THE JOHN F. KENNEDY NATIONAL SECURITY FILES

VIETNAM:
NATIONAL SECURITY FILES,
1961–1963
FIRST SUPPLEMENT

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY NATIONAL SECURITY FILES:

John F. Kennedy left an uncertain legacy in the area of foreign policy. Kennedy took office committed to pursuing the cold war more vigorously, and during his first year he launched a major military buildup, enlarged American foreign aid programs, and undertook new foreign policy commitments in various parts of the world. The Kennedy offensive dramatically worsened relations with the Soviet Union, contributing to the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. In the aftermath of that most frightening confrontation of the cold war, Kennedy seemed to shift from the militant approach that had marked his first years in office, taking the first hesitant steps toward what would later be called détente. It can never be known how far Kennedy might have gone in this direction had his administration not been cut short by an assassin’s bullet. In other areas, moreover, he enjoyed less success in foreign policy, and in places like Vietnam and Latin America, his record and legacy is even more mixed and ambiguous.

Kennedy took office in a time of rising international tension. The struggle of hundreds of new nations to break from their colonial past and establish modern institutions set loose chaos across much of the globe. The rhetoric and actions of the erratic Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev suggested a new Communist boldness, even recklessness, and a determination to exploit the prevailing instability. The development of new weapons systems added an especially frightful dimension. The fate of the world thus seemed to hang in the balance, and Kennedy assumed power certain that the survival of the United States depended upon its ability to defend “free” institutions. Should America falter, he warned, “the whole world, in my opinion, would inevitably begin to move toward the Communist bloc.”

Calling upon his countrymen to become the “watchmen on the walls of freedom” and promising to assert firm, vigorous leadership, Kennedy committed his administration to meet the perils of the new era. He gathered about him a youthful, energetic, and intelligent corps of advisers from the top positions in academia and industry, self-confident, activist men who shared his determination to get the country moving again. The New Frontiersmen accepted without question the basic assumptions of the containment policy of Truman and Eisenhower, but they also believed that they must take the initiative in challenging Communism rather than merely reacting to its moves. They were alarmed by the dangers of a global war. But they were also exhilarated by the prospect of leading the nation through perilous times and winning the ultimate victory, and they shared a Wilsonian view that destiny had singled out their nation to defend and spread the democratic ideal.

To meet the challenges of the new era, Kennedy revamped the machinery of U.S. foreign policy. Contemptuous of the State Department, which he once labeled a “bowl of jelly,” he reportedly fantasized about establishing under his personal control a small,
secret office to run U.S. foreign policy. He contented himself with remodeling the National Security Council (NSC) to enhance his personal control. As his special assistant for national security affairs, he chose McGeorge Bundy, formerly a Harvard dean. Bundy and his deputy, Walt Whitman Rostow, eliminated Eisenhower’s cumbersome committee system, making the NSC a compact body of eleven people. The White House established its own situation room and installed equipment giving it direct access to State Department, Defense Department, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) cables. Although it comprised a “little State Department,” thus posing a threat to its larger and older rival, the NSC under Bundy’s direction maintained effective liaison with the State Department bureaucracy. Bundy managed the flow of information, intelligence, and decision papers to the president and monitored the operations of other agencies. Rather than simply acting as a neutral clearinghouse, the NSC also lobbied for policies it preferred. “The energy, small size, and bureaucratic compactness of the NSC staff allowed it to run rings around State in the competition for influence.”

It remained throughout the Kennedy years the president’s major foreign policy instrument.

With the White House leading the way, the Kennedy administration launched a full-scale effort to meet the challenges of the cold war. Kennedy ordered a massive buildup of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles to establish a credible deterrent to Soviet nuclear power. Persuaded that Eisenhower’s reliance on nuclear weapons had left the United States muscle-bound in many situations, he also expanded and modernized the nation’s conventional military forces to permit a “flexible response” to various types and levels of threats. Certain that the emerging nations of the Third World would be the principal battleground of the Soviet-American rivalry, the administration devoted much attention to developing an effective response to guerrilla warfare. Kennedy and his advisers also felt that the United States must strike at the source of the disease, however, and they placed great emphasis on devising programs of economic and technical assistance that would eliminate the conditions in which Communism flourished and channel revolutionary forces into democratic paths.

The new administration encountered repeated frustration in its first months in office. Kennedy inherited from Eisenhower a poorly conceived plan to overthrow the Cuban regime of Fidel Castro. Although dubious about the morality and workability of the plan, the new president was eager for a foreign policy victory, and he hesitated to scrap it for fear Republican critics would charge him with weakness. Without the air support he refused to provide, however, the plan was doomed to failure, and although Kennedy manfully assumed responsibility for the debacle at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, his fledgling administration was vulnerable to attack from those who thought the United States had done too little and those who thought it had done too much. At about the same time, the administration decided that Eisenhower’s commitment in landlocked Laos could not be upheld militarily and agreed to negotiate a settlement at Geneva.

Relations with the Soviet Union deteriorated dangerously. The administration viewed with alarm Khrushchev’s January 1961 speech avowing Soviet support for wars of national liberation in the Third World. At their first summit in Geneva in June, Khrushchev bullied his younger colleague, reasserting his commitment to wars of national liberation and renewing the ultimatum on Berlin he had first issued in 1958. A shaken Kennedy upon returning to Washington stepped up his plans for a military buildup. Within several weeks, Khrushchev escalated the Berlin crisis, sealing off East Germany from West Berlin by constructing a steel and concrete wall. Shortly after, Moscow resumed nuclear testing.
The steady increase of tensions led directly to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Upon taking office, the Kennedy administration learned that a “missile gap” presumed to be in favor of the Soviet Union actually favored the United States. Determined to build on and exploit that lead, Kennedy significantly expanded America’s already formidable nuclear arsenal, and in October 1961, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric proclaimed to the world that the United States was invulnerable to a Soviet sneak attack and had a second-strike capability as extensive as the Soviet capability for a first strike. Any move on the Soviet part would therefore be an act of “self-destruction.” Khrushchev appears to have responded to the U.S. challenge with a daring and risky gambit in Cuba. Soviet motives will probably never be entirely clear. Khrushchev and others have claimed they were trying to protect Cuba from an anticipated U.S. invasion, and there were certainly grounds for such fears. Western scholars also speculate that a beleaguered Khrushchev sought to ease pressures from militants at home and from the Chinese and make up some of the missile gap on the cheap by placing offensive missiles in Cuba.

Whatever his motives, Khrushchev’s actions provoked the most dangerous Soviet-American confrontation in the history of the cold war. Kennedy responded by “quarantining” Cuba, sealing off the island with a naval blockade and demanding that the Soviets withdraw their missiles. While the world nervously awaited the Soviet response, tensions mounted. Neither side had total control of its forces in the area, and on several occasions incidents in or around Cuba threatened to trigger a war. Eventually, Khrushchev relented, agreeing to withdraw the missiles in return for a face-saving American pledge not to invade Cuba. The United States accepted the deal and privately assured Moscow that it would remove its own Jupiter missiles from Turkey. The superpowers pulled back from the brink, and the world breathed a collective sigh of relief. In the aftermath of the missile crisis, both superpowers moved to ease the tensions that had brought them to the verge of nuclear war. Kennedy and Khrushchev toned down the militant cold war rhetoric that had characterized the years 1961–1962 and even spoke publicly of moving toward peaceful coexistence. They established a “hot-line” to facilitate communications in times of crisis. The United States agreed to sell its adversary a large supply of desperately needed wheat. Most important, in the first major effort to put some brakes on a nuclear arms race that was careening out of control, the two nations signed a treaty in August 1963 agreeing to end atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons.

Kennedy’s success in turning around the cold war was not matched by success in other areas. From the time it took power, the administration had promoted with considerable fanfare a so-called Grand Design for Europe. Its aims were to stabilize Europe in order to concentrate on other areas and through expanding trade with Europe to solve its growing economic problems. The administration promoted tariff reduction and British membership in the European Economic Community to correct its swelling balance of payments deficit and sought to encourage its allies to furnish more conventional forces for the defense of Europe while relying exclusively on the U.S. nuclear deterrent. These plans ran afoul of European interests and European suspicions of both American and British intentions. France and Germany feared that, as a member of the Common Market, Britain would be what French leader Charles de Gaulle called a “Trojan horse” for America. With his usual flair for the grandiloquent, de Gaulle in January 1963 vetoed British admission. France, Germany, and Britain hesitated to rely entirely on the United States for a nuclear deterrent, and their fears were underlined by America’s unilateral cancellation of the Skybolt missile originally offered Britain and by its failure even to consult the allies prior to acting in the Cuban missile crisis. Thus de Gaulle also insisted on an independent nuclear force de frappe for France. By early 1963, the Grand Design
was in shambles amidst mutual recriminations between the Kennedy administration and the European allies.

In the Third World as well, the Kennedy legacy was at best mixed. In Latin America, the administration with maximum publicity launched the Alliance for Progress as a way of promoting economic development and thereby undermining leftist revolutions. The program made dramatic gains in such areas as tax collection and public health, but overall progress was disappointing. The goals may have been too ambitious, and in the particularly crucial area of economic development, private capital was not forthcoming in the amount required. The pace of agrarian reform was slow, and gains in education were limited. Most important perhaps, military coups in Argentina, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras undermined the very political freedoms the Alliance for Progress was supposed to foster.

The object of much U.S. attention in Latin America, Cuba’s Fidel Castro, survived. The Kennedy administration acquired a near obsession with eliminating Castro, and even before the missile crisis, with the blessings of top U.S. officials, the CIA launched Operation Mongoose, a multifaceted scheme to destabilize Cuba and overthrow the Castro government. As early as August 1960, apparently without explicit presidential sanction, the CIA had formulated a plot to assassinate Castro, and the agency subsequently enlisted the assistance of leading mob figures such as Sam Giancana. Various assassination schemes were actually tried, including poison and exploding cigars. Operation Mongoose accomplished little, the assassination plots failed, and the Castro government remained intact.

In Vietnam, Kennedy’s legacy was especially uncertain. When Kennedy took office, the Viet Cong insurgency supported by North Vietnam threatened the U.S.-backed government of Ngo Dinh Diem. Having suffered major setbacks at the Bay of Pigs, in Laos, and in Berlin, Kennedy decided it was necessary to make a stand somewhere, and Vietnam seemed the most likely place. Thus in late 1961, the administration dramatically increased U.S. support for the Diem regime, and by 1963, the United States had more than 16,000 “advisers” in Vietnam. Perhaps more important, by the time of Kennedy’s death the United States had assumed growing responsibility for the South Vietnamese government. In the summer of 1963, the predominantly Buddhist population had launched a series of protests against the Catholic-led government. The Diem regime responded forcefully, at one point sending armed forces into the pagodas. Concerned about the protests and the regime’s reaction to them and increasingly persuaded that Diem and his family were their own worst enemies, the Kennedy administration encouraged dissident army officers to launch a coup. After several false starts, the military on November 1, 1963, overthrew the regime and assassinated Diem and his notorious brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu. Whether Kennedy would have extricated the United States from an increasingly untenable situation in Vietnam, as his defenders claim, can never be known. What is clear is that during his brief one thousand days in the White House, the young president sharply increased the U.S. commitment and assumed greater responsibility for the U.S. client state.

Researchers can study these and other aspects of the Kennedy foreign policy through the Country Files of the National Security File, 1961–1963. As the title suggests, the files were maintained in the White House by the staff of National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy. They were organized geographically and comprised separate files for individual countries. Arranged chronologically, the files include many different types of material: extensive cable traffic between the departments and agencies in Washington and the embassies and missions abroad; memoranda of conversations between U.S. and foreign
officials and among top U.S. officials; intelligence reports assessing foreign policy issues; internal memoranda, including memos from the national security adviser to the president; and an agenda for and records of top-level meetings. The Country Files provide a clear sense of the way in which the administration perceived major foreign policy issues and framed its responses. The chronological arrangement permits the researcher to follow on a day-to-day basis the administration’s handling of crises and to trace the evolution of major policies.

The Country Files cover a variety of topics. The file for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe provides valuable insights into such things as the rise of Soviet-American tension in 1961, the Cuban missile crisis, and the beginnings of détente. The collection covering the Middle East contains significant material on the steadily expanding U.S. aid program for Israel, pan-Arabism of the United Arab Republic, and political discontent in Iran. The country files for Africa, Latin America, and Western Europe are much larger, and they document some of the administration’s major problems. The Africa file contains a great deal of information on the major crisis in the Congo and the administration’s efforts to win good will among that continent’s numerous newly emerging nations. Roughly half of the Latin America file deals with Cuba, and that file also contains important documentation on two other key Latin American nations, Brazil and the Dominican Republic. The Western Europe files document the formulation and implementation of the Kennedy Grand Design. Extensive files for Vietnam and Asia and the Pacific provide documentation of the administration’s escalation of the Vietnam War and its involvement in other areas such as the Philippines, Korea, and Indonesia. If still incomplete, the National Security File, Country File, 1961–1963, provides an indispensable starting point for research on the Kennedy foreign policy.

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The presidency of John F. Kennedy represents an important period in the history of U.S. foreign policy. The Kennedy administration significantly escalated the war in Vietnam. Inheriting from Dwight D. Eisenhower a small and still qualified commitment to uphold the fledgling South Vietnamese government of Ngo Dinh Diem, the Kennedy administration expanded that commitment rhetorically by repeatedly proclaiming Vietnam’s importance to U.S. security and tangibly by increasing the number of U.S. military advisers to more than 16,000 and authorizing their involvement in combat. The National Security Files for 1961–1963 provide an indispensable documentary record of this critical period in U.S. foreign relations. The world changed dramatically during the 1960s, and the volume and diverse nature of the documents contained in these files represent an essential foundation for understanding U.S. foreign policy during this period.

**Foreign Policy and National Security Files**

Researchers can study foreign policy management in depth in the “Country Files” section of the National Security Files. The Country Files, maintained in the White House by Kennedy’s national security advisers, represent some of the most important documents on the promulgation and implementation of foreign policy. They contain extensive cable traffic between the departments and agencies in Washington and embassies and missions abroad; memoranda of conversations between U.S. and foreign officials and among top U.S. officials; intelligence reports assessing critical foreign policy issues; internal memoranda, such as those from the national security advisers to the president; and agendas for and records of the top-level meetings. The Country Files provide a clear sense of the way in which the administration perceived major foreign policy issues and framed its responses. For an individual country, the chronological arrangement of documentation permits the researcher to follow on a day-to-day basis the administration’s handling of crises and to trace the evolution of major policies.


No conflict in recent history has divided America as much as the war in Vietnam. Questions remain regarding the Kennedy administration’s response to escalating Viet Cong aggression, the decision to expand American material and personnel support, and the view that the Vietnamese conflict was part of the larger, global cold war. This new addition to UPA’s *National Security Files, 1961–1963*, on Vietnam will go far in providing the background for an increased understanding of the U.S. involvement in and escalation of the war in South Vietnam.


From the Laos Accords of 1961 until the death of the president, the Kennedy administration engineered the massive buildup of U.S. military advisory and assistance forces in
South Vietnam. This buildup included the initiation of the new “counterinsurgency” strategy at the behest of President Kennedy’s foreign policy makers and the development of one of the largest military logistical support organizations in history. This First Supplement provides extensive background for an understanding of the Kennedy administration’s primary objective for U.S. involvement—“to assist the Government of Vietnam and its armed forces to defeat externally directed and supported Communist subversion and aggression and attain an independent South Vietnam functioning in a secure environment.”

Researchers will be able to trace the evolution of a variety of Vietnam War-related issues, including U.S. concerns with South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem and political instability, the faltering military situation and the Ap Bac disaster, decisions leading to the buildup of U.S. support and advisory units, and the persistent South Vietnamese demand for war material. Many of the recently released documents relate to operational and tactical planning for U.S. Special Forces, pacification and resettlement, and nonmilitary economic activities. In addition, these materials document changes in strategy due to the poor South Vietnamese military effectiveness; outline South Vietnamese government alienation of the populace and the Buddhist crisis; highlight the achievements and failures of various South Vietnamese and U.S. Special Forces military operations; shed light on the Kennedy administration’s decision-making process; exhibit U.S. plans and programs for training and arming the South Vietnamese military; and provide background on the disputatious issue of nation building.

These files will also assist the researcher in showing the effects of the cold War on the U.S. domestic economic, political, and social scene. These files provide documentation regarding the Kennedy administration’s efforts to rally public opinion behind America’s containment foreign policy, as well as the politics involved in pursuing a policy of counterinsurgency.
SOURCE NOTE

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EDITORIAL NOTE

University Publications of America (UPA) has microfilmed, in their entirety, all NSF “Country Files” documents that were declassified, sanitized, or unclassified as of January 2002. Many individual documents and entire folders of documents remain classified or unprocessed; UPA has therefore included in its NSF microfilm publications the “Document Withdrawal Sheets” for each folder. These withdrawal sheets itemize documents that have been withdrawn from the folders, due to either national security or privacy restrictions, by the staff of the John F. Kennedy Library.

Acknowledgments

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviation and acronyms appear in this guide.

CIA
  Central Intelligence Agency
ICC
  International Control Commission
SEATO
  Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
U.K.
  United Kingdom
UN
  United Nations
USAID
  U.S. Agency for International Development
The following is a listing of the folders that comprise The John F. Kennedy National Security Files, 1961–1963, Vietnam, First Supplement. The four-digit number on the far left is the frame at which a particular file folder begins. This is followed by the file title, the date(s) of the file, and the total number of pages. Substantive issues are highlighted under the heading Major Topics, as are prominent correspondents under the heading Principal Correspondents.

Reel 1

Frame No.

   Major Topics: Communist guerrilla presence in Laos; Soviet Union policy toward Laos; Pathet Lao.
   Principal Correspondents: David K. Bruce; James Gavin.

   Major Topics: Military Advisory Assistance Group; Vietnam Task Force strategies for South Vietnam; guerrilla warfare tactics and countertactics; Viet Cong military operations; modification of command structure for Air Force of Vietnam; U.S. training centers for Army of Vietnam; Communist guerrilla presence in Cambodia and Laos; stability of South Vietnam government.

   Principal Correspondent: J. Lawton Collins.

   Major Topics: Proposed increase in armed services of South Vietnam; popular support for Ngo Dinh Diem; proposed negotiations between South Vietnam and Cambodia; U.S. collaboration with South Vietnam government; long-range economic development program for South Vietnam.
   Principal Correspondent: Chester Bowles.

   Principal Correspondent: James Gavin.

   Major Topics: Vietnam Task Force Progress Report; Cambodia policy on guerrilla infiltration; Communist guerrilla presence in Laos; Laos political conditions; U.S. support for South Vietnam military operations in Laos; Soviet Union policy toward Southeast Asia; opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam in People’s Republic of China; SEATO role in Vietnam military operations.
   Principal Correspondent: Sterling J. Cottrell.
Major Topics: India policy toward South Vietnam; influence of India on ICC; U.S. aid money for South Vietnam; International Cooperation Administration; military strategy of Ngo Dinh Diem; proposed increase in armed services of South Vietnam.
Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Robert H. Johnson; Edwin F. Black.

0103  General, October 4–9, 1961. 11 pp.
Major Topics: South Vietnam military operations; Army of Vietnam attacks on Viet Cong; UN inspection in Laos; proposed SEATO military involvement in Vietnam.
Principal Correspondents: Robert H. Johnson; Walt W. Rostow.

Major Topics: Military situation analyses; Viet Cong military operations; South Vietnam political conditions; South Vietnam government officials; popular support for Ngo Dinh Diem.
Principal Correspondents: Robert Thompson; Takashi Oka.

Major Topics: U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam; South Vietnam government restrictions on citizens.
Principal Correspondent: John S. Everton.

Principal Correspondent: George L. Jones Jr.

0145  General, November 11–13, 1961. 3 pp.
Major Topic: Military situation analyses.
Principal Correspondent: Walt W. Rostow.

Major Topic: Military situation analyses.
Principal Correspondent: Walt W. Rostow.

0151  General, November 18–20, 1961. 6 pp.
Major Topics: Intelligence briefings; Viet Cong and South Vietnam military operations; protection of South Vietnam rice crop from Viet Cong troops.
Principal Correspondent: Frederick Nolting.

Major Topics: Guerrilla warfare; administrative problems of Ngo Dinh Diem; proposed introduction of U.S. troops into South Vietnam military operations.
Principal Correspondent: Walt W. Rostow.

Major Topics: Coup plans and attempts against Diem regime; political situation analyses.
Principal Correspondent: Robert H. Johnson.

Major Topics: Project Beef-Up; commander-in-chief, Pacific establishment of Tactical Air Control System; U.S. Air Force training teams in South Vietnam; U.S. supply of T-28 aircraft to South Vietnam; U.S. supply of vessels to Vietnam Navy; Joint Chiefs of Staff military planning; decline in rice prices; rice harvest.
Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting; Lyman L. Lymnitzer.
0191 **General, December 3–5, 1961.** 36 pp.

*Major Topics:* Intelligence briefings; political reforms of South Vietnam government; South Vietnam government officials; popular support for Ngo Dinh Diem; South Vietnam political conditions; U.S. proposals for South Vietnam military operations; criticism of U.S. policy in South Vietnamese press.

*Principal Correspondents:* Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

0227 **General, December 6–7, 1961.** 36 pp.

*Major Topics:* Stability of Diem regime; Viet Cong military operations.

*Principal Correspondents:* Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

0263 **General, December 8–10, 1961.** 42 pp.

*Major Topics:* Felixberto Serrano; Philippine medical assistance to South Vietnam; U.S. aid money to South Vietnam; intelligence briefings; Viet Cong military operations; rice exports; strength of Pathet Lao.

*Principal Correspondents:* Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.


*Major Topics:* U.S. aid money for South Vietnam; South Vietnam government tax reforms; letter to John F. Kennedy from Ngo Dinh Diem; intelligence briefings; ICC.

*Principal Correspondents:* Frederick Nolting; George Ball.

0367 **General, December 14–18, 1961.** 10 pp.

*Major Topics:* Philippine medical assistance to South Vietnam; defoliation operation plans.

*Principal Correspondents:* George Ball; William C. Trueheart.


*Major Topics:* U.S. military advisers for South Vietnam; rice exports; organizational reforms of South Vietnam government; U.S. aid for Vietnamese social programs; rural health program; South Vietnam education reforms; South Vietnam infrastructure.

*Principal Correspondent:* Frederick Nolting.


*Principal Correspondents:* Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting.


*Major Topic:* Cambodia–South Vietnam relations.

*Principal Correspondent:* Dean Rusk.


*Major Topics:* Defoliation operations along Cambodia-Vietnam border; Army of Vietnam weapons and manpower; Tay Ninh Province; Viet Cong military forces; U.S. rice surplus used as aid for South Vietnam.

*Principal Correspondents:* Dean Rusk; Joseph A. Mendenhall; Kenneth Young.


*Major Topics:* Cambodian border control; South Vietnam diplomacy; prohibition of additional military personnel or equipment in Geneva Accords; machinery imports for South Vietnam; exchange rates for Vietnamese piasters; intelligence briefings; Viet Cong military operations.

*Principal Correspondents:* William C. Trueheart; W. C. Trimble; Frederick Nolting.

Major Topics: War casualties; counterguerrilla operations; Viet Cong military operations; Viet Cong political activities; U.S. press correspondents in South Vietnam; prohibition of additional military personnel or equipment for Vietnam in Geneva Accords; stability of South Vietnam government; U.S. military police; Chinese aid to North Vietnam; rural health program.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk; William C. Trueheart.


Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk; William C. Trueheart.


Major Topics: Opinions of Ngo Dinh Diem on aerial bombing; provincial surveys; North Vietnam proposal for reunification elections.

Principal Correspondents: William C. Trueheart; Frederick Nolting.


Major Topics: Economic and social development of villages; administrative effectiveness of South Vietnam government; expulsion of U.S. press correspondents from South Vietnam; U.S. night fighter aircraft sent to Vietnam.

Principal Correspondents: William C. Trueheart; George Ball; Frederick Nolting.


Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; George Ball.


Principal Correspondents: David K. Bruce; Frederick Nolting.

General, April 1–10, 1962. 11 pp.

Major Topics: North Vietnam proposal for reunification elections; Soviet Union policy toward North Vietnam; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; W. C. Trimble.

General, April 11–16, 1962. 10 pp.


Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.


Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; William C. Trueheart; Dean Rusk.


Major Topics: Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; Viet Cong infiltration in Cambodia; Laos–South Vietnam relations.

Principal Correspondents: William C. Trueheart; George Ball; Frederick Nolting.


Major Topic: South Vietnam government agencies.

Principal Correspondent: Frederick Nolting.

Major Topics: Intelligence briefings; employment of doctors in public service; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; Viet Cong military operations; Vinh Lac incident; ICC investigation of Geneva Accords violations; U.K. involvement in Cambodia–South Vietnam relations.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.


Major Topics: Introduction of additional U.S. military personnel and equipment into South Vietnam; ICC investigation of Geneva Accords violations; neutrality of Cambodia; strategic hamlet program.

Principal Correspondent: Frederick Nolting.

General, June 1–8, 1962. 20 pp.

Major Topics: ICC investigation of Geneva Accords violations; South Vietnam government budget; South Vietnam currency shortage.

Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting.


Major Topics: Strategic hamlet program; South Vietnam currency shortage; Army of Vietnam operations in Cambodia; U.S. policy objectives; Viet Cong military operations.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk; George Ball.


Major Topics: Army of Vietnam operations in Cambodia; ICC investigation into Geneva Accords violations; U.K. government attitudes toward North Vietnamese aggression; illegality under Geneva Accords of U.S. Military Assistance Command presence in South Vietnam; Polish and Indian delegations to ICC.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; George Ball; D. K. Robertson.


Major Topics: ICC investigation into Geneva Accords violations; South Vietnam currency shortage; South Vietnam government budget.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

General, July 1–6, 1962. 27 pp.

Major Topics: Viet Cong infiltration in Laos; South Vietnam currency shortage; war casualties.

Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting.


Major Topics: Laos–South Vietnam relations; Viet Cong infiltration in Laos.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Roger Tubby; Dean Rusk.


Major Topics: Viet Cong infiltration in Laos; neutrality of Laos; war casualties; strategic hamlet program.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.


Major Topics: Strategic hamlet program; Australian military personnel in South Vietnam.

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; William C. Trueheart.
Reel 2

   Major Topics: Attempted coup against Diem regime; Army of Vietnam officers opposed to Diem regime; defoliation plans; strategic hamlet program; U.S. aid money for South Vietnam; piaster purchase plan; South Vietnam government officials.
   Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting.

   Major Topics: Reunification of Vietnam; U.S. supply of helicopters to South Vietnam.
   Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

   Major Topics: Viet Cong military operations; analyses of defoliation plans; shortages of food and medicine in Viet Cong–controlled areas; neutrality of Cambodia; Laotian compliance with ICC; South Vietnam relations with Cambodia and Laos; allegations of indiscretion against U.S. press correspondent Francois Sully.
   Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

   Major Topics: Analyses of defoliation plans; plans for Nguyen Dinh Thuan’s visit to United States; U.S. press correspondents in South Vietnam; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations.
   Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; William C. Trueheart; Dean Rusk.

   Major Topics: Laos–North Vietnam relations; Laos–South Vietnam relations; strategic hamlet program; piaster purchase program; South Vietnam relations with Cambodia; war casualties; vaccinations administered in South Vietnam.
   Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk; Michael V. Forrestal.

   Major Topics: Laos–South Vietnam relations; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; Laos–North Vietnam relations; analyses of defoliation plans; U.S. expenditures for South Vietnam; defoliant testing.
   Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; William H. Brubeck; George Ball.

0248 General, October 1–6, 1962. 15 pp.
   Major Topics: Laos–South Vietnam relations; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations.
   Principal Correspondent: Frederick Nolting.

   Major Topics: Laos–South Vietnam relations; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; Laos–North Vietnam relations; meeting between Nguyen Dinh Thuan and John F. Kennedy.
   Principal Correspondents: William C. Trueheart; Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

   Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

   Major Topics: Aerial bombing of Cambodian border villages by Air Force of Vietnam; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; press queries on defoliation; Viet Cong military operations.
   Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting.
Major Topics: Viet Cong infiltration through Cambodia; South Vietnam relations with Laos; South Vietnam relations with Cambodia.
Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting.

Major Topics: Neutrality of Cambodia; analyses of defoliation plans; strategic hamlet program; election system in South Vietnam hamlets.
Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

0398 General, December 1962. 27 pp.
Major Topics: Opinions of Souvanna Phouma on Laotian neutrality; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; progress report on strategic hamlet program; Air Force of Vietnam operations against Viet Cong; U.S. aircraft used in South Vietnam air operations.
Principal Correspondents: Dean Rusk; Frederick Nolting; Michael V. Forrestal; Roswell L. Gilpatric.

0425 General, January 1–9, 1963. 31 pp.
Major Topics: Viet Cong attacks on South Vietnamese troops in U.S. helicopters; war casualties; South Vietnam military operations; expulsion of U.S. press correspondents from South Vietnam.
Principal Correspondents: Harry D. Felt; Arthur Sylvester.

Major Topics: Viet Cong attacks on South Vietnamese troops in U.S. helicopters; South Vietnam military operations; Viet Cong military operations.
Principal Correspondent: Paul D. Harkins.

Major Topics: Anti-Diem activities of National Council of the Vietnamese Revolution; background and political opinions of Pham Huy Co; U.S. counterguerrilla tactics; U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam; behavior of U.S. press correspondents in South Vietnam; U.S. support for Diem regime; Viet Cong military operations; success of strategic hamlet program; piaster shortage; piaster purchase program; Chinese Communist influence on Southeast Asia; U.S. policy toward Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, and the Philippines.
Principal Correspondents: Melvin L. Manfull; Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

Major Topics: Nationalist China–South Vietnam relations; Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; reports on defoliation operations.
Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

Major Topic: South Vietnam government support for rural social and economic improvement programs.
Principal Correspondent: Dean Rusk.

0544 General, April 1–18, 1963. 56 pp.
Major Topics: Reduction of U.S. economic and military aid to South Vietnam; Polish opposition to defoliation; opinions of Ngo Dinh Diem on U.S. aid to South Vietnam; South Vietnam government funds for strategic hamlet program; reports on defoliation operations; U.S. efforts to counter Communist propaganda.
Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Dean Rusk.

**Major Topics:** Reduction of U.S. economic and military aid to Vietnam; reports on defoliation operations; Air Force of Vietnam operations against Viet Cong; Viet Cong use of chemical weapons against population of South Vietnam.

**Principal Correspondents:** Frederick Nolting; George L. Jones Jr.


**Major Topics:** Cambodia–South Vietnam relations; proposed reduction of U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam.

**Principal Correspondent:** Dean Rusk.


**Major Topics:** South Vietnam government relations with citizens and U.S. officials; Buddhist demonstrations and protests against Diem regime in Hue; position of Tran Kim Tuyen in South Vietnam government; proposal for coup to overthrow Diem regime by central Vietnam political group.

**Principal Correspondents:** Frederick Nolting; William C. Trueheart.

0656 **General, June 1–5, 1963.** 9 pp.

**Major Topics:** Buddhist demonstrations and protests against Diem regime in Hue; alleged use of chemical weapons against Buddhist protesters.

**Principal Correspondent:** William C. Trueheart.


**Major Topics:** Buddhist demonstrations and protests against Diem regime in Hue; alleged use of chemical weapons against Buddhist protesters; David Halberstam’s report on change in U.S. policy toward South Vietnam government; opinions of Nguyen Dinh Thuan on stability of South Vietnam government; negotiations between Buddhist leaders and South Vietnam government; opinions of Ngo Dinh Diem on Buddhist crisis; religious freedom for Buddhists.

**Principal Correspondent:** William C. Trueheart.

0699 **General, June 16–24, 1963.** 16 pp.

**Major Topic:** Opinions of South Vietnam government officials on Buddhist crisis.

**Principal Correspondent:** William C. Trueheart.


**Major Topics:** Opinions of Ngo Dinh Diem and Nguyen Dinh Thuan on Buddhist crisis; South Vietnam political conditions; appointment of Henry Cabot Lodge as U.S. ambassador to Vietnam; proposed coup to overthrow Diem regime.

**Principal Correspondents:** William C. Trueheart; George Ball.

0737 **General, July 1–20, 1963.** 95 pp.

**Major Topics:** Reports on Buddhist crisis in Vietnamese press; South Vietnam government relations with Buddhists; opinions of Ngo Dinh Diem on Buddhist crisis; South Vietnam political conditions; proposed coup by Tran Kim Tuyen to overthrow Diem regime; progress report on strategic hamlet program; opinions of Nguyen Luong on Buddhist crisis; Buddhist demonstrations and protests against Diem regime in Saigon.

**Principal Correspondents:** William C. Trueheart; Frederick Nolting.
Frames 0832-0967

Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; Marshall Wright.

Major Topics: Buddhist militants in Japanese politics; press queries on Buddhist crisis; anti-Buddhist statements by Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu; South Vietnam political conditions; proposed coup by Tran Kim Tuyen to overthrow Diem regime; international opinions on Buddhist crisis.
Principal Correspondents: Frederick Nolting; George Ball.

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Major Topics: Buddhist demonstrations and protests against Diem regime in Saigon; South Vietnam government actions against Buddhist protesters; coup attempt by Tran Kim Tuyen against Diem regime; declaration of martial law by Ngo Dinh Diem; South Vietnam political conditions; religious freedom for Buddhists.
Principal Correspondents: George Ball; William C. Trueheart.

Major Topics: Opinions of Vo Van Hai on South Vietnam government; roles of Ngo Dinh Nhu and Ngo Dinh Diem in Buddhist crisis; influence of Ngo Dinh Nhu on Army of Vietnam personnel; Buddhist demonstrations and protests against Diem regime in Saigon; censorship of U.S. press reports; student unrest in support of Buddhists; role of Tran Quoc Buu in Buddhist crisis.
Principal Correspondent: Henry Cabot Lodge.

Major Topic: Influence of Ngo Dinh Nhu on South Vietnam political conditions.

Major Topics: Opinions of Army of Vietnam personnel on Buddhist crisis; student unrest in support of Buddhists; Viet Cong military operations; opinions of General Tran Van Don on South Vietnam government; relationship between Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu; relationship between Ngo Dinh Diem and Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu.

Major Topics: Roles of Ngo Dinh Nhu and Ngo Dinh Diem in Buddhist crisis; South Vietnam government actions against Buddhist protesters; raids on Buddhist pagodas; proposed military coup to overthrow Diem regime.
Principal Correspondents: Michael V. Forrestal; Henry Cabot Lodge.

Major Topics: Opposition of South Vietnam military personnel to Diem regime; proposed military coup to overthrow Diem regime.
Principal Correspondent: Henry Cabot Lodge.

*Major Topics:* South Vietnam government actions against Buddhist protesters; U.S.
influence on Ngo Dinh Diem; Walter Cronkite interview with John F. Kennedy;
South Vietnam political conditions.

*Principal Correspondents:* Dean Rusk; Henry Cabot Lodge.


*Major Topics:* U.S. aid money for South Vietnam; U.S. support for South Vietnam
government; opinions of Nguyen Dinh Thuan on South Vietnam government leadership;
relationship between Ngo Dinh Nhu and Nguyen Dinh Thuan; progress of strategic hamlet program; opinions of Ngo Dinh Diem on press censorship; student unrest in support of Buddhists; opinions of French ambassador to Vietnam on U.S. policy.

*Principal Correspondents:* Henry Cabot Lodge; Dean Rusk.


*Major Topic:* Opinions of South Vietnam military personnel on South Vietnam
government policies.

0478  **General, September 1–10, 1963, CIA Cables and TDCS.** 4 pp.

*Major Topic:* Vietnamese press article by Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu accusing United States of attempted coup to overthrow Diem regime.

0482  **General, September 1–10, 1963, State Cables, Memos and Miscellaneous.** 64 pp.

*Major Topics:* U.S. opinions on policies of Ngo Dinh Diem; French military missions in Laos; chronology of Buddhist crisis; role of Ngo Dinh Nhu in Buddhist crisis; USAID expenditures for Vietnam.

*Principal Correspondents:* Vu Van Thai; Michael V. Forrestal.


*Major Topics:* Public opinion on Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu; South Vietnam political conditions; political situation analyses; opinions of South Vietnam military personnel on South Vietnam government leadership; public opinion on South Vietnam government actions during Buddhist crisis; opinions of Tran Kim Tuyen on South Vietnam government.

*Principal Correspondents:* Henry Cabot Lodge; Dean Rusk.


*Major Topics:* Opinions of South Vietnam military personnel on South Vietnam
government policies; opinions of South Vietnam military personnel on Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu.

0672  **General, September 11–17, 1963, CIA Reports.** 7 pp.

*Major Topics:* South Vietnam government actions during Buddhist crisis; political situation analyses; status of plans for military coup to overthrow Diem regime.


*Major Topics:* U.S. proposals for new leadership in South Vietnam government;
status of plans for military coup to overthrow Diem regime; South Vietnam political conditions; political situation analyses; public opinion on Ngo Dinh Nhu; South Vietnam government actions against Buddhists.

*Principal Correspondent:* Thomas L. Hughes.
Major Topics: Political situation analyses; South Vietnam political conditions; U.S. influence on Ngo Dinh Diem; U.S. Action Plan for Vietnam; U.S. policy objectives; opinions of Madame Tran Van Chuong on South Vietnam political conditions.
Principal Correspondents: Michael V. Forrestal; McGeorge Bundy; Paul M. Kattenburg.

0842 General, September 18–21, 1963, State Cables. 94 pp.
Major Topics: Deaths and injuries during Buddhist crisis; Buddhist demonstrations and protests against Diem regime in Hue; raids on Buddhist pagodas; political situation analyses; role of Ngo Dinh Nhu in South Vietnam government; U.S. influence on Ngo Dinh Diem.
Principal Correspondents: Henry Cabot Lodge; Dean Rusk.

Principal Correspondent: Rufus Phillips.

Major Topics: Student unrest; commercial import program; reduction in food aid to Vietnam.
Principal Correspondent: Henry Cabot Lodge.

Major Topics: Opinions of Sri Lankan leaders on South Vietnam political situation; South Vietnam government violations of human rights during Buddhist crisis; opinions of Buu Hoi on South Vietnam political situation; role of Ngo Dinh Nhu in South Vietnam government; political activities of Tran Kim Tuyen since leaving South Vietnam government; McNamara-Taylor Report.
Principal Correspondents: George Ball; Henry Cabot Lodge.

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0001 General, September 22–October 5, 1963, CIA Reports. 39 pp.
Major Topics: South Vietnam military participation in planning coup to overthrow Diem regime; roles of Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu in South Vietnam government.

0040 General, September 22–October 5, 1963, Memos and Miscellaneous. 8 pp.
Major Topic: South Vietnam political conditions.
Principal Correspondent: Maxwell Taylor.

0048 General, October 6–14, 1963, State Cables. 41 pp.
Major Topics: U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam; U.S. press correspondents in South Vietnam; South Vietnam military operations; South Vietnam political conditions; political activities of Tran Kim Tuyen since leaving South Vietnam government.
Principal Correspondents: Henry Cabot Lodge; Dean Rusk.

0089 General, October 6–14, 1963, CIA Reports. 16 pp.
Major Topics: U.S. influence on Ngo Dinh Diem; South Vietnam political conditions; political situation analyses; South Vietnam military operations.

0105 General, October 6–14, 1963, Memos and Miscellaneous. 36 pp.
Major Topics: Performance of U.S. diplomats in South Vietnam; Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu’s visit to United States.
Principal Correspondents: W. H. Sullivan; Robert L. Kinney.


*Principal Correspondents:* Henry Cabot Lodge; Dean Rusk; George Ball.


*Major Topic:* South Vietnam military operations.

*Principal Correspondent:* Paul D. Harkins.


*Major Topic:* South Vietnam military participation in planning coup to overthrow Diem regime.

*Principal Correspondent:* Henry Cabot Lodge.


*Major Topics:* Truong Cong Cuu's accusations of sedition against Tri Quang; student opposition to Diem regime.

*Principal Correspondents:* Michael V. Forrestal; Henry Cabot Lodge.


*Major Topics:* Military situation analyses; commercial import program; U.S. aid money for South Vietnam; South Vietnam political conditions.

*Principal Correspondents:* Henry Cabot Lodge; Paul D. Harkins.


*Major Topics:* Political situation analyses; CIA report on South Vietnam government; military situation analyses; CIA participation in Buddhist crisis; reduction in U.S. aid money for South Vietnam; UN investigation of Buddhist crisis.

*Principal Correspondent:* Michael V. Forrestal.


*Major Topics:* South Vietnam military participation in planning coup to overthrow Diem regime; political situation analyses; commercial import program; military situation analyses.

*Principal Correspondent:* Henry Cabot Lodge.

0356 **General, November 1–2, 1963, State Cables.** 4 pp.

*Major Topic:* Military coup against Ngo Dinh Diem.

*Principal Correspondent:* Henry Cabot Lodge.


*Major Topics:* Military coup against Ngo Dinh Diem; opinions of Tri Quang on South Vietnam political conditions.

*Principal Correspondent:* Henry Cabot Lodge.


*Major Topic:* South Vietnam provisional government officials.

*Principal Correspondent:* Paul D. Harkins.


*Major Topics:* South Vietnam provisional government officials; South Vietnam military officials; assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem; arrests of South Vietnam government officials; political situation analyses; status of Buddhist leaders under new regime.

*Principal Correspondent:* Henry Cabot Lodge.


*Major Topics:* South Vietnam political conditions; economic conditions under new regime; political situation analyses; South Vietnam provisional government; military situation analyses; strategic hamlet program.

*Principal Correspondent:* Henry Cabot Lodge.
   *Major Topics:* Political situation analyses; South Vietnam provisional government; North Vietnam government officials; assassinations of Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu.

0488 **General, November 16–22, 1963, Memos and Miscellaneous.** 82 pp.
   *Major Topics:* Military Revolutionary Council; Poland–U.S. relations; Soviet Union–U.S. relations; People’s Republic of China–U.S. relations; U.S. military operations in Laos; history of Buddhist crisis.
   *Principal Correspondents:* McGeorge Bundy; Roger Hilsman.

   *Major Topics:* USAID expenditures for South Vietnam; South Vietnam political conditions; budget of South Vietnam government.
   *Principal Correspondent:* Henry Cabot Lodge.
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The following index is a guide to the major correspondents in *The John F. Kennedy National Security Files, 1961–1963, Vietnam, First Supplement*. The first number after each entry refers to the reel, while the four-digit number following the colon refers to the frame number at which a particular file folder containing correspondence by the person begins. Hence, 2: 0187 directs the researcher to the folder that begins at Frame 0187 of Reel 2. By referring to the Reel Index, which constitutes the initial section of this guide, the researcher will find the folder title, inclusive dates, and a list of Major Topics and Principal Correspondents, arranged in the order in which they appear on the film.

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