat came from "Communist Russia and its Chinese Communist ally."<sup>20</sup> Accordingly the United States tried to get a pact before the Geneva Conference, and Britain had given its approval in principle before the conference.

But Anthony Eden's approach to the subject was entirely different from that of John Foster Dulles. Britain had recognized and maintained diplomatic relations with the Peking government. Her leaders regarded the problem in the Far East as being more diffuse than a simple threat of military aggression from China. In the initial phases of the discussions, the disagreement between the Americans and the British superficially took the form of a dispute over membership of the proposed treaty. Eden has written that in early April, 1954, it was "becoming obvious that difficulties lay ahead on the subject of the membership of the proposed security system in Southeast Asia."<sup>21</sup> He "repeatedly emphasized" to Dulles that while "India and other Asian countries might well choose to remain outside such an arrangement, they should nevertheless be given every opportunity to participate and should be kept fully informed."<sup>22</sup>

But Dulles resisted strenuously this suggestion that

---

12. <sup>19</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXX (January 4, 1954),

<sup>20</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 346.

<sup>21</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 109. <sup>22</sup>Ibid.

India be invited to join the grouping. As he expressed his mind to Eden, if there were a question of extending the security arrangements westward to include India, "there would be a 'strong demand' in the United States to extend it eastwards . . . to include Nationalist China and Japan."<sup>23</sup> And so Dulles thought, doubtless with the views of Senator Knowland in mind, that the less said about Indian participation the better. Eden bristled at "this balancing of India against Formosa." The two did not seem to him comparable.<sup>24</sup> But these negative and positive attitudes toward India were only symptomatic of a more fundamental disagreement between the United States and her British ally. For it is evident that the two held differing world views, differing appraisals of the nature of the threat of Communism, and differing approaches to the practice of diplomacy.

In an April 30 memorandum to Dulles, Eden cautioned that "Communism in Asia cannot be checked by military means alone. The problem," he said, "is as much political as military; if any military combination is to be effective, it must enjoy the widest possible measure of Asian support."<sup>25</sup> If other Asian countries were not to actively support the new security agreement, at least steps should be taken to secure their "benevolent neutrality." And in order to secure the widely-based Asian support, the ground must be carefully prepared "for what is, in any case, intended to be

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 122.

a lasting defensive organization, not a hastily contrived expedient to meet the present crisis."<sup>26</sup>

But apparently a hastily contrived expedient to meet the present crisis was precisely what Dulles and other high Administration officials had in mind. On March 29 in his Overseas Press Club address Dulles had said:

Under the conditions of today, the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of Communist Russia and its Chinese Communist ally, by whatever means, would be a grave threat to the whole free community. The United States feels that that possibility should not be passively accepted but should be met by united action.<sup>27</sup>

Dulles thus put the allies on notice that the United States would not be prepared to accept any compromise at Geneva that would leave the Communists in control of any part of Indochina. The proposed collective security agreement was to be the instrument through which the new policy would be implemented.

But the British balked. On April 1 Eden sent to Sir Roger Makins, British Ambassador in Washington, a message which Makins was to communicate to Mr. Dulles. Eden took note of the United States government's having "rightly" rejected military intervention against the Vietminh, but also of its apparent hope that with material aid and political prodding the Franco-Vietnamese forces might achieve victory alone. He pointed out what Dulles surely must

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXX (April 12, 1954), 540.

already have known, that "such a policy is becoming increasingly unacceptable to the French."<sup>28</sup> Although not urging the French to abandon the effort as long as any hope of success remained, Eden warned that, "after earnest study of military and political factors, we feel it would be unrealistic not to face the possibility that the conditions for a favorable solution in Indochina may no longer exist."

Failure to face this possibility would make agreement and unity among the Allies at Geneva more difficult to achieve.<sup>29</sup>

However, Dulles would not accept the warning. He told the Ambassador that, in Eden's words, "the best hope was to compel China to desist from aid to the Vietminh by the threat of military action." Dulles "said that we possessed a military superiority in the area now which we might not have in a few years' time."<sup>30</sup> He therefore pressed for an ad hoc coalition of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and the three Associated States of Indo-China, in whose name a warning or a threat would be issued to China: either she would desist in her aid to the Vietminh or the Allies would carry out naval and air actions against the Chinese coast and actively intervene in Indo-China itself.<sup>31</sup>

President Eisenhower urged this plan upon Prime

---

<sup>28</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 102.      <sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 102-103.      <sup>31</sup>Ibid., 103.

Minister Churchill in a message sent April 5, and suggested that Dulles might fly to London to discuss the proposal.

The British leaders indicated that they would be willing to receive Dulles, but their military advisors cautioned that the proposed military actions, only vaguely conceived by the Americans, were not likely to be effective, and Eden "was determined . . . not to be hustled into injudicious military decisions."<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, he found proposals for a long-range collective security agreement "attractive" and found "advantage in expressing our views to the Americans whilst their own ideas are still not fully formed."<sup>33</sup>

Announcing on April 10 that " . . . the United States could not willingly abandon or yield to the postponement of its proposal for a common front against the Communist threat to Indo-China and neighboring free countries,"<sup>34</sup> Mr. Dulles left for London. His talks there with Eden were "marked by persistent British attempts to tone down the American proposal into a mere statement of 'Western unity, of intention and action' at Geneva."<sup>35</sup> Eden preferred, at this point, not to even "mention . . . any decision concerning collective security in South-East Asia, if that were agreed upon."<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>34</sup> The New York Times, April 11, 1954.

<sup>35</sup> Lerche in Journal of Politics, August, 1956, 463.

<sup>36</sup> Eden, Full Circle, 108.

Throughout the episode his desire was not to prejudice the compromise he hoped to achieve at Geneva. And he anticipated with equanimity a "negotiated settlement [that] was bound to produce either a Communist share in the government of most of Indo-China, or complete Communist control of part of the country (sic.).\" He regarded the latter alternative as preferable, and though he had sympathy with the American view that these solutions were not ideal, he \"thought it unrealistic to expect that a victor's terms could be imposed upon an undefeated enemy.\"<sup>37</sup>

The April 12 and 13 talks in London ended with no final decision on the matter. Dulles was forced \"to shelve the idea of immediate intervention\" in Indochina.<sup>38</sup> But a cautious joint statement, obviously the result of compromise, made some concession to Dulles's position:

. . . we are ready to take part, with other countries principally concerned, in an examination of the possibility of establishing a collective defense, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, to assure the peace, security, and freedom of South-East Asia and the Western Pacific.<sup>39</sup>

Still Eden held to his views on the nature and

---

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 101. Walter Bedel Smith was to give ex post facto concurrence with this judgment. He declared that he was \"convinced that the results [of Geneva] are the best that we could possibly have obtained in the circumstances\" and that \"diplomacy has rarely been able to gain at the conference table what cannot be gained or held on the battlefield.\" Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954, 255.

<sup>38</sup>Chalmers Roberts in The Reporter, September 14, 1954, 33.

<sup>39</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 109.

membership of the proposed pact and the minute of the conference stated that:

It was agreed that in any statement to the House of Commons, Mr. Eden should explain that the whole question of membership was a matter for further consideration and that it would be discussed with the Government of India as with the Government of Pakistan and others.<sup>40</sup>

Eden's memoirs state that the subject of the composition of the pact was not raised in the House, but other sources indicate that the overall subject was raised and that "Mr. Eden denied under questioning that the joint statement embodied a 'definite commitment to take certain action in certain sectors.'"<sup>41</sup>

Now Mr. Dulles increased the pressure on the reluctant British. Returning to Washington via Paris, he issued on April 16 an invitation to the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, France, the Philippines, Thailand and the three Associated States of Indochina to attend a meeting that would set up a working group to study the collective defense of Southeast Asia. Eden viewed this act by Dulles as taking "steps to settle the question of membership in advance, on his own terms," and he instructed the British Ambassador not to attend the meeting.<sup>42</sup> He angrily accused the Americans of threatening to disrupt the Anglo-American alliance because of dislike for some of

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Lerche in Journal of Politics, August, 1956, 463.

<sup>42</sup> Eden, Full Circle, 110.

Britain's Commonwealth partners.<sup>43</sup> Dulles had left himself open to such a charge with his expressed opinion that Indian and other neutralism was "immoral," but this was only one source of Dulles's frustration. In order to cover up, the Washington meeting was not cancelled, but converted into a general briefing conference on Korea and the coming negotiations at Geneva.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, Vice President Richard Nixon had given his notable comments to newsmen in Washington on April 16. He was identified in the press as an anonymous "high administration source," and evidently reflected the general administration view when he said that "perhaps Communist intransigence about Korea would teach the French and British the futility of negotiation and bring them over to the plan of united action put forward by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles."<sup>45</sup> This could be taken as further evidence that Washington was trying to jar the British into agreement on united action under a hastily contrived defense pact.

The Geneva Conference opened on April 27 with no effective agreement between the Western allies.

On May 4, Senator Knowland delivered a speech suggesting that the United States should go ahead with a Pacific

---

<sup>43</sup>Supra, chapter IV, 172-173.

<sup>44</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 110-111. Roberts in The Reporter, September 14, 1954, 34.

<sup>45</sup>The New York Times, April 17, 1954.

pact without British approval or adherence. Knowland was not, of course, an authoritative spokesman for the administration, and it is not possible to say whether his suggestion was coordinated with high policymaking. President Eisenhower seemed on the following day to be making further efforts to persuade or coerce the British rather than to leave them out. In a White House press release he was quoted as saying:

Obviously, it was never expected that this collective security arrangement would spring into existence overnight. There are too many important problems to be resolved. But there is a general sense of urgency. The fact that such an organization is in process of formation could have an important bearing upon what happens at Geneva during the Indochina phase of the Conference. . . . Progress in this matter has been considerable and I am convinced that further progress will continue to be made.<sup>46</sup>

And Mr. Dulles made a speech on May 7 in which he said that good progress was being made in the "conversations" that were going on.<sup>47</sup>

Anthony Eden always sought to keep distinct the question of a long-range security pact and any question of military intervention in Indochina.<sup>48</sup> But his initial

---

<sup>46</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXX (May 17, 1954), 740.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 743.

<sup>48</sup>In an April 24 directive prepared in advance for an emergency Cabinet meeting (supra, IV, 170-171) Eden had stated that "we can give an assurance now that if a settlement is reached at Geneva, we shall join in guaranteeing that settlement and in setting up a collective defense in South-East Asia, as foreshadowed in the London communique, to make that joint guarantee effective." This seems to be

desire, at least, had been to make a definite connection between the ultimate pact and the Geneva result.<sup>49</sup> On both points, Dulles took an opposite view. For Eden, diplomacy and foreign policy were concerned with national interests and specific but limited national objectives. Thus he had relatively little concern with ideology and no crusading zeal. He did not share the American-Dullesian goal of "stopping Communism."<sup>50</sup> If one or more of the Indochinese countries should come under a native Communist government, Eden was prepared to live with it. A Southeast Asian security pact would serve as a practical instrument for preserving specific British interests in the area and for lessening the likelihood of any outright international aggression that might threaten the general peace. Dulles's desire for military intervention and a military alignment was aimed at preventing any more people or territory from coming under Communist rule "by whatever means."

So the British continued to resist formal treaty-making until after Geneva. That this was far from what the

---

the first hint of Eden's later suggestion of a Locarno-type pact. Eden, Full Circle, 118.

<sup>49</sup> See previous note.

<sup>50</sup> McGeorge Bundy has observed that Dulles was "a Secretary of State who combined great subtlety--even deviousness--of tactics with a deep internal need for arbitrary moral certainty." "The End of Either/Or," Foreign Affairs, XLV (January, 1967), 189. Eden himself observed, "A preacher in a world of politics, Mr. Dulles seemed sometimes to have little regard for the consequences of his words." Full Circle, 71.

United States wanted is indicated in a dispatch from Geneva by Thomas J. Hamilton on May 16. Hamilton reported that the breach between the United States and Britain was wider than when the conference had begun. Mr. Dulles was still insisting that the April 13 statement in London had committed Britain to immediate action on the pact. Mr. Eden continued to insist otherwise. This only serves further to point up the differences that existed between the two countries on the purpose and concept of a Pacific security pact.

On May 15, Eden had read in the Swedish newspapers a report of Franco-American discussions on military intervention in Indochina.<sup>51</sup> This was confirmed the following day when the United States announced that indeed it was holding separate talks with the French. Naturally, Eden thought that this development would undermine his efforts at Geneva, and so in mid-May a nearly complete breakdown in relations between the two English-speaking countries appeared likely. This was averted only because the French, and later other allies, declined to cooperate fully with the United States proposals.<sup>52</sup> Although Eden wanted to keep the options open, he did not accept the United States argument that the threat of intervention would bring greater concessions from the Russians, Chinese and Vietminh.

On May 19, President Eisenhower publicly stated that the United States, "given cooperation in other quarters,"

---

<sup>51</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 133.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 133-135.

might go ahead with a Southeast Asian alliance without the British. He apparently had in mind Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Thailand.<sup>53</sup> This announcement was matched in Geneva by an American proposal to move the conference back into plenary sessions where, Eden thought, no real progress could be made. And the French feared that such a move would bring about the fall of the current government.<sup>54</sup> But on May 20, New Zealand informed the United States that it was unwilling to proceed without the United Kingdom.<sup>55</sup>

Staff talks on the treaty arrangements were begun, however, in early June, but there were no formally announced results. Dulles was still hopeful, or so it seemed, that Geneva would fail. In a press conference on June 15 he stated:

The United States has not given up on its view that the situation in that area /Southeast Asia/ would be improved by the creation of a collective defense system. I would hope that the talks here would at least further progress along that line. There seems to be some indication that the British feel that the possibilities of Geneva have been exhausted and that the result is sufficiently barren so that alternatives should now be considered. If that is the way they feel when they come over here, I hope that that can lead to a closer meeting of the minds.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup>The New York Times, May 20, 1954.

<sup>54</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 135.

<sup>55</sup>The New York Times, May 21, 1954.

<sup>56</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXX (June 28, 1954), 990.

Eden and Prime Minister Churchill had announced that, during a recess of the Geneva conference, they would come to Washington to talk with the President and Secretary of State. The fall of the Laniel government in France on June 22, and its replacement by that of Pierre Mendes-France, laid to rest the question of France's participation in joint military actions with the United States, for Mendes-France announced upon entering office that he would achieve a peaceful settlement by July 20 or else resign.

Nothing could have brought into bolder relief the cleavage between the United States and Britain than the proposal Anthony Eden made in his foreign policy address in the House of Commons on June 23, 1954. He called for a defensive alliance akin to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but one also incorporating a mutual guarantee of national boundaries in Southeast Asia--a Far Eastern "Locarno." The reaction in Washington was one of "anguish and shock."<sup>57</sup> The idea of a non-aggression pact with Communist countries was nothing short of anathema to John Foster Dulles and, so he thought, the American people.<sup>58</sup> "For weeks," one observer wrote, "Americans had watched with mounting dissatisfaction Mr. Eden's attempts to play a conciliatory role at Geneva," and this suggestion of Locarno "brought this dissatisfaction

---

<sup>57</sup>Lerche in Journal of Politics, August, 1956, 471.

<sup>58</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 138-139.

to a boil."<sup>59</sup>

The atmosphere was therefore tense, if not acrid, when the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary arrived in Washington for talks. But somehow the deadlock was at least partially broken. Eden had wanted to again warn against any anti-Communist alliance for Southeast Asia prior to the end of Geneva. He also wished to explain his "dual system of guarantees."<sup>60</sup> On this latter point he was not able to convince the American leaders, and the talks evidently resulted in his and Churchill's ceasing to object to immediate action on the examination of the "possibilities" of a defensive agreement.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, the United States gave up the idea of an immediate pact to cover intervention.<sup>62</sup> The chief result of the meeting was the drafting of a seven-point agreement<sup>63</sup> that set forth an Anglo-American basis for a Geneva settlement.<sup>64</sup> Even this

---

<sup>59</sup>Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954, 245. One immediate reaction in the United States was the adoption of an amendment to the Mutual Security Act of 1954 which would withhold military assistance in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific from any government "committed by treaty to maintain Communist rule over any defined territory in Asia."

<sup>60</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 148.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. See also Lerche in Journal of Politics, August 1956, 472.

<sup>62</sup>Lerche in Journal of Politics, August, 1956, 472.

<sup>63</sup>See Appendix I.

<sup>64</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 368.

accomplishment would seem to have been an exercise in futility, for President Eisenhower soon was to announce through Walter Bedel Smith that the United States would sign no agreement at Geneva.<sup>65</sup>

The idea of a Far Eastern Locarno having been dropped, and this idea having embodied Eden's central concept of a long-range peaceful settlement, an accurate assessment would seem to be that Dulles won most of his points as the Geneva conference drew to a close. This seems especially true in view of the nature of the treaty that finally emerged from Manila and which was later to be used by the Johnson Administration, if not quite in accordance with Mr. Dulles's "New Look" military-foreign policy.

Actual drafting of the treaty began in early July, with some controversy still remaining over its nature and membership. In a press conference on July 21, President Eisenhower again suggested membership for Chiang Kai-shek's government on Taiwan, but this was apparently only to "serve as a counterweight to British insistence upon tailoring the treaty so as to make it acceptable to India, Burma, and Indonesia."<sup>66</sup> The jockeying continued.

---

<sup>65</sup>A footnote on this point indicates the extent to which the scholarly community has been inclined to go in its uncritical treatment of the official actions and explanations by American foreign policymakers. Richard P. Stebbins, writing for the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations, observed that the "announcement by the United States that it would refuse to sign any agreement provided fresh opportunities for Communist obstruction . . . ."

<sup>66</sup>Lerche in Journal of Politics, August, 1956, 473.

One correspondent reported that the United States favored "a formal arrangement with mutual defense commitments bound by an immediate or formal treaty," while the British were inclined to shy from the formalistic approach. They preferred a "looser accord pledged to non-aggression in a way that could enlist the support of Britain's Commonwealth partners and other Colombo powers."<sup>67</sup> But this seems to miss the point of the controversy rather widely. When the United States wanted "united action" in the spring and summer of 1954, Secretary of State Dulles made it fairly clear that all he wanted from the British was assent or diplomatic support, not actual participation in the military strikes.<sup>68</sup> Evidence also shows that SEATO was seen by Dulles as essentially assent by several allies for any possible future military action by the United States.<sup>69</sup> Eden favored "a girdle of neutral states" around the Communists in Asia.<sup>70</sup> As for China, he was willing to live and let live. This is what the Geneva agreements ultimately called for. It was not what the United States wanted and Dulles's concept of SEATO was contrary to it. In some vague way, Dulles was still thinking in terms of a roll-back of the Communist forces.

---

<sup>67</sup>Walter H. Waggoner in The New York Times, July 24, 1954.

<sup>68</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 125-127. Beal, John Foster Dulles, 210.

<sup>69</sup>Beal, John Foster Dulles, 222.

<sup>70</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 139.

Why, after all, did the United States so resent the suggestion of "Locarno"? It seems evident that Eden wanted to keep the peace in Indochina by giving a guarantee to the compromise settlement, by accepting the Geneva status quo. It seems equally clear that the United States wanted to retain at least the option of using military intervention to thwart the terms of the Geneva agreement, and to establish a new status quo more to its liking.

### The Nature and Purpose of the Treaty

In his memoirs, George Bidault, former French Foreign Minister, caustically and bitterly comments on something he discovered in the first volume of President Eisenhower's memoirs:

Two maps published in Eisenhower's Mandate for Change show how blind the Americans were and how many prejudices they had against "French colonialism." The first map shows the Communists nearly all over Vietnam while the French were fighting there. The second map shows how, after the country was partitioned, all the Communists were cleverly contained in their part of the North and how all the rest of Vietnam was free.<sup>71</sup>

There does indeed seem to be a large measure of self-delusion in the implied optimism with reference to the outcome of the Geneva conference. The contrasting maps in Eisenhower's book further illustrate the apparent ambiguity of the thinking of American leaders of this period.

---

<sup>71</sup>George Bidault, Resistance, the Political Autobiography of George Bidault (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 202. Bidault concludes his ironic comment with the observation, "General Maxwell Taylor would be a very happy man right now if such were the case."

President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles recognized that "it was the military success of the Vietminh that had . . . compelled the West to agree to the holding of the Geneva conference; and [that] it was the continuation of that success that was ultimately to determine the conference's outcome."<sup>72</sup> But though they understood this fact, the American leaders labored to change it and finally faced it most reluctantly. Some might conclude that the non-performance at Geneva indicates that the fact was never really accepted by the United States. Shortly after the conference ended, a State Department official summed up the general American attitude when he said, "It would be an understatement to say that we do not like the terms of the ceasefire agreement just concluded."<sup>73</sup> But of even more importance than the military situation to the outcome was the underlying political strength of the Vietminh. This was what really frustrated Mr. Dulles and his successors, and drove them to seek relentlessly for an arrangement that would, by political and military change, and by the sheer passage of time, overcome the result of Geneva. This meant that, while the purely military decisions at Geneva were reluctantly accepted at least temporarily, the political terms stated and implied in the agreement were never accepted.

---

<sup>72</sup>Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954, 217.

<sup>73</sup>Assistant Secretary of State Walter S. Robertson, Department of State Bulletin, XXX (August 23, 1954), 261.

As two scholars have written, "though the United States said it would 'refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb' the /Geneva/ agreements, it soon became evident that it was prepared to use every other means to back up the Saigon regime in its departure from their central provisions."<sup>74</sup> On the surface, such means would not have been necessary, in the view of the American leaders, if what Mr. Eisenhower's maps had purported to reveal had really been accurate. Herein lay the self-delusion. The ambiguity lay in the refusal to sanction the partition of Vietnam, reflected by references to "the state of Vietnam" and "independent" Vietnam; i.e., the policy of sullenly and grudgingly accepting some of the provisions of Geneva, and rejecting others.

Robert Burns' famous warning about "the best laid plans" surely holds especially true in the planning of national and international strategies. Even so the precise purposes of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty must be one of the most debated and confusing issues of the mid-20th century. Perhaps Mr. Dulles knew well what he had in mind, but intentionally or unintentionally he never communicated his understanding to the attentive public.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup>George McTurnan Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam (New York: Delta Book, 1969), 59.

<sup>75</sup>The confusion surrounding the Southeast Asia Collective Security Treaty could have been an aspect of the general confusion that surrounded Mr. Dulles's broad policy of "massive retaliation" or the "New Look" in foreign-defense

Early in 1954 Undersecretary of State Robertson had told the House Appropriations Committee that

The heart of the present policy toward China . . . is that there is to be kept alive a constant threat of military action vis-a-vis Red China in the hope that at some point there will be an internal breakdown . . . . In other words, a cold war waged under the leadership of the U. S., with constant threat of attack against Red China, led by Formosa and other Far Eastern groups and militarily supported by the United States.<sup>76</sup>

Was SEATO, then, to be an expression of this anti-Chinese policy? Certainly Dulles's oft-repeated appeals to the massive retaliation doctrine, and the generally accepted administration view of Communism as a unified and centrally-directed movement, would suggest that SEATO was to fit the Robertson formulation. Yet the thought of an openly aggressive China seems to have been more in the nature of a vague fear than a cogently calculated expectation.

In May Mr. Dulles was saying that "what we are trying to do is to create a situation in Southeast Asia where the domino situation will not apply."<sup>77</sup> If there is substance

---

policy. Originally, Mr. Dulles explained his policy as incorporating the principle that any potential aggressor would be put unequivocally on notice that his aggression would be met with a specific and certain counterattack on his home territory. Subsequently, the Secretary of State and other Eisenhower administration spokesmen were to state that one purpose of the new policy was to "keep the enemy guessing." This may be only an apparent contradiction, but it was never very successfully resolved. See King, Southeast Asia in Perspective, 138-144.

<sup>76</sup>Hearing before the House Committee on Appropriations, January 26, 1954, 125-127.

<sup>77</sup>Quoted in Stebbins, The United States in World Affairs, 1954, 237.

in George Orwell's theory that poor thinking is inevitably expressed in poor grammar or tortured language, this statement of Dulles's may be a classic example. The language of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and the protocol and special "understanding" of the United States are likewise perplexing and circuitous in form. The provisions have been subject to a variety of interpretations.

Mr. Dulles often spoke in terms of "saving" Southeast Asia, which might have meant something more than preventing the area, or parts of it, from coming under a Communist government. But apparently this is all that Dulles meant. And perhaps the capacity of SEATO to accomplish this was clear in his mind.

The British position was more flexible and not so simple. They remained more than reticent about the proposed security arrangement and "in view of the moderate stance adopted by the Communist powers at the /Geneva/ conference and their proposal to neutralize the countries in Indochina, America's Western allies had lost any sense of urgency in meeting the 'communist threat' to the area."<sup>78</sup> Yet the British had already acceded to a major Dulles point at the time of the June meeting in Washington by agreeing that the Southeast Asia pact would "be limited to those powers willing to undertake specific commitments for military action in the event of renewed Communist aggression /and/ the United

---

<sup>78</sup>Kahin and Lewis, The United States in Vietnam, 59.

Kingdom was willing to examine the possibilities of this . . . arrangement at once."<sup>79</sup> This meant that Eden had been persuaded to give up his request that Asian neutrals such as India and Burma be included in the negotiations. Dulles did not want the likely negative counsel of these countries in the event the United States wanted to take military measures. And the British permitted themselves to be persuaded to accept considerably more of the Dulles scheme. This was so much the case that Foreign Minister Eden was constrained to avoid reporting to the House of Commons on what had been agreed upon in Washington, leaving this task to Prime Minister Churchill, whose great prestige enabled him to cover the subject by merely referring to the creation of a "study group."

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the June Washington meeting between the British and American leaders produced a seven-point text to be communicated to the French as a joint Anglo-American statement of position with regard to the conclusion of an armistice agreement on Indochina. This text tacitly accepted some kind of partition in Vietnam, but point 4 stated that the agreement should "not contain political provisions which would risk loss of the retained area to Communist control."<sup>80</sup> But of course article 14 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam and

---

<sup>79</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 148.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 149.

paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference contained precisely such provisions. Although some Western writers have belittled these provisions which called for all-Vietnam elections in 1956, there is little evidence that the Vietnamese Communists have ever done so, and the provisions in fact express one of the essential commitments of the Geneva settlement.

These agreements having been concluded in July, 1954, Secretary Dulles immediately set about reinvigorating his plan for an organized context within which to carry out whatever "united action" might be deemed desirable in the future. But now the plan had a somewhat different purpose. Ignoring the Geneva provisions, Mr. Dulles immediately stated that "the important thing from now on is not to mourn the past but to face the future opportunity to prevent the loss in northern Viet-Nam from leading to the extension of Communism throughout Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific."<sup>81</sup> The task, he said in a press conference, would be to build up "the truly independent states of Cambodia, Laos and southern Viet-Nam." Dulles meant to imply of course that no Communist government could be independent of what he thought of as "world Communism," and his verbal sleight-of-hand was also meant to launch "southern Viet-Nam" as a "truly independent state." The Southeast Asia Collective

---

<sup>81</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXX (August 2, 1954), 163.

Defense Treaty was to be a major instrument of this policy. President Eisenhower had simultaneously helped to set the stage for the *démarche* by stating on July 21 that " . . . the United States has not itself been party to or bound by the decisions taken by the /Geneva/ conference," and "is actively pursuing discussions with other free nations with a view to the rapid organization of a collective defense in Southeast Asia in order to prevent further direct or indirect Communist aggression in that general area."<sup>82</sup> And on the same date, Undersecretary of State Walter Bedell Smith had at Geneva presented the unilateral statement that "The Government of the United States . . . takes note . . . of paragraphs 1 to 12 of the Declaration presented to the Geneva Conference."<sup>83</sup> Whether Smith had intended to exclude recognition of paragraph 12, pledging the members of the conference to "respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity, and the territorial integrity of" Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, there can be no doubt that he intended to deliberately snub paragraph 13 which reads:

The members of the Conference agree to consult one another on any question which may be referred to them by the International Supervisory Commission, in order to study such measures as may prove necessary to ensure that the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam are respected.<sup>84</sup>

But future developments were to strongly suggest, if not prove, that Mr. Dulles's efforts were less an effective

---

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>See Appendix IV.

<sup>84</sup>See Appendix III.

exercise in calculated self-interest than an approach to alliances which merely temporarily concealed a United States lack of political creativeness. For as Hans Morgenthau has written, "insofar as the task is political, requiring a variety of means to be applied with subtlety, discrimination and imagination, a policy of alliances will be useless, if not harmful."<sup>85</sup> And the issue in Indochina was and remains "political allegiance and not military defense."<sup>86</sup>

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty consists of a preamble and eleven articles. The significance of the treaty lies in Article IV and in a protocol which was signed on the same day as the treaty. The treaty and the protocol were also simultaneously ratified by the United States. According to Article IV, paragraph 1, each party to the treaty

recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the parties or against any State or territory which the parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. Measures taken under this paragraph shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Alliances" in Harold K. Jacobson, ed., America's Foreign Policy (New York: Random House, 1956), 319.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. Morgenthau was not necessarily applying these terms to the Indochina situation.

<sup>87</sup> Partial or complete texts of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty can be found in many works. See Peter V. Curl, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954 (New York: Harper Row, 1956), 319-323.

The obligations assumed by the United States here were similar to those outlined in security pacts with South Korea, the Philippines, and Australia and New Zealand. The statement that an armed attack would endanger the peace and safety of each party and that each agreed in that event to meet the danger "in accordance with its constitutional processes" incorporated what Secretary of State Dulles called a "Monroe Doctrine formula."<sup>88</sup> This was designed, apparently, to introduce an element of flexibility with regard to specific obligations, but certainly also to avoid the constitutional question that had arisen with the North Atlantic Treaty. There the formula "an attack upon one is an attack upon all" raised the constitutional question of whether the United States could be committed to war without a declaration by the Congress. Events subsequent to the signing of the Manila Pact were to reveal that the provisions of this article were not uniformly understood and interpreted even by the signatories themselves.

Paragraph 2 of Article 4 states in rather odd and complicated phrases:

If, in the opinion of any of the parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any party in the treaty area or of any other State or territory to which the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article from time to time apply is threatened in any way other than by armed attack or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the

---

<sup>88</sup>U. S., Congressional Record, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, CI, Part I, 1051.

area, the parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defense.<sup>89</sup>

When Dulles was asked by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to "be a little more definite as to just what" this paragraph meant, Dulles replied that it applied "primarily to the threat of overthrow by subversive measures, internal revolution which might, perhaps, be inspired from without, but which does not involve open interference from without."<sup>90</sup> Mr. Dulles was at some pains to assure the committee that this provision of the treaty did not commit the United States to oppose all attempts to overthrow governments in the treaty area, and that all that was really required was consultation.<sup>91</sup>

The real novelty in the treaty is found in the provision for designating countries or areas not signatory to the treaty as nevertheless coming under its protection. Thus the protocol to the treaty designating Laos, Cambodia, and "the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam" as areas to which the provisions of Article IV would apply is as significant as the treaty itself. Indeed, given the series of developments described in this and the

---

<sup>89</sup>Curl, Documents in American Foreign Relations, 1954, 319-323.

<sup>90</sup>Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 83d Cong., 2d sess., Part I, Nov. 11, 1954, 20.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 28.

two previous chapters, one is tempted to conclude that the treaty was created to serve the protocol, rather than vice versa. Secretary Dulles was always conscious of his disappointment with the Geneva agreements, but this consciousness was expressed usually by evading any mention of those agreements. For example, he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "the Indochina situation was considered by some of the treaty signatories as creating obstacles to these three countries' /Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam/ becoming actual parties to the treaty at the present time."<sup>92</sup> He later spoke of there being a "question as to the propriety" of their becoming members.<sup>93</sup> But Mr. Dulles was not referring to anything so vague as the "situation" in Indochina or to the "propriety" of the countries' joining the treaty. He was referring to the specific provisions of the Geneva agreements which forbade the three states of Indochina to join any such arrangement.<sup>94</sup> Geneva provided generally for the neutrality, as well as the unity and territorial integrity of the three states. Dulles maintained, of course, that the "Associated States" indicated their desire to be under the protection of the treaty.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 5. Italics added.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 19. Italics added.

<sup>94</sup>Article 19 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities.

<sup>95</sup>Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearings cited in note 90, 19.

This could not have been true of the government in Hanoi, and Mr. Dulles's casual references to "the territory under Vietnamese jurisdiction" left the question open as to whether the United States considered the authorities who succeeded the French in Saigon as the legitimate government of all Vietnam.

Mr. Dulles recognized the novelty of the protocol provisions and also that of the anti-subversion provisions of Article IV, paragraph 2.<sup>96</sup> And he acknowledged that there was "a grave need, particularly in Vietnam, for a strong government which commands the loyalty of the people, and which has an effective police and constabulary at its command to detect and run down these subversive activities." He added that the situation in Vietnam was "by no means satisfactory at the present time" and that it called for "very attentive consideration by all of us." He assured the committee that "it will be given such consideration."<sup>97</sup> Senator H. Alexander Smith, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, invited Mr. Dulles to develop a bit for the committee this plan for dealing with subversion through the treaty. The Secretary replied that "obviously it is not practical publicly to develop details."<sup>98</sup> It is perhaps significant, in view of the protocol designating a part of Vietnam as coming under the provisions of the treaty, that Senator Smith and others regarded the problem in Vietnam as

---

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

essentially a political one. He regarded the "internal-subversion approach" as the "most dangerous one" for the Communists to take, and the one "which really is more dangerous than any immediate military act."<sup>99</sup> Having accompanied Dulles to Manila for the negotiation of the treaty, Senator Smith was presumably in close touch with him and his understanding of the purposes of the pact.

The facts of the situation and the various statements by the various participants seem to suggest that the pact, in Dulles's view, had two principle purposes. First, the mere existence of SEATO, coupled with Mr. Dulles's announced policy of massive retaliation, would constitute a deterrent threat to China. This threat, at least potentially nuclear, would prevent any overt Chinese military expansion into Southeast Asia. And secondly, the other danger, that of "internal subversion," would be dealt with by the provisions of Article IV, paragraph 2. The principal goal here was to preserve an "independent," anti-Communist South Vietnam. So the territory of the signatory powers was not the territory about which Mr. Dulles was most concerned. As a member of the International Control Commission for Indochina has written, "the curious aspect of the Southeast Asia Defense Organization is its constant reference to an area, an area not of the countries concerned, but an area which those

---

<sup>99</sup>U. S., Congressional Record, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, CI, Part I, 1053.

countries themselves can designate as under their protection if they so agree unanimously."<sup>100</sup>

Another significant aspect of the pact is a special "understanding" of the United States. It reads:

The United States of America in executing the present Treaty does so with the understanding that its recognition of the effect of aggression and armed attack and its agreement with reference thereto in Article 4, paragraph 1, apply only to Communist aggression, but affirms that in the event of other aggression or armed attack it will consult under the provisions of Article 4, paragraph 2.<sup>101</sup>

Senator Walter F. George expressed the view in the Senate that there was "a very good reason" for this understanding. "The United States," he said, "was the only country at Manila which did not have territorial interests in the area. It could hardly be said that all kinds of armed attacks threatened our peace and safety, although we could quite properly say it of a Communist armed attack."<sup>102</sup>

The first question raised by this explanation is whether the treaty could be considered a genuine example of collective security if there was so basic a disagreement as to what would constitute a threat to the member states' security as was implied by Senator George's explanation. Another question might have involved just how the various

---

<sup>100</sup> B. S. N. Murti, Vietnam Divided - The Unfinished Struggle (New York, Asia Publishing House, 1964), 48.

<sup>101</sup> U. S., Congressional Record, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, CI, Part I, 1050.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 1051.

concepts of collective security were reconciled at the Manila conference, or why the American concept won out over the others. The Australians were especially opposed to the United States "understanding."<sup>103</sup> Despite Senator Smith's assurances that the United States permitted the Asian participants to take the initiative at the Manila conference,<sup>104</sup> the evidence indicates that Mr. Dulles was rather firmly in charge. At the time of the conference, at least, Dulles got essentially what he wanted in the treaty, compromising only on matters of form and not substance. Dulles had been willing to launch a frontal assault on the Geneva agreements by making the three Indochina states full-fledged members of the treaty organization. But according to one informed source, the British and the French strongly resisted this.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, Dulles's essential position was satisfied by the provisions of the protocol. Moreover, Dulles "had always wanted primarily to direct the treaty against Communist aggression."<sup>106</sup> and his original text had specifically referred to "Communist aggression," but this was eliminated at Eden's request.<sup>107</sup> But once again, the United States'

---

<sup>103</sup>Ralph Braibanti, "The Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty," Pacific Affairs, Dec., 1957, 321-341.

<sup>104</sup>U. S., Congressional Record, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, CI, Part I, 1052.

<sup>105</sup>Lacouture and Devillers, La Fin D'une Guerre, 294.

<sup>106</sup>Sherman Adams, Firsthand Report (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 126.

<sup>107</sup>Bator, Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy, 165.

special "understanding" achieved Dulles's essential purpose. So in contrast to Senator George's rather vague interpretation of these provisions, it appears that they gave the United States the flexibility it wanted: There would be no "NATO formula," meaning that the United States could take action if it, following its "constitutional processes," desired to; and the United States understanding meant that it would take action only in case of "Communist aggression."

Others could do as they wished, but it is highly doubtful that the United States leaders of this period expected them to do much. Victor Bator's conclusion was that the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty was "an anti-Communist tool to be used or not used by the United States as it pleased."<sup>108</sup> More to the point perhaps is the conclusion of George McTurnan Kahin and John W. Lewis that "SEATO constituted in effect one half of a two-pronged American riposte to the military armistice upon which the Geneva Agreements were based. The other prong was the United States' effort to inject sufficient power into the regime of Bao Dai and Ngo Dinh Diem to render it politically viable and able to stand as a separate state."<sup>109</sup> The diplomatic maneuvers which were to support this second "prong" will be considered in the following chapter.

The non-Western participants at Manila did take one

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>109</sup> Kahin and Lewis, The United States in Vietnam, 63.

small initiative. And they did so no doubt in part because the major initiatives had been taken by the Western powers, principally the United States. A non-controversial "Pacific Charter" was adopted at the same time the collective defense treaty was concluded. Sounding remarkably like Japan's Pacific Charter of 1943,<sup>110</sup> this document was apparently inspired by Ramon Magsaysay of the Philippines.<sup>111</sup> In it the eight powers pledged to "uphold the principles of equal rights and self determination of peoples" and to "earnestly strive by every peaceful means to promote self-government and to secure the independence of all countries whose peoples desire it and are able to undertake its responsibilities." The Charter also stressed the need for economic cooperation and development aimed at raising living standards in the Asian countries. It has been suggested that this involved a hope that aid would be forthcoming from the United States to the Colombo powers, but such hopes have been largely unrealized.<sup>112</sup>

### The Alternative Fizzles

Marvin Gettleman has written that

An American alternative to the settlement of Geneva emerged two months later in the form of the anti-

---

<sup>110</sup> Braibanti in Pacific Affairs, Dec., 1957, 334.

<sup>111</sup> Russell H. Fifield, The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia: 1945-1958 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), 103.

<sup>112</sup> D. W. Crowley, The Background to Current Affairs (London: MacMillan and Company, 1967), 284.

Communist SEATO alliance. The years after 1954 would test this alternative and find it wanting. In early 1965 C. L. Sulzberger pronounced "the alliance structure devised by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles . . . valueless."<sup>113</sup>

Sulzberger made this pronouncement in 1965 when another Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, sought to revive SEATO as a justification for the escalation of the war in Vietnam. What has been said thusfar and what follows here would seem to indicate that escalation by the dispatching of United States military ground forces was not the kind of thing that John Foster Dulles had in mind when the Southeast Asia Collective Defense treaty was negotiated. Since SEATO has failed to serve either the Dulles or the Rusk approach to the situation in Vietnam, Mr. Sulzberger's choice of the word "valueless" seems to be accurate enough. The purpose of this paper is to raise the question, and to shed some light on a possible answer, as to whether United States interests would have been better served by a diplomacy that was aimed at making the Geneva agreements work than by one, such as is discussed here, aimed at finding an alternative to those agreements.

As 1954 drew to a close, Secretary of State Dulles addressed the nation and predicted that SEATO would become a "deterrent to Communist designs on Southeast Asia . . . a combined allied security unit for policing the area . . . [a]

---

<sup>113</sup>Marvin E. Gettleman, Vietnam: History, Documents, and Opinions on a Major World Crisis (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1955), 115-116.

defense weapon of great potential power, capable of mounting a mobile striking force against attack or aggression in Southeast Asia."<sup>114</sup> It must have been a surprise to Dulles when the British reaction to this statement was swift and negative. The London Times reported that

Surprise was expressed in diplomatic quarters tonight at reports of Dulles' . . . statements about the defense of Southeast Asia. Britain's objectives in the Southeast Asia organization have always been predominantly to create political and economic solidarity by creating an organization in which India, Burma and Ceylon and other currently neutralist powers in the area might join or cooperate.<sup>115</sup>

Anthony Eden had sought to prepare the House of Commons for the British role in SEATO--there was considerable doubt in the British Parliament as to the wisdom of such an alliance--by pointing to the build-up of the Vietminh army since Geneva and the already existing alliance between Soviet Russia and China. The Foreign Secretary likened a security agreement for Asia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, saying that the threats each sought to meet were essentially the same. But at the same time<sup>116</sup> he

---

<sup>114</sup>The New York Times, Jan. 1, 1955. Because of the British reaction to these statements, some degree of embarrassment in Washington perhaps accounts for their not appearing in the Department of State Bulletin as a part of an official record.

<sup>115</sup>Bator, Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy, 166.

<sup>116</sup>Speech in the House of Commons, Nov. 8, 1954. Cf. Frederick H. Hartman: "Despite the overwhelming approval of the American public for this pact, whose very name of SEATO deliberately paralleled the magic of NATO's name and implied similar success in Asia, the fact was that SEATO's membership was an admission of the lack of interest or even

seemed to suggest that a chief purpose of SEATO would be "to provide some kind of guarantee of these Geneva settlements."<sup>117</sup> Eden was striving to steer a delicate course between the conflicting views of his own and the other British parties and the American Secretary of State. But on the eve of the first SEATO Council meeting the U. S.-British split was out in the open again.

The first SEATO Council meeting was held in Bangkok in February, 1955. Presumably, some of the "gaps" in the treaty arrangements would be filled in at this meeting. But

---

opposition by the major Asian nations to the U. S. proposals and policies. SEATO was (and is) unlike NATO exactly in that feature which made NATO, for all its later troubles, so useful and successful as a rallying point. SEATO lacked local great power membership--a warning itself that the strategy it embodied was probably deficient in capitalizing on the basic forces at work in Asia. By all of these acts of the first Eisenhower Administration, the status quo in Asia was intentionally frozen. By all of these acts the seeds were sown, for better or for worse, for the later Vietnam War. By all of these acts, for which the Chinese must also assume responsibility, the "Chinese problem" went unresolved. Although the strategic objective (containing communism) was clear, the strategic concept did not distinguish which communisms were a threat under which circumstances. Worse, the concept, because ambiguous, could lead to actions contrary to the basic forces of Asian nationalism, while ensuring only nominal Asian support on its behalf." Frederick H. Hartman, The New Age of American Foreign Policy (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1970), 200.

<sup>117</sup>Allan B. Cole, Conflict in Indo-China and International Repercussions, A Documentary History, 1945-1955 (Ithica, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1956), 187-188. SEATO pledges the parties to respect the Geneva accords: "Each Party declares that none of the international engagements now in force between it and any other of the Parties or any Third Party is in conflict with the provisions of this Treaty." Article 6 of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty.

the meeting turned out to be "more or less exploratory in character and . . . therefore there was a tendency to postpone fundamental decisions."<sup>118</sup> Those organizations created were of a purely advisory character. No machinery was created to combat subversion "in the treaty area." A group of Military Advisers was instituted, but they in no wise constituted a unified command. No provision was made for distributing economic aid under the treaty.<sup>119</sup>

On the eve of the Bangkok meeting, the Thai Prime Minister, Marshal Pibul Songgram, announced that his government favored a permanent military force under the Manila Treaty and would welcome the establishment of bases for such a force in his country. Mr. Dulles not only rejected the Thai suggestion informally, but was reported to have stated that "the areas most vitally affecting the security of the Manila Powers lay outside their own territories and that insufficient attention was paid to meeting the Communist menace on a broad basis."<sup>120</sup> The American leadership was apparently at this time convinced that the threat to Southeast Asia was a military one emanating from China. William J. Sebald, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs had recently said in a speech that "the Communist success at Geneva . . . confirmed his judgement of Red

---

<sup>118</sup> Collective Defense in South East Asia--The Manila Treaty and its Implications (Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1956), 120.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 120-121.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

designs on Southeast Asia."<sup>121</sup> And Secretary Dulles himself stated in a radio-T.V. broadcast on March 8, 1955 that he had "pointed out at Bangkok that for military purposes, the Chinese Communist front should be regarded as an entirety because if the Chinese Communists engage in open armed aggression this would probably mean that they have decided on general war in Asia."<sup>122</sup>

So the United States sternly resisted any suggestion of a unified command or a standing force for SEATO,<sup>123</sup> and continued to envision the use of mobile striking force which, of course, only the United States had.

State Department press releases now began to speak of "the government of Vietnam" to designate what the SEATO protocol had referred to as "the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam."<sup>124</sup> A communiqué of the SEATO Council meeting stated that the "Council reaffirmed the determination of the member governments to support these

---

<sup>121</sup>Department of State Bulletin, XXXI (March 7, 1955), 378.

<sup>122</sup>The New York Times, March 9, 1955.

<sup>123</sup>Dulles also resisted the term SEATO "lest an organization like NATO be implied." He did not want the organization thought of as one in which all members would make military contributions. Russell H. Fifield, Southeast Asia in United States Policy (New York: Praeger, 1963), 126. Dulles sought briefly to popularize the organization as "Manpac" (for Manila Pact) but SEATO stuck. See note 116.

<sup>124</sup>Department of State Press Release 87, February 16, 1955. Department of State Bulletin, XXXI (February 28, 1955), 372.

three states /i.e., Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam/ in maintaining their freedom and independence as set forth in the Protocol to the Treaty."<sup>125</sup> The "treaty area" of course excluded North Vietnam. The protocol of course included South Vietnam, which was now to have its independence guaranteed. The true purpose of SEATO had become quite clear.

Anthony Eden had not attended the Manila Conference which created SEATO. (Nor did the Foreign Minister of France.) Ever the diplomat and a man who obviously valued greatly Anglo-American friendship, he always tried to put the best face on all joint actions. Still his non-attendance at Manila and his laconic comment on the Bangkok meeting seem to suggest something less than great enthusiasm for SEATO. He wrote in his memoirs:

Having missed Manila, I was particularly glad to be able to attend the first S.E.A.T.O. Council meeting at Bangkok in February, 1955. I had been anxious to call in at the capitols of some of the countries which had helped me during the Geneva Conference, and this gave me my chance . . . . I have pleasant memories of that conference. In the tropical heat, the greatest charm of the building in which we met was that it was open to the heavens; when the discussions became torpid, the flitting birds provided a pleasant diversion. Cooperation between the delegates was easy as well as effective, and I thought the results substantial.<sup>126</sup>

There was apparently more torpidity, however, than easy and effective cooperation. Eden expressed the view<sup>127</sup> that the

---

<sup>125</sup>Department of State Press Release 104, February 25, and Department of State Bulletin, XXXI (February 28, 1955), 372.

<sup>126</sup>Eden, Full Circle, 163.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

development of economic, social and cultural welfare under the treaty would be more important than defense against aggression or protection from subversion. Secretary Dulles surely did not share this view. The conflicting interpretations of the significance of the treaty continued to be exposed.

As United States influence continued to grow in South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem was persuaded to reduce the size of his army to just that which was needed to deal with infiltration and the rebellious politico-religious sects. The overall defense of the area was to be based upon the "threat of retaliation against direct or indirect aggression," using as an "umberella" mainly the naval and air power of the United States forces.<sup>128</sup> Various actions were taken in the late 1950's and 1960's to build up SEATO's formal structure, but the most significant steps were of a bilateral nature between the United States and Vietnam and the United States and Thailand.

At the Council meeting of March, 1956, the South

---

<sup>128</sup> Bernard B. Fall, "Indochina Since Geneva," Pacific Affairs, March, 1955, 23, and Ellen J. Hammer, "Progress Report on Southern Vietnam," Pacific Affairs, September, 1957, 221-235. Miss Hammer thinks that SEATO may have created a false sense of security at a particularly crucial time. General Matthew B. Ridgeway had already strongly expressed his view to the Washington Administration that air and sea power alone could not win a war in Asia. He thought that Korea had shown this and that conditions in Southeast Asia would be even more unfavorable. Could Secretary Dulles and Admiral Radford have been thinking expressly of nuclear bombs? See Ridgeway, Soldier, 274-78.

Vietnamese National Council "addressed to it a special message disowning the Geneva agreements."<sup>129</sup> If this was a bid for South Vietnamese membership, Secretary Dulles threw cold water on it, but assured President Diem of continued American aid. The attitude of Cambodia was apparently of some concern at this point. Formal membership for South Vietnam would have given Cambodia a feeling of encirclement by her two traditional enemies, and Britain and France were still opposed to such a move.<sup>130</sup> In April, 1956, Diem announced that he would not agree to the holding of elections as called for by the Geneva Conference, but stated that no foreign troops could come into South Vietnam and that he would grant no military bases or join any military alliance.<sup>131</sup>

Prince Noradom Sihanouk of Cambodia, on a visit to China, stated that he would not accept protection from SEATO. Four years later he signed a friendship and non-aggression treaty with China, but continued to receive aid, including military aid, from the United States. He later renounced even this. At the Geneva Conference on Laos in 1962, the head of the neutralist government Prince Souvanna Phouma "was adamant that Laos should formally renounce its rights to call on SEATO for assistance against aggression."<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup>George Modelski, ed., SEATO (Cheshire, Australian National University, 1962), 145.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 146.      <sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Michael Field, The Prevailing Wind: Witness in Indochina (London, Mathuen & Company, Ltd., 1965), 19.

This was done and Laos was dropped as a protocol state to SEATO.

It is doubtful that John Foster Dulles ever anticipated that the United States would fight a war such as that in Southeast Asia in the 1960's. But the Democratic successors to the Eisenhower Administration, finding an increasing challenge to the "independence" of South Vietnam, immediately began to cite SEATO as a justification for further intervention. The new Undersecretary of State, George Ball wrote:

Through the SEATO . . . treaty . . . the United States joined with others in throwing a protective arm around the embattled new nation /of South Vietnam/ . . . . The protocol to the SEATO treaty is an expression of the signatories' vital interests in the preservation of the integrity and independence of Viet-Nam. Those interests derive both from geography and from the very nature of the power struggle now going on in the world between aggressive Communist power and freedom.<sup>133</sup>

What had been implicit in Dulles's maneuvers and interpretations was now becoming manifest. What was supposedly "collective" was more and more being seen as bilateral or even unilateralist. For not only had Cambodia and Laos turned their backs on SEATO, the European and other signatories offered little enthusiasm or support for it and the actions the United States was undertaking in Vietnam.

On March 6, 1962, a joint statement issued by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Thai Foreign Minister Thanat

---

<sup>133</sup>George W. Ball, "Viet-Nam, Free World Challenge in Southeast Asia," Department of State Publication 7388, June, 1962.

Khoman contained a significant interpretation of Article IV of SEATO. The United States declared that its obligation under the pact was "individual as well as collective." Mr. Rusk further "reaffirmed" that whatever action the United States might take under SEATO would not require the "prior agreement" of the other members. A strong statement committing the United States to the independence of Thailand against Communist subversion and aggression was included.<sup>134</sup> Thailand believed a way had been found to bypass what it considered to be "British and especially French obstructionism in SEATO."<sup>135</sup>

These cross purposes grew out of the conflicting attitudes toward the Geneva Conference and the future of Indochina. The British and the French had seen Geneva as an appropriate, if not ideal, settlement of this question. The United States made no positive contribution to the Geneva Conference. Indeed, Secretary Dulles had been almost apologetic about having met with the Russian Molotov at Berlin in 1953. He promised the American people that he would not be "outmaneuvered" at the conference table. To be outmaneuvered apparently meant that he would be unable to achieve an anti-Communist Vietnam. Since this was, under the circumstances, a totally unrealistic goal, the Geneva Conference was doomed to failure, as far as the United States was concerned, from

---

<sup>134</sup>Fifield, The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia, 141.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 142.

the beginning. It was thus that Dulles sought to dis-associate the United States from the work of the conference. But the United States stopped one step short of outright denunciation of the agreements. And the result of those agreements was that at least a part of French Indochina would be under a Communist government. The Dulles idea of SEATO could not change this result, nor even prevent what has subsequently taken place in Vietnam. SEATO was, in fact, like the bombing of North Vietnam in February, 1965: a prime example of the politics of frustration.

At the time of SEATO's creation Walter Lippmann wrote that the treaty was "the first formal instrument in modern times which is designed to license international intervention in internal affairs."<sup>136</sup> President Eisenhower's view was that the Indochinese struggle had alerted the nations of Southeast Asia "to the dangers of international Communism and finally convinced our European allies, the British and the French, of the need for cooperative action in that region. This new realization culminated in the formation of one of our most important regional alliances, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. The dilemma of finding a moral, legal and practical basis for helping our friends of the region need not face us again."<sup>137</sup>

But the success of the Eisenhower-Dulles policy was

---

<sup>136</sup>New York Herald Tribune, September 14, 1954.

<sup>137</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 374.

more an illusion than a reality and resulted in the substitution of one dilemma for a far greater one. The United States had a pseudo-legal basis, of dubious practicality, for intervening in Southeast Asia. The greater dilemma became how to get out.

## CHAPTER VI

### POST-GENEVA POLICY AND DEVELOPMENTS

As required by the circumstances, United States Indochina policy changed after September, 1954 from largely one of public pronouncements to one of essentially working behind the scenes. The negotiation of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty was the last major public act of the Eisenhower administration. It might be said that a certain lesson had been learned, but some of the behind-the-scenes activity showed later that other lessons had not been learned. Some of this activity began even before the Geneva Conference was ended.

The recently published Pentagon Papers<sup>1</sup> do not reveal precisely how Ngo Dinh Diem returned to Vietnam in 1954 and what role the United States played in his selection by Emperor Bao Dai to be Prime Minister in Saigon. But available information demonstrates clearly that Diem would not have remained in power more than a year, and probably

---

<sup>1</sup>References here will be cited from The Pentagon Papers as published by The New York Times (New York: Bantam Books, 1971) unless otherwise noted and are cited hereafter as Pentagon Papers.

less, had not the United States made a decision to support him against considerable odds. One of those odds was France.<sup>2</sup> United States Ambassador Donald Heath in Saigon did not expect Diem to last, and seems to have discouraged support for him.<sup>3</sup>

When the Geneva Agreements called for elections to be held in all of Vietnam in 1956, it was soon realized that North Vietnam had a larger population than the Southern Zone. The number of people desiring to leave North Vietnam and go south under the terms of the agreements was larger than had been expected, and both official and unofficial United States representatives helped to stimulate this flow of persons to even larger proportions.<sup>4</sup> The International Rescue Committee, an organization formed during World War II to assist the escape and resettlement of intellectuals from Nazi Germany, came to play a major part in getting the people out of the North and into the South. Professors Leo

---

<sup>2</sup>Chester Cooper, The Lost Crusade, 120-121, observes that the United States had been "pro-French" before 1954 and therefore would not have been likely, as some have charged, to be promoting Diem's cause prior to the time of the latter's appointment in June, 1954. But as Diem and the French had a mutual dislike for each other, once the United States decided to back Diem, the French had to go from South Vietnam.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. According to Cooper, Heath thought that the French still had a major role to play in Vietnam and that the role of the United States would be minimal.

<sup>4</sup>See Robert Scheer, How the United States Got Involved in Vietnam (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1965), 26-31.

Cherne and Joseph Buttinger worked with this group, becoming strong partisans of Ngo Dinh Diem. Buttinger urged support for a new United States Ambassador to Saigon who would support "the people's national aspirations."<sup>5</sup> He contacted Cardinal Spellman of New York, Senators Mike Mansfield and John F. Kennedy, and Representative Walter Judd on behalf of Diem. Senator Mansfield, after a trip to Vietnam in late 1954, urged support for Diem (and withdrawal of all United States support to Vietnam if Diem fell) in a report that was said to have been an important influence on President Eisenhower's administration.<sup>6</sup>

On October 23, 1954, President Eisenhower wrote a letter to Diem offering him conditional support,<sup>7</sup> and on November 3, Ambassador Heath, regarded as having been too close to the French, was replaced by General J. Lawton Collins. Collins was shortly to work out an agreement with French General Paul Ely for the withdrawal of all French troops from Vietnam and for the United States to take over the responsibility of training the South Vietnamese Army.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Joseph M. Buttinger, "An Eyewitness Report on Vietnam," The Reporter, January 27, 1955, 19-20.

<sup>6</sup>U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, 83d Congress, 2d Session, Report on Indochina, Report of Senator Mike Mansfield on a Study Mission to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, October 15, 1954.

<sup>7</sup>This letter was to be cited by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in support of their escalation of the United States involvement in Vietnam.

<sup>8</sup>In an interview with General Collins printed in the

The President wrote another letter in February, 1955--this one to Bao Dai, who had been trying in Paris to undermine Diem's position--telling him firmly that "the United States Government intends to continue its support of his /Diem's/ Government."<sup>9</sup>

But Diem lacked significant support among the people and other potential leaders inside Vietnam. His position was extremely precarious and General Collins soon saw how fragile was the foundation on which United States policy rested in Vietnam. He urged in December 1954 that Diem be removed, and if Washington was not prepared to do that, "I recommend re-evaluation of our plans for assisting Southeast Asia." With confusion reflecting the state of affairs in Indochina he said that his recommendation was the "least desirable but in all honesty and in view of what I have observed here to date this may be the only sound solution."<sup>10</sup> But Secretary Dulles replied that "we have no other choice

---

March 4, 1955 issue of U. S. News and World Report, 82-8, the General discussed his mission of administering a military aid program. He was not very enthusiastic, saying that perhaps he could "put a little impetus behind the Vietnam Government to get ahead and do something . . . . It's a year and a half from now that the elections are scheduled . . . ." Collins seemed to think that South Vietnam was threatened not only by North Vietnam but by China, and he seemed to imply that the United States was taking on a full responsibility for South Vietnam.

<sup>9</sup>Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1955 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), 315-16.

<sup>10</sup>Pentagon Papers, 19.

but continue our aid to Vietnam and support of Diem."<sup>11</sup>

Diem was opposed by the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai armed religious sects and by the gangster group known as Binh Xuyen, which had controlled the Saigon police. These three groups formed a coalition against Diem and Diem, emboldened perhaps by the action of the United States in helping him remove the Army Chief General Nguyen Van Hinh who had threatened a coup in October, 1954, decided to take on the coalition and forcefully disband the sects and Binh Xuyen.

When first undertaken, this action, along with Diem's other troubles, seemed to further weaken his chances of survival. The French called him "hopeless" and "mad,"; General Collins became more adamant, and finally, after a meeting with Collins on April 27, 1955, Secretary Dulles "reluctantly agreed to the replacing of Premier Diem. He cabled the embassy in Saigon to find an alternative."<sup>12</sup>

But once again, with the aid of Central Intelligence-man Colonel Edward Lansdale and the Saigon Military Mission which "began secretly paying funds to . . . Cao Dai leader General Trinh Minh The," Diem was able to crush the immediate power of the sects. Washington was apparently overly impressed with Diem's success<sup>13</sup> and Dulles's order to find a

---

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.      <sup>12</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>13</sup>It was only a partial and temporary success, for the sects were anti-Communist and might have helped to "broaden the base" of Diem's government had he chosen to win them over rather than assault them head-on. See Victor Bator, Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy, 173-174, 180 and 226.

replacement for Diem was withdrawn.<sup>14</sup> On April 29 the State Department announced that "the present head of the legal government of Free Vietnam which we are supporting is Diem."<sup>15</sup> When Diem's government began to threaten to remove Bao Dai as "head of state" the United States government hinted that it would go along with this. When this was accomplished, it meant that "the French were Out and the Americans were In."<sup>16</sup>

This was consistent with the no-doubt sincere, but rather muddled and naive "anti-colonialism" policy of the Eisenhower Administration.<sup>17</sup> Consistent with this also was President Eisenhower's order of August 17, 1954 that "aid to Indochina henceforth be given directly to the Associated States rather than through France."<sup>18</sup> In mid-1955 the United States took over the training of the South Vietnamese Army. All of these actions made pretty clear the direction in which United States policy was heading. Nothing illustrates Dulles's optimism better than his reaction to Diem's ability to survive the threats to his position in 1954-55. Nothing illustrates his naivete better than his argument in 1955 that South Vietnam was not a puppet of the United States.

---

<sup>14</sup>Pentagon Papers, 21.

<sup>15</sup>Cooper, The Lost Crusade, 142, and The New York Times, April 30, 1955.

<sup>16</sup>Cooper, The Lost Crusade, 143.

<sup>17</sup>See Victor Bator's brilliant refutation of this notion in Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy, 194-212 and 220-221.

<sup>18</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 371.

After returning from a trip to Europe, Dulles and Eisenhower jointly reported to the nation in a television broadcast.

Dulles stated: "I never forget the fact that we have got Asian problems as well as European problems and I took advantage of this NATO council to talk a bit to them about our Asian problems, because there is a considerable failure to understand the motivation of our Asian policies . . . ."

/England and France had each cautioned Dulles against undermining the Geneva agreements<sup>7</sup> Mr. Eisenhower broke in:

"That's a wonderful way to tell them!" And Dulles continued:

"The main point I made there was that we had to accept the fact that Vietnam is now a free nation--at least the Southern half of it is--and it does not have a puppet government, it has not got a government that we can give orders to and tell what we want it to do or we want it to refrain from doing

. . . ." <sup>19</sup> Less than three months earlier, Dulles had been prepared to have United States embassy officials in Vietnam find a replacement for Diem! And some nine years later, United States policymakers indirectly delivered the same independent leader into the hands of his assassins. <sup>20</sup>

In a secret cablegram to Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith in Geneva on July 7, 1954, Secretary Dulles instructed:

---

<sup>19</sup> Department of State Bulletin, May 30, 1955, 872-73.

<sup>20</sup> See Pentagon Papers, 224-232.

Since undoubtedly true that elections might eventually mean unification of Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh, this makes it all more important they should be only held as long after cease-fire agreement as possible and in conditions free from intimidation to give democratic elements best chance.<sup>21</sup>

When Diem announced in 1956 that he would not permit the elections called for by the Geneva Accords to be held, the United States acquiesced, if it did not encourage the move, on the basis of a Central Intelligence Agency assessment that the Saigon Government "almost certainly would not be able to defeat the Communists in country-wide elections."<sup>22</sup> And in a cablegram to the United States Embassy in Saigon on December 11, 1955, Dulles stated:

While we should certainly take no positive step to speed up present process of decay of Geneva accords, neither should we make the slightest effort to infuse life into them.<sup>23</sup>

But the United States had already begun to take positive steps to do precisely that. On behalf of Ngo Dinh Diem, who was to be the instrument of United States policy in Vietnam after mid-1954, the United States undertook a covert campaign of sabotage and "black" psychological warfare in northern Vietnam beginning in June, 1954, before the Geneva Conference was over.<sup>24</sup> It undertook a lesser campaign

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>22</sup>Pentagon History, St. Louis Post Dispatch, June 25, 1971.

<sup>23</sup>Pentagon Papers, 23.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 53-66.

to get the French out of Vietnam. The Eisenhower Administration seemed convinced that it could handle the situation successfully and alone, with Diem as its instrument.

In a National Security Council paper, NSC 5809, dated April 2, 1958, President Eisenhower directed the Government to "work toward the weakening of the Communists of North and South Vietnam in order to bring about the eventual peaceful reunification of a free and independent Vietnam under anti-Communist leadership."<sup>25</sup>

How far such an effort would have been taken under Eisenhower and Dulles it is not possible to know. The mild reaction to Diem's refusal to permit the elections to be held in 1956 had, like his successful temporary crushing of the sects, given a spurt of optimism to Washington policymakers. Mr. Eisenhower still wanted to act peacefully, except for certain covert operations against North Vietnam and what came to be called the Viet Cong. He and Dulles mistakenly thought in terms of an overall Communist reaction to events. If China and Russia did not insist on implementation of the Geneva Accords, the United States could successfully deny them. They did not reckon upon a purely Vietnamese demand on behalf of the sense of the Geneva agreements. Vietnamese nationalism was not to be defined by the Vietnamese, but by the Americans. Ngo Dinh Diem was the

---

<sup>25</sup>Pentagon History, St. Louis Post Dispatch, June 25, 1971.

Vietnamese Nationalist leader, just as Chiang Kai-shek was the Chinese Nationalist leader. But a United States intelligence estimate of May, 1959 stated that Diem's regime

reflects his ideas. A facade of representative government is maintained, but the Government is in fact essentially authoritarian.

The legislative powers of the National Assembly are strictly circumscribed; the judiciary is undeveloped and subordinate to the executive; and the members of the executive branch are little more than the personal agents of Diem.

No organized opposition, loyal or otherwise, is tolerated, and critics of the regime are often repressed.

/Diem's programs designed to increase security in the countryside actually/ drove a wedge not between the insurgents and the farmers, but between the farmers and the Government, and eventuated in less rather than more security.<sup>26</sup>

David Hotham, correspondent for the London Times and The Economist, wrote in 1959:

Instead of uniting it, Diem has divided the South. Instead of merely crushing his legitimate enemies, the Communists, he has crushed all opposition of every kind, however anti-Communist it might be. In doing so, he has destroyed the very basis on which his regime should be founded. He has been able to do this, simply and solely because of the massive dollar aid he has had from across the Pacific, which kept in power a man who, by all the laws of human and political affairs, would long ago have fallen. Diem's main supporters are to be found in North America, not in Free Viet Nam . . . .<sup>27</sup>

After the Geneva Conference of 1954 the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned "that a successful defense of South Vietnam could not be guaranteed under the limits imposed by the 1954 Geneva Accords" and agreed to send American military

---

<sup>26</sup> Pentagon Papers, 71.

<sup>27</sup> David Hotham in R. W. Lindholm, ed., Vietnam: The First Five Years (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1959), 346-9.

advisers to Vietnam "only on the insistence of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles."<sup>28</sup> Sound military advice and intelligence reporting were ignored by men whose ideology and peculiar intellectual processes controlled their behavior.

---

<sup>28</sup>Pentagon Papers, xxi.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

The situation facing American policymakers in Southeast Asia in 1954 was admittedly a difficult one. The difficulty was compounded by the relative unfamiliarity of the setting. As Louis Halle has written:

A farm problem in Ohio is one thing for Washington to solve. A crisis in Vietnam is quite another. How many Americans are in a position really to understand the cultural background and physical environment which gives the Vietnamese crisis its peculiar character? Can we blame them if they tend to assume that the Vietnamese ought to react, in the situation, just as they, with their American background, would react? They have to deal with what they cannot understand--with what they cannot be expected to understand.<sup>1</sup>

Another part of the difficulty was that of facing the possibility of the commitment of United States military forces to an area of Asia so soon after the truce ending the unpopular Korean involvement. President Eisenhower made it clear to the American people that there would be no use of United States ground forces in Southeast Asia. But as we have seen in chapter 3, there was contemplation of the use of air power. Although other capabilities of a military

---

<sup>1</sup>Louis J. Halle, Dream and Reality - Aspects of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), xv.

nature were available, the domestic political situation was perceived in such a way as to make air power the only likely choice if any military force was to be employed. As Victor Bator has observed, "domestic politics are recognizable in his [Eisenhower's] concern to distinguish between intervention with Air Force, Navy, or even Marines on the one hand, and employment of ground troops on the other."<sup>2</sup> A view often voiced is that the situation in Vietnam was one in which no amount or kind of U. S. military power offered a satisfactory solution. It was essentially a political problem. And indeed the United States had diplomatic capabilities that could have been put to use. Military and economic assistance to a newly independent, although Communist, Vietnam might have helped to achieve the purpose of keeping Vietnam independent of China and helped to preserve a balance of power in Asia. But the official American view of

---

<sup>2</sup>Bator, Vietnam - A Diplomatic Tragedy, 214. Bator expands on this theme as follows: "A special feature of the American military scene connects this distinction with domestic politics. The Commitment of the Army--of ground forces--to foreign operations is, as a domestic political consideration, far more sensitive than the use in foreign operations of the Navy, Air Force and the Marines. The public image of these three special services is that of athletes who have fancy uniforms, and who are, for the most part, volunteers whose business it is to undertake risks. They are in popular imagination like duelists, prize-fighters, explorers, Himalayan climbers. They are contenders for glory and medals of honor. Nobody wants to expose them to danger but their business habitually puts them in hot spots which is only to be expected. The ground forces, on the other hand, recruited as draftees, are seen in an entirely different light. They are fathers, businessmen, husbands, and sons whom bad luck and tricky foreign entanglements take away from their children, businesses, wives and mothers." Pages 214-215.

a monolithic Communism precluded this alternative. In John Lovell's terms, then,<sup>3</sup> the situation and United States capabilities combined with the ideological perceptions of John Foster Dulles and other American leaders to produce a pattern of response that ultimately led to a large American ground-military involvement in Vietnam.

Lovell's second suggested factor of analysis is personality. Although there is no published systematic data on Dulles's personality, no available psychiatric evaluation, there exists much suggestive evidence that Dulles's policies were greatly influenced by his personality and belief system. Some of that evidence has been presented here. It has been demonstrated that Dulles's attitude was more than merely an attitude toward the Soviet Union, Communism or "the enemy." Dulles's personality involved an attitude that was more generalized. He more than once seemed to suggest that the ultimate enemy was not Communism or the Soviet Union and China, but rather his own faithless fellow countrymen. His phenomenal ego was apparent in virtually everything he said and did. In criticizing Democratic foreign policies he had implied that the men who devised those policies suffered from a weakness of character. New Dealers and Fair Dealers were too mired in their own materialistic concerns to present any effective challenge to world Communism. Concomitantly, Dulles seemed to think that difficult international situations

---

<sup>3</sup>See Introduction.

would yield to his own sense of faith and righteousness. When British and French officials refused to follow his lead, he accused them of weakness and bad faith. But America's allies frustrated Dulles's plans only in part. President Eisenhower acted on several occasions to restrain Dulles. One of those occasions was the Indochina crisis of April-July, 1954. But in general the force of Dulles's personality must have assured Eisenhower, who made it abundantly clear on many occasions that he trusted Dulles explicitly. As Ole Holsti has written:

Dulles' admirers and critics agree that his impact on American foreign policy was second to none. Richard Rovere's judgement that "Mr. Dulles has exercised powers over American foreign policy similar to those exercised by Franklin D. Roosevelt during the war" is supported by most students of the Eisenhower Administration. His brilliant mind and forceful personality, combined with an almost total reliance upon his own abilities and the strong support of the President, served to magnify his influence . . . .<sup>4</sup>

So Dulles did more than merely set the tone of foreign policy in the Eisenhower Administration. The commitment to South Vietnam under Eisenhower was essentially the work of John Foster Dulles. That this commitment was continued under succeeding administrations does not alter the significant evidence that it grew in considerable part out of Dulles's own personality.

Most discussions of American political culture have noted the strong isolationist strain that has been present

---

<sup>4</sup>Holsti in Journal of International Affairs, XXI, No. 1, 1967. See Introduction.

since the beginning of the republic. The nation was launched under the banner of a "realist" isolationist policy identified with George Washington and Alexander Hamilton. This early isolationism, based upon a sound appraisal of the position of the new nation, militarily and geographically, was gradually replaced by a more "idealistic" form of isolationism. This form of isolationism was associated with and colored by a view, eschewed by Hamilton, that the United States was morally superior to, and thus different from, all other nations. This meant, of course, especially European nations. Americans knew little of the rest of the world, but tended to take a Rousseauistic view of the unspoiled nature of more primitive, non-European peoples. The real moral contrast was with Europe. United States involvement in World War I was thus widely regarded as an aberration. As soon as things had been put aright, the United States would return to "normalcy." The fate of President Wilson's League of Nations was only a symptom of this feeling. Soon, however, President Franklin Roosevelt failed to keep the United States out of another great war, and the isolationists despised him for this.

With the perceived threat of Communist Russia facing the United States after World War II, complete non-involvement was no longer a feasible policy. Still, conservative isolationists seemed more willing to take a stand in Asia than elsewhere. They had given up on Europe long ago.

Perhaps there was some hope that Asian countries might find the successful United States formula for development and democracy. American missionary efforts in China had been especially important in developing this view.<sup>5</sup> The hopeful but sentimental attitude of many Americans toward China has often been noted. This goes a long way toward explaining the bitter reaction of so many Americans to the Chinese Communist victory in 1949.

It was into this situation that John Foster Dulles stepped in 1950. The attitudes toward Europe and Asia described above were strongest within the Republican Party. There were strong elements of anti-European isolationism in the campaign of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the early 1950's. It is ironic that Dulles, the internationalist, sought to appease the McCarthyite elements in the United States, but such is the influence of this aspect of political culture on this particular policy-maker.

Lovell's fourth factor is recruitment. There is no peculiar attribute of the political leadership recruitment patterns in the United States which made the selection of John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State in 1953 a necessity. He was no doubt widely admired and respected within the Republican Party, but there was no popular demand for his being appointed to the office. Though the office is not an

---

<sup>5</sup>For a stimulating recent discussion of these matters see James C. Thomson Jr., While China Faced West (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

elective one, it is not at all an exaggeration to say that Dulles campaigned for it. When Thomas E. Dewey, the Republican candidate for President, was defeated in 1948, Dulles was exceedingly disappointed. He suggested that Communist leaders were celebrating not Dewey's defeat, but his own failure to become Secretary of State. They had, he implied, won a kind of victory over the United States. This was yet another of Dulles's implications that Communist strength lay in American moral and political weakness.

After being defeated in his bid for the United States Senate in 1949, Dulles went back to work for the Democrats. But as another Presidential election drew near, Dulles once again began to cultivate his reputation as chief foreign policy spokesman for the Republicans. This personal campaign of Dulles's, and its results, had some of the essential elements of an entire party's efforts to take over the reins of government. Particularly, the element of promising great things that would be difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish was present in Dulles's campaign. Thus he raised hopes that Communist Russia and her allies, which to Dulles included all other Communist countries if not the neutral ones, would be not only halted in their drive for world conquest, but made to contract when he became Secretary of State.

The situation in Southeast Asia in 1954 was a cruel test for Dulles. Dulles's maneuverability was lessened by

the campaign he had waged for office. He had to a considerable degree trapped himself. The link between personality and recruitment in this case was a strong one indeed.

The factor of socialization, in Dulles's case, is difficult to assess. It might reasonably be argued that he was never "socialized" into the role of Secretary of State in any traditional sense. Much has been written about his being a "one-man State Department." He saw his role as being that of a formulator of policy, and hardly at all that of an administrator. Much also has been written and said about the decline in morale within the State Department as a result of Dulles's appeasement of McCarthy.<sup>6</sup> In any case, Dulles did not so much fit into the office of Secretary of State as he altered the position to fit his own requirements. Whether he was, as President Eisenhower and Vice President Nixon claimed, the greatest Secretary of State the country had even known, he was in many respects unique in the office.

It is possible that some foreign diplomats stood in awe of Dulles. But few really liked him or even trusted him. Lovell defines socialization as the process of learning a social role, and as "the process of acquiring and refining attitudes and beliefs in relation to the image one has of the role he occupies."<sup>7</sup> But as it has been said of

---

<sup>6</sup>For a recent assessment, see John Franklin Campbell, The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971).

<sup>7</sup>Lovell, Foreign Policy in Perspective, 240.

freshmen students, that they must often unlearn before they can learn, John Foster Dulles might have unlearned some things in his experience as Secretary of State. But this is not certain in regard to his relationships with his foreign counterparts. The Geneva Conference and other events of 1954 might have taught Dulles that dealing with allies was a sensitive and difficult matter, and that halting Communist revolutions in Asia required more than proclamations and a bit of air power. Yet the Pentagon Papers reveal that Dulles was so sanguine about Diem's prospects in 1958 that the Eisenhower Administration made plans to extend non-Communist control over all Vietnam. As for the role he sought for himself as a spokesman for the United States in the world, Dulles's letter to President Eisenhower shortly before his death suggests that his ambitions had not diminished:

I was brought up in the belief that this nation of ours was not merely a self-serving society but was founded with a mission to help build a world where liberty and justice would prevail. Today that concept faces a formidable and ruthless challenge from International Communism. This had made it manifestly difficult to adhere steadfastly to our national idealism and national mission and at the same time avoid the awful catastrophe of war.<sup>8</sup>

#### A Policy Based on Anti-Communist Ideology

From the "policy of boldness" article of May, 1952 to the Republican Party platform of that year to the "massive retaliation" speech of January 29, 1954, there was a kind of

---

<sup>8</sup>Gerson, John Foster Dulles, 321.

progression in the thought and the moves of John Foster Dulles. He seemed to think that he would be able to turn American foreign policy completely around, but he had no comprehensive or concrete plans for accomplishing such a goal. When faced with a concrete situation such as the deterioration of French control in Indochina and the threat of a Communist military and political triumph there, he was not "possessed of a definite body of doctrine and of deeply rooted convictions upon it" which he could apply to the situation. He was armed only with a vague and sentimental ideology which he had convinced himself had genuine political efficacy. No doubt the situation facing him and the other American policymakers was "frustrating, perplexing, and multifaceted." Just what the "distinctive pattern of response" the situation called for is still a matter of much dispute.

Two possible courses of action could perhaps have qualified as realistic responses. One was to accept in spirit and in fact the resolution of the problem of Indochina as foreseen by the Geneva Conference of 1954. The argument will be advanced that the perception of the nature of the Communist threat held by American policymakers in 1954 precluded such a resolution, and that such a suggestion can be confidently advanced only with the aid of hindsight. But it is a fact that the major American allies were prepared to accept such a solution in 1954, although they lacked the power to insure the lasting success of this solution:

only the United States could have done that. It has been argued that the Geneva agreements were too "ambiguous" to form the basis for a satisfactory solution to the problem of a stable power balance in Southeast Asia.<sup>9</sup> But the ambiguity of the agreements was not so apparent to the principal participants in the 1954 conference: the British, the French, the Russians, the Chinese, and especially to the representatives of the Hanoi and Saigon governments. Support for the agreements by the United States would have largely overcome such ambiguity as existed in the text of the agreements or the minds of the negotiators. The chief question mark hovering over the negotiations was the position of the United States government, and whether that government would support the agreements concluded. The United States government was the only participant in the negotiations that stated disagreement with the work of the convention. Even the United States promised not to "disturb" the agreements by force.

Theoretically, another course might have been feasible. Had the United States been willing to cooperate with France and other allies in supporting a government in Saigon after 1954 that would have been genuinely neutral and which would have effectively concentrated on bringing the diverse elements of Vietnamese society together under a stable

---

<sup>9</sup>See Victor Bator, "Geneva, 1954: The Broker. Mold," The Reporter, June 30, 1966.

government, implementation of the Geneva agreements might at least have been delayed until United States policymakers better comprehended the fact of polycentric Communism. It is a fact that the French Governments since 1954 have been on much better terms with the Communists in Vietnam than has the government of the United States. This may be explained by the fact that the French refused to join the Americans in their efforts in support of Ngo Dinh Diem and his successors, or it may be an indication that the Hanoi government was prepared to delay its ultimate goals for unification of Vietnam if only an attempt had not been led by the United States to permanently detach the South and create there an anti-Hanoi, anti-Peking force.

The second alternative suggested here is too problematical to warrant a strong recommendation. Yet it seems far more feasible than the course of action taken by the United States in the period immediately following the Geneva Conference, and continued in the 1960's.

To have implemented the Geneva accords would not have been an ideal solution from the standpoint of American national interests nor from the standpoint of idealists who see nations as having a simple choice between freedom and despotism. Implementation would almost certainly have resulted in a united Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh. But scant evidence exists to support the "domino theory" or the belief that Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh would have been a mere puppet

of China. And of course if China had not been a Communist state, it is most unlikely that the United States would have intervened to thwart the Geneva Accords. United States Vietnam intervention was a function of its China policy, as well as an expression of the hopes Dulles had raised with his strictures on the containment policy. Dulles had in a very real sense trapped himself with his public statements, though he probably did not regard himself as having been trapped.

The Dulles-Eisenhower intervention of the 1950's did not lead necessarily to the United States military commitment of the 1960's. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson could have reversed the course set in the 1950's. But they too found themselves constrained by the policies Dulles had put into effect, while at the same time they shared enough of the Dulles ideology of the cold war to pursue the Dulles policies to their logical conclusion. In fact they went beyond the plans of Dulles, who obviously hoped to avoid the commitment of ground military forces. There was in this sense a consistent progression and continuity of policy development in the three administrations. Chapter 1 has shown that to a considerable extent the stage was set for the policy of Eisenhower and Dulles under Truman and Acheson. But the evidence also shows that Acheson and Truman were content to apply the new policies called for in NSC-68 primarily to Europe where they had considerable success. It

was Dulles who, by letting ideology become dominant and by becoming trapped by his own rhetoric, set the stage for an American tragedy in Vietnam.

Truman and Acheson had truly been, in some sense, "Europe firsters," and sought French cooperation in Europe by extending much military aid to France in her struggle in Indochina. Dulles was relatively more concerned about Asia. He was a willing victim of the especially Republican belief that United States destiny and the fulfilment of her historic and sacred mission lay in influencing the peoples and nations of the Far East. Dulles was willing to risk some break with France in order to "stop Communism" in Asia.

A partisan element enters here too. The Truman Administration, with Acheson's direction in foreign affairs, had by 1952 devised policies for Europe that won almost universal support in Europe, in the United States Congress, and among the American people. The Korean War and the Chiang Kai-shek debacle in China gave the Republicans a foreign policy issue on which to appeal to the voters, stimulating their bewilderment and anger at the failure of the Second World War to bring peace and relaxation of domestic economic controls. Acheson's statement on the reasons for which we aided France in Vietnam in 1950-52<sup>10</sup> when combined with his remarks about letting the dust settle in China after the

---

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 1.

Communist victory in 1949<sup>11</sup> seemed to indicate a much more relaxed attitude toward matters in the Far East than Dulles was willing to countenance. For years the Republican Party had not been able to effectively challenge the Democrats on domestic policy. The situation in the Far East gave them an opportunity to challenge the opposition in the area of foreign policy.

Dulles and other Republicans also stimulated a more general partisan reaction among the American people and in this they were aided and reinforced by some of the most widely circulated magazines and newspapers. The total effect was to create a more corrosive partisan atmosphere than the country had known since the great battle between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists of the 1790's. In the same issue of Life magazine that printed Dulles's "A Policy of Boldness" article in May, 1952, an editorial strongly suggested that another electoral victory by the Democrats would not only confirm that appeasement of Communists was a policy acceptable to the voters, but would prove their lack of faith in freedom itself. The editorial read as though it had been written by Mr. Dulles himself.

The Dulles personality and ideology began to have a strong influence on American foreign policy even before the

---

<sup>11</sup>

Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation, 306.

Republicans took office. Afterwards, at some crucial points when Dulles seemed trapped and ready to take drastic steps to untrap himself, President Eisenhower restrained him in an indirect way--for example, by requiring congressional and British approval before intervention would be undertaken. But the influence of Dulles was too strong to be thwarted entirely. And the mistakes of omission--the refusal, for example, to take a more positive stand on the Geneva agreements--were the result of an intellectual failure of Dulles's. Dulles feared the appeal of Communism, and he feared the reaction of the American people if his promise of a victory over Communism was not kept. But he always spoke of Communism at the ideological and never the analytical level. It was thus scarcely possible that Dulles could have come up with a non-military American foreign policy dealing with the spread of Communism. Dulles always sought to point out the falsity of Communist ideology. He seemed unaware that "the great political ideologies of the past which captured the imagination of men and moved them to political action, such as the ideas of the American and French Revolutions and the slogans of Bolshevism and fascism, were successful, not because they were true, but because they gave the people to whom they appealed what they were waiting for, both in terms of knowledge and in terms of action." The author of these words continued:

Communism has been successful wherever its tenets of social, economic and political equality appeal to people

for whom the removal of inequality has been the most urgent aspiration. Western ideology has succeeded wherever in popular aspirations political liberty has taken precedence over all other needs. Thus Communism has largely lost the struggle for the minds of men in Central and Western Europe, and democracy has by and large been defeated in Asia.

And in applying these observations to American foreign policy in Asia, he continued:

While the speeches of Mr. Acheson are emphatic in stressing the power political aspects of the struggle with the Soviet Union, the general climate of opinion, private and official, favors the interpretation of the East-West conflict in terms of a democratic crusade. While our China policy, however awkwardly and hesitatingly, seems to subordinate ideological considerations to the calculus of power advantage, our over-all policy in Asia still shows strong traces of counterrevolutionary tendencies for their own sake, and accordingly our propaganda has been inclined to stress the virtues and truths of democracy and the vices and falsehoods of Bolshevism.<sup>12</sup>

The element of Indochinese nationalism also by and large eluded Dulles and other American policymakers. From time to time there were moral strictures on France for failing to grant independence to Indochina before 1954. Senators such as John F. Kennedy seemed to think this was the central problem, and it was fundamental to the struggle in Indochina, although American spokesmen seemed ambivalent in that they generally, or more often, ascribed the fundamental problem to "Communist aggression." And on at least one occasion, Secretary Dulles stated his view that the peoples of Indochina might not be "ready" for full independ-

---

<sup>12</sup>Hans J. Morgenthau, "A Positive Approach to Democratic Ideology," Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science (New York, Columbia University, January, 1951), 227-38.

ence. Later Dulles, Under Secretary of State Bedell Smith, Adlai Stevenson and others were to state that the lesson of the results of Geneva was that independence should have been granted sooner. Behind this view lay the apparent belief that non-Communist nationalist forces would have been victorious in Vietnam in any purely internal struggle if genuine independence had come earlier. Mr. Dulles never directly admitted the political weakness of the anti-Communist or anti-Ho Chi Minh forces in Vietnam. To have done so would have undermined his entire public policy on Indochina. But Dulles did so indirectly when he said after Geneva that one lesson that was learned was that "resistance to Communism needs popular support."<sup>13</sup> Mr. Eisenhower directly and bluntly acknowledged the commanding political strength of the Vietminh in his memoirs published in 1963.<sup>14</sup> But throughout this period under consideration here, there also existed in the minds of United States policymakers the unproven assumption that anti-Communists would have carried the day if independence had been granted earlier. At some much earlier date this might have been so, but given Ho Chi Minh's identification with and leadership of the independence movement, in contrast to the careers of, say Bao Dai and Ngo Dinh Diem, the assumption at any point after 1945 seems

---

<sup>13</sup>Text of statement in The New York Times, July 24, 1954.

<sup>14</sup>Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, 372.

dubious at best.

Dulles was for "peaceful change" in the 1930's. He was sympathetic with "dynamic" as against "static" forces. In the 1950's he was much more in favor of the status quo. The dynamic forces were then Communist, of course. When Dulles was presented with a chance to end force and allow peaceful change, he opposed it. He was no longer willing to accommodate the dynamic forces. Certainly he and President Eisenhower knew what those forces were. Instead, Dulles built up fear of the dynamic force in Vietnam and identified it with a world-wide, coordinated movement to conquer the world and end freedom and religion everywhere. But this only concrete policy for dealing with the success of this movement in Indochina was another Korean-type war, or worse.

So Dulles was led back to "containment" after Geneva. His earlier policy had been so sterile that it had not even contained the Communists in Vietnam. But 1954 was the best opportunity to have achieved a settlement on the basis of the Geneva agreements. Having failed at containment after promising a roll-back, Dulles and Eisenhower could not abide by Geneva. In part Dulles was controlled by the containment policy itself, though he had denied it. Acheson might have been able to finesse a genuine settlement at Geneva. He had some flexibility, but Dulles had little or none in this situation. He was trapped by his own moralistic approach to foreign policy, by his tendency to

oversell himself, and by his own "collosal self-esteem," the other side of which coin was possibly a deep-seated lack of self-confidence. This caused Dulles to be unable to appraise a situation objectively or to understand the progression of events. He was reduced to engaging in constant self-justification even if this meant severe distortion of fact.

It is deeply ironic that Dulles, had he been responsible for policymaking in the 1960's might not have gone as far into military involvement as did Kennedy and Johnson. There was a real reluctance on the part of Eisenhower and Dulles to use actual military force, especially ground forces. The Pentagon Papers reveal that Dulles and Eisenhower were willing to try to overthrow the Ho Chi Minh regime in North Vietnam. Perhaps they hoped for another rather cheap "victory" such as was accomplished in Guatemala and Iran. One could argue that such efforts were more truly Machiavellian and less Quixotic than was the effort made in Vietnam in the 1960's. The Dulles legacy is chiefly one of a missed opportunity in Indochina. The best chance the world had for a reasonable settlement of the conflict there was Geneva 1954. Dulles did not merely let that chance slip by; he deliberately avoided taking it.

## APPENDIX I

Joint communication to the French Government, stating the willingness of the United States and the United Kingdom to respect an armistice agreement on Indo-China which:\*

1. Preserves the integrity and independence of Laos and Cambodia and assures the withdrawal of Vietminh forces therefrom.

2. Preserves at least the southern half of Vietnam, and if possible an enclave in the delta; in this connection we would be unwilling to see the line of division of responsibility drawn further south than a line running generally west from Dong Hoi.

3. Does not impose on Laos, Cambodia, or retained Vietnam any restrictions materially impairing their capacity to maintain stable non-Communist regimes; and especially restrictions impairing their right to maintain adequate forces for internal security, to import arms and to employ foreign advisers.

4. Does not contain political provisions which would risk loss of the retained area to Communist control.

5. Does not exclude the possibility of the ultimate reunification of Vietnam by peaceful means.

6. Provides for the peaceful and humane transfer, under international supervision, of those people desiring to be moved from one zone to another of Vietnam; and

7. Provided effective machinery for international supervision of the agreement.

---

\*Source: Anthony Eden, Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden: Full Circle (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 149.

## APPENDIX II

### Protest by the Vietnamese Delegation against the Geneva Conference Agreements, July 21, 1954\*

The delegation of the State of Viet-Nam has presented a proposal designed to obtain an armistice without division, even provisional, of the territory of Viet-Nam, through the disarmament of all the belligerent forces after their withdrawal to the smallest possible zones of regroupment and the institution of a provisional control by the United Nations over the entire territory, pending the reestablishment of peace and arrangements permitting the Vietnamese people to determine its destiny through free elections. The delegation protests the summary rejection of this proposal, the only one which respects the aspirations of the Vietnamese people. It insists that, at least, the demilitarization and neutralization of the Catholic religious communities in the delta of northern Viet-Nam be accepted by the conference.

It protests solemnly: (a) the hasty conclusion of the armistice agreement, contracted only by the high authority of France and the Vietminh notwithstanding the fact that the French High Command controls the Vietnamese troops only through a delegation of authority by the Chief of State of Viet-Nam, and especially notwithstanding the fact that many clauses of this agreement are of such a nature as gravely to compromise the political future of the Vietnamese people;

---

\*Source: P. V. Curl (ed.), Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954 (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 315-316.

(b) the fact that this armistice agreement abandons to the Vietminh territories, many of which are still in the possession of Vietnamese troops and thus essential to the defense of Viet-Nam in opposing a larger expansion of Communism and virtually deprives Viet-Nam of the imprescriptible right to organize its defense otherwise than by the maintenance of a foreign army on its territory; (c) the fact that the French High Command has arrogated to itself without preliminary agreement with the delegation of the State of Viet-Nam the right to fix the date of future elections, notwithstanding that a matter of a clearly political character is concerned.

Consequently, the Government of the State of Viet-Nam requests that note be made of its solemn protest against the manner in which the armistice has been concluded and against the conditions of the armistice which take no account of the profound aspirations of the Vietnamese people, and of the fact that it reserves to itself complete freedom of action to guarantee the sacred right of the Vietnamese people to territorial unity, national independence and freedom.

### APPENDIX III

#### Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference, July 21, 1954\*

Final declaration, dated July 21, 1954, of the Geneva Conference on the problem of restoring peace in Indochina, in which the representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Viet-Nam, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America took part.

1. The Conference takes note of the agreements ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam and organizing international control and the supervision of the execution of the provisions of these agreements.

2. The Conference expresses satisfaction at the ending of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreements on the cessation of hostilities will permit Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam henceforth to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations.

3. The Conference takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and of Laos of their intention to adopt measures permitting all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by

---

\*Source: P. V. Curl (ed.), Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954 (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 311-314.

participating in the next general elections, which, in conformity with the constitution of each of these countries, shall take place in the course of the year 1955, by secret ballot and in conditions of respect for fundamental freedoms.

4. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam prohibiting the introduction into Viet-Nam of foreign troops and military personnel as well as of all kinds of arms and munitions. The Conference also takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos of their resolution not to request foreign aid, whether in war material, in personnel, or in instructors except for the purpose of effective defense of their territory and, in the case of Laos, to the extent defined by the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Laos.

5. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam to the effect that no military base at the disposition of a foreign state may be established in the regrouping zones of the two parties, the latter having the obligation to see that the zones allotted to them shall not constitute part of any military alliance and shall not be utilized for the resumption of hostilities or in the service of an aggressive policy. The Conference also takes note of the declarations of the Governments of Cambodia and Laos to the effect that they will not join in any agreement with other states if this agreement includes the obligation to participate in a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations or, in the case of Laos, with the principles of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos or, so long as their security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases on Cambodian or Laotian territory for the military forces of foreign powers.

6. The Conference recognizes that the essential purpose of the agreement relating to Viet-Nam is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities creates the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Viet-Nam.

7. The Conference declares that, so far as Viet-Nam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity, and territorial integrity, shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot.

In order to insure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the member states of the International Supervisory Commission referred to in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from April 20, 1955, onwards.

8. The provisions of the agreements on the cessation of hostilities intended to insure the protection of individuals and of property must be most strictly applied and must, in particular, allow every one in Viet-Nam to decide in which zone he wishes to live.

9. The competent representative authorities of the northern and southern zones of Viet-Nam, as well as the authorities of Laos and Cambodia, must not permit any

individual or collective reprisals against persons who have collaborated in any way with one of the parties during the war, or against members of such persons' families.

10. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that it is ready to withdraw its troops from the territory of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, at the request of the governments concerned and within a period which shall be fixed by agreement between the parties except in the cases where, by agreement between the two parties, a certain number of French troops shall remain at specified points and for a specified time.

11. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that for the settlement of all the problems connected with the reestablishment and consolidation of peace in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, the French Government will proceed from the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam.

12. In their relations with Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam, each member of the Geneva Conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity, and the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned states, and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs.

13. The members of the Conference agree to consult one another on any question which may be referred to them by the International Supervisory Commission, in order to study such measures as may prove necessary to insure that the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam are respected.

#### APPENDIX IV

##### Declaration by the United States, July 21, 1954, Regarding Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference\*

As I stated on July 18, my Government is not prepared to join in a declaration by the Conference such as is submitted. However, the United States makes this unilateral declaration of its position in these matters:

##### Declaration

The Government of the United States, being resolved to devote its efforts to the strengthening of peace in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations, takes note of the agreements concluded at Geneva on July 20 and 21, 1954 between (a) the Franco-Laotian Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam, (b) the Royal Khmer Army Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam, (c) the Franco-Vietnamese Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam and of paragraphs 1 to 12 inclusive of the declaration presented to the Geneva Conference on July 21, 1954, declares with regard to the aforesaid agreements and paragraphs that (i) it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb them, in accordance with Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or

---

\*Source: P. V. Curl (ed.), Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954 (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 316-317.

use of force; and (ii) it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.

In connection with the statement in the declaration concerning free elections in Viet-Nam my Government wishes to make clear its position which it has expressed in a declaration made in Washington on June 29, 1954, as follows:

In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly.

With respect to the statement made by the representative of the State of Viet-Nam, the United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this. Nothing in its declaration just made is intended to or does indicate any departure from this traditional position.

We share the hope that the agreements will permit Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations, and will enable the peoples of that area to determine their own future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Public Documents

- Ball, George W. Viet-Nam, Free World Challenge in Southeast Asia. U. S. Department of State Publication No. 7388. June, 1962.
- The New York Times, The Pentagon Papers (Bantam Books, 1971).
- U. S. Congressional Record. Vol. C.
- U. S. Congressional Record. Vol. CI.
- U. S. Department of Defense. History of U. S. Decision-Making Process on Vietnam Policy ("Pentagon Papers"). 1968.
- U. S. Department of State. Bulletin XVI. March 29, 1947.
- U. S. Department of State. Bulletin XXI. July 18, 1949.
- U. S. Department of State. Bulletin XXII. January 23, February 13 and 20, March 20 and 27, 1950.
- U. S. Department of State. Bulletin XXIV. May 28, 1951.
- U. S. Department of State. Bulletin XXVIII. January 28, June 29, 1953.
- U. S. Department of State. Bulletin XXX. March 8, 1954.
- U. S. Department of State. Bulletin XXXI. May 30, 1955.
- U. S. Department of State. Foreign Ministers' Meeting - Berlin Discussions. Publication No. 5399. March, 1954.
- U. S. Department of State. Press Release No. 549. October, 1953.
- U. S. Department of State. Press Release No. 87. February, 1955.

- U. S. President. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1955. Washington. Government Printing Office. 1959.
- U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. Hearings. 83d Cong., 2d Sess. June, 1954.
- U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. Hearing. 83d Cong., 2d Sess. November 11, 1954.
- U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. Nomination of John Foster Dulles - Secretary of State-Designate. Hearing. 83d Cong., 1st Sess. January 15, 1953.
- U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. Report on Indochina, Report of Senator Mike Mansfield on A Study Mission to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. 83d Cong., 2d Sess. October 15, 1954.
- U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. 84th Cong., 1st Sess. 1955.

#### Books

- Acheson, Dean. Power and Diplomacy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Present at the Creation. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969.
- Adams, Sherman. Firsthand Report: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961.
- Alperovitz, Gar. Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- Bator, Victor. Vietnam, A Diplomatic Tragedy. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1965.
- Beal, John R. John Foster Dulles. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957.
- Beard, Charles A. A Foreign Policy for Americans. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940.
- Bell, Coral. Negotiation from Strength - A Study of the Politics of Power. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

- Berding, Andrew H. Dulles on Diplomacy. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1965.
- Bidault, George. Resistance, The Political Autobiography of George Bidault. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965.
- Bodard, Lucien. The Quicksand War: Prelude to Vietnam. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1967.
- Campbell, John C. The United States in World Affairs, 1948-1949. New York: Harper & Brothers, for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1950 and 1951.
- Campbell, John Franklin. The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971.
- Childs, Marquis. The Ragged Edge. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955.
- Clubb, Oliver E. The United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia. Washington: Brookings Institute, 1962.
- Cole, Allan B. Conflict in Indo-China and International Repercussions, A Documentary History, 1945-1955. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1956.
- Congressional Quarterly Service. China and U. S. Far East Policy, 1945-1966. Washington, 1966.
- Cooper, Chester L. The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1970.
- Council on Foreign Relations. Documents on American Foreign Relations. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954-1963.
- Crowley, D. W. The Background to Current Affairs. London: MacMillan and Company, 1967.
- Curl, Peter V., (ed.) Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.
- Donovan, Robert J. Eisenhower: The Inside Story. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956.
- Drachman, Edward R. United States Policy Toward Vietnam, 1940-1945. Rutherford, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970.
- Drummond, Roscoe and Coblents, Gaston. Duel at the Brink. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960.

- Dulles, John Foster. War or Peace. New York: MacMillan, 1950.
- \_\_\_\_\_. War, Peace and Change. New York: MacMillan, 1939.
- Eden, Anthony. Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden: Full Circle. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960.
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965.
- Fairbank, John King. The United States and China. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.
- Fall, Bernard B. The Two Viet-Nams. New York: Praeger, 1967.
- Farley, Miriam S. United States Relations with Southeast Asia. New York: American Institute of Pacific Relations, 1955.
- Field, Michael. The Prevailing Wind: Witness in Indochina. London: Mathuen & Company, Ltd., 1965.
- Fies, Herbert. From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950. New York: W. W. Norton, 1970.
- Fifield, Russell H. The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia: 1945-1958. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Southeast Asia and United States Policy. New York: Frederick A. Praeger for Council on Foreign Relations, 1963.
- Finer, Herman. Dulles Over Suez. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964.
- Fleming, Denna F. The Cold War and its Origins, 1917-1960. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961.
- Gerson, Louis L. The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, John Foster Dulles. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1967.
- Gettleman, Marvin E. Vietnam: History, Documents, and Opinions on a Major World Crisis. New York: Fawcett Publications, 1965.

- Gould-Adams, Richard. John Foster Dulles, A Reappraisal. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1962.
- Graebner, Norman A. Cold War Diplomacy, 1945-1960. Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962.
- Greene, Felix. A Curtain of Ignorance. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1964.
- Halle, Louis J. The Cold War as History. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Dream and Reality - Aspects of American Foreign Policy. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958.
- Hammer, Ellen J. The Struggle for Indochina. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954.
- Harris, Richard. America and East Asia - A New Thirty Years War? New York: George Braziller, 1968.
- Hartmann, Frederick H. The New Age of American Foreign Policy. New York: MacMillan, 1970.
- Herz, Martin F. Beginnings of the Cold War. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.
- Huntington, Samuel P. The Common Defense. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961.
- Jones, Joseph N. The Fifteen Days. New York: Viking, 1955.
- Kahin, George McTurnan and Lewis, John W. The United States in Vietnam. New York: Delta Books, 1969.
- Kennan, George F. American Diplomacy: 1900-1950. New York: Mentor Books, 1952.
- Lacouture, Jean and Devillers, Philippe. La Fin d'une Guerre. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1960.
- Lancaster, Donald. The Emancipation of French Indo-China. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Lefever, Ernest Warren. Ethics and United States Foreign Policy. New York: Meridian Books, 1957.
- Lerner, Daniel and Aron, Raymond. France Defeats E.D.C. New York: Praeger, 1957.
- Lippmann, Walter. The Cold War - A Study in US Foreign Policy. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947.

- Livingston, John C. and Thompson, Robert G. The Consent of The Governed. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966.
- Lovell, John P. Foreign Policy in Perspective. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.
- Mason, Alpheus Thomas. Free Government in the Making. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Mills, Lennox A. Southeast Asia - Illusion and Reality in Politics and Economics. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964.
- Modelski, George (ed.). SEATO. Cheshire: Australian National University, 1962.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. Politics Among Nations. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Purpose of American Politics. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Truth and Power. New York: Praeger, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Vietnam and the United States. Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1965.
- Morin, Relman. Dwight D. Eisenhower, A Gauge of Greatness. The Associated Press, 1969.
- Murti, B. S. N. Vietnam Divided - The Unfinished Struggle. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964.
- Parenti, Michael. The Anti-Communist Impulse. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Peeters, Paul. Massive Retaliation - The Policy and Its Critics. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959.
- Pfeffer, Richard M. (ed.). No More Vietnams - The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968.
- Phillips, Cabell. The Truman Presidency. New York: Macmillan, 1966.
- Randle, Robert F. Geneva 1954: The Settlement of the Indochina War. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Reischauer, Edwin O. Wanted: An Asian Policy. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955.

- Ridgeway, General Mathew B. Soldier: Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgeway. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956.
- Roosevelt, Elliott. As He Saw It. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945.
- Rosinger, Lawrence K. The State of Asia: A Contemporary Survey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.
- Rostow, Walt W. The United States in the World Arena. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961.
- Rovere, Richard H. The Eisenhower Years. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956.
- Royal Institute of International Affairs. Collective Defense in South East Asia - The Manila Treaty and its Implications, London, 1956.
- Scheer, Robert. How the United States Got Involved in Vietnam. Santa Barbara: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1965.
- Schilling, Warner R., Hammond, Paul Y., and Snyder, Glenn H. Strategy, Politics and Defense Budgets. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.
- Schoenbrun, David. Vietnam: How We Got In, How to Get Out. New York: Atheneum, 1968.
- Stebbins, Richard P. The United States in World Affairs, 1954. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Harper & Brothers, 1956.
- Stevenson, Adlai E. Major Campaign Speeches. New York: Random House, 1953.
- Tang Tsou. America's Failure in China. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Taylor, Maxwell D. The Uncertain Trumpet. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1959.
- Thompson, James C., Jr. While China Faced West. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Weintal, Edward and Bartlet, Charles. Facing the Brink - An Intimate Study of Crisis Diplomacy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967.
- World in Turmoil: Realities Facing U. S. Foreign Policy. New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1958.

Wright, Theodore P., Jr. American Support of Free Elections Abroad. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1964.

Young, James P. The Politics of Affluence. Scranton: Chandler Publishing Company, 1968.

#### Articles and Periodicals

Acheson, Dean G. "The Eclipse of the State Department," Foreign Affairs, July, 1970.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Illusion of Disengagement," Foreign Affairs, April, 1958.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Mr. Acheson Answers Some Questions," New York Times Book Review, October 12, 1969.

Alger, Chadwick. "Comparison of Intranational and International Politics," American Political Science Review, June, 1963.

Baldwin, Hanson. Column. The New York Times, February 7, 1954.

Bator, Victor. "Geneva, 1954: The Broken Mold," The Reporter, June 30, 1966.

Braibanti, Ralph. "The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty," Pacific Affairs, December, 1957.

Brogan, Denis W. "The Illusion of American Omnipotence," Harper's, December, 1952.

Bundy, McGeorge. "The End of Either/Or," Foreign Affairs, January, 1967.

Buttinger, Joseph M. "An Eyewitness Report on Vietnam," The Reporter, January 27, 1955.

Christian Science Monitor. May 3 and 14, 1954.

Current History. May, 1954.

Deutscher, Isaac. "How the Russians Bet a Little in Asia to Win a Lot in Europe," The Reporter, September 23, 1954.

Dulles, John Foster. "The Church's Contribution Toward a Warless World," Religion in Life, Winter, 1939.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Diplomat and His Faith," Christian Century, March 19, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Moral Force in World Affairs," Presbyterian Life, April 10, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Policy for Security and Peace," Foreign Affairs, April, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Policy of Boldness," Life, May 19, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Why the Communists Really Believe Their Own Lies," Reader's Digest, May, 1951.
- "Dulles vs. Bricker," The Nation, April 18, 1953.
- Fall, Bernard B. "Indochina Since Geneva," Pacific Affairs, March, 1955.
- Gotham, Frank. "John Foster Dulles: The Cartels' Choice," The Nation, October 18, 1952.
- Halle, Louis J. Review of Richard Gould-Adams' John Foster Dulles: A Reappraisal, The New Republic, December 8, 1962.
- Hammer, Ellen J. "Progress Report on Southern Vietnam," Pacific Affairs, September, 1957.
- Harsch, Joseph C. "John Foster Dulles: A Very Complicated Man," Harper's, September, 1956.
- Hartmann, Frederick H. "Away With Unilateralism," The Antioch Review, Spring, 1951.
- Holsti, Ole R. "Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy," Journal of International Affairs, XXI, No. 1, 1967.
- Joyce, James A. "SEATO: False Alibi," Christian Century, November 8, 1967.
- Kemler, Edgar. "The Asia-First Admiral," The Nation, July 17, 1954.
- Kennan, George F. "The Quest for Concept," Harvard Today, Autumn, 1967.
- Knebel, Fletcher. "We Nearly Went to War Three Times Last Year," Look, February 8, 1955.
- Lerche, Charles O. "The United States, Great Britain, and SEATO: A Case Study of the Fait Accompli," Journal of Politics, August, 1956.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Decline and Fall of American Foreign Policy," The New Republic, December 10 and 17, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Positive Approach to Democratic Ideology," Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, January, 1951.

New York Herald Tribune. 1954 and 1961.

New York Times. 1947-1956.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. "The Moral World of John Foster Dulles," The New Republic, December 1, 1958.

Reston, James. Columns, New York Times, January 14 and October 26, 1952; February 4, 1954.

Riggs, Fred. "International Relations as a Prismatic System," World Politics, XIV, 1961, 144-81.

Roberts, Chalmers M. "The Day We Didn't Go To War," The Reporter, September 14, 1954.

Saint Louis Post Dispatch, 1971.

Shepley, James. "How Dulles Averted War," Life, January 6, 1956.

Taylor, Edmond. "The Long Weekend that Killed EDC," The Reporter, September 23, 1954.

"What We're Doing in Indo-China." Interview with General J. Lawton Collins. U. S. News and World Report, March 4, 1955.

White, Theodore H. "Indochina - The Long Trail of Errors," Reporter, June 22, 1954.

#### Other Sources

McCarthy, Joseph E. The Concept and Evolution of American Foreign Policy Toward Viet-Nam, 1954-1963. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Maryland, 1965.

Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Intellectual, Political, and Moral Roots of U. S. Failure in Vietnam," Paper prepared for the 1968 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.