

193 Statement by the President Announcing the Availability of the Neighborhood Youth Corps for Assistance in Disaster Areas. *April 17, 1965*

I AM PLEASED to announce that the Secretary of Labor has just offered the assistance of the Neighborhood Youth Corps in States affected by floods and tornadoes to assist in flood control and reclamation work in public parks and on other community projects in which Federal disaster assistance is not available. Wherever Governors desire to do so, they may request special NYC programs.

The NYC of the U.S. Department of Labor will enter into agreements with State and local officials who wish to operate NYC disaster control and reclamation projects which would employ unemployed and needy

youth from the ages of 16 through 21 on reclamation work.

In Minnesota the NYC's conservation project enrollees have been helping in flood control.

Through these emergency projects, disaster areas would be reclaimed more readily, financial help would be given to young people in need, and unemployed youth would have valuable experience in doing vital public work.

This action shows the ability of the war on poverty to meet the immediate and urgent needs of States and local communities.

NOTE: The statement was released at Austin, Tex.

194 Statement by the President: "Tragedy, Disappointment, and Progress" in Viet-Nam. *April 17, 1965*

THIS has been a week of tragedy, disappointment, and progress.

Tragedy came to hundreds of Vietnamese and many Americans struck down in the cruel course of battle. On this, of all weekends, we must feel a deep sadness that men must still die and families still be left homeless in the brutality of war.

We mourn the death of Joseph Grainger who worked to improve the life of villagers in Viet-Nam and we mourn all the others on both sides who found this week to be their last.

I regret the necessities of war have compelled us to bomb North Viet-Nam. We have carefully limited those raids. They have been directed at radar stations, bridges, and ammunition dumps, not at population centers. They have been directed at con-

crete and steel, and not human life.

I understand the feelings of those who regret that we must undertake air attacks. I share those feelings, but the compassion of this country and the world must go out to the men and women and children who are killed and crippled by the Viet Cong every day in South Viet-Nam. The outrage of this country and the world must be visited on those who explode their bombs in cities and villages, ripping the bodies of the helpless. The indignation of this country and the world must extend to all who seek dominion over others with a violent and ruthless disregard for life, happiness, or security.

And let us remember, the people of South Viet-Nam and the Americans who share their struggle suffer because they are attacked, not because they are attackers.

It has been a week of disappointment because we tried to open a window to peace only to be met with tired names and slogans—and a refusal to talk.

They want no talk with us, no talk with a distinguished Briton, no talk with the United Nations. They want no talk at all—so far. But our offer stands. We mean every word of it.

Peace is too important, the stakes are far too high, to permit anyone to indulge in slander and invective.

We will not reply in kind. The window to peace is still open. We are still ready for unconditional discussion. We will impose no conditions of any kind on any government willing to talk, nor will we accept any. On this basis we are ready to begin discussion next week, tomorrow, or tonight.

Nor can the continuation of the war be used to doubt the sincerity of our peaceful purpose. The infiltration continues. The terror continues. Death in the night continues. And we must also continue.

To those governments who doubt our willingness to talk, the answer is simple: Agree to discussion. Come to the meeting room. We will be there.

Our objective in Viet-Nam remains the same—an independent South Viet-Nam, tied to no alliance, free to shape its relations and associations with all other nations.

This is what the people of South Viet-Nam want. And we will finally settle for no less.

Our policy also remains the same: to strive for peace, but not to yield to aggression; to use what power we must, but no more than we need; to stay until independence is secure, but to leave when that independence is surely guaranteed.

And let this also be clear: Until that independence is guaranteed there is no human power capable of forcing us from Viet-Nam.

We will remain as long as is necessary, with the might that is required, whatever the risk and whatever the cost.

We are told by some that there can be no peace and no hope for a better life unless we first surrender and abandon South Viet-Nam.

This we will not do.

And I hope that a mounting crescendo of world opinion that is weary of war, that is opposed to aggression, will finally find a way to reach the ears of those that are now deaf to calls for peace.

This has been a week of progress because it has brought a strengthened unity of American purpose. More than ever, in the Congress and in the press, among people in every section and every occupation, we are united on the need to resist aggression, to pursue peace, and to improve the lives of the people of southeast Asia.

There has also been progress around the world in understanding the peaceful aims which we share with the Government of South Viet-Nam. There has been renewed appreciation that by defending South Viet-Nam we also stand for the independence of all who have cause to fear their neighbors. And our unyielding determination has strengthened the hope of those menaced by terror and discouraged those who expect conquest by default. As a result, news from the battlefield is improving.

It is more clear than ever that the real hope for the South Vietnamese is not with the attackers but against them. I join the Vietnamese Government in a warm welcome to the increasing numbers who choose to leave that false cause and rejoin their countrymen.

Progress has also come in the beginning of a massive new effort to improve the lives of the people of southeast Asia.

These countries are not pawns on a chess-

board. They are not simply battlefields for contending powers or abstract ideologies. Their fields and villages sustain millions of people whose first desire is for food and shelter and hope of progress.

Last week I suggested that the industrialized countries of the world join in helping them realize those desires. Since that time the skills and the energies of our own Government have been directed toward examining the most effective contributions that we might make. We have had discussions with leaders of the United Nations. The Secretary General has taken the lead. Other industrialized nations, like Japan, Canada, and the United Kingdom, have shown their willingness to take a share in this enterprise.

Already ideas are being transformed into programs and intentions into action.

Our purpose should not be misunderstood. We do not seek to buy peace. If the price of ending aggression is blood and men, we are ready to pay that price. We do this because it is necessary to the health and independence of the countries of southeast Asia. We do it because it is right in this world that the strong and the wealthy should help the poor and the weak.

Nor are we neglecting the special needs of battle-torn South Viet-Nam. In the last 10 years we have spent more than \$2 billion for economic progress in that area. Yesterday, only yesterday, I sent a team of rural electrification experts to Saigon to help extend the healing miracles of electricity to the Vietnamese countryside.

For in South Viet-Nam, as in all Asia, peace must not simply be an end to conflict. It must be the beginning of progress and

hope and of the elimination of material misery.

It is not easy to engage in a struggle whose beginning is obscure, and whose end is not in sight. Peace, like war, requires patience and the courage to go on despite discouragement. Yet we must go on, for there is a world to lose—a world of peace, of order, and of expanding promise for all who live therein.

That will be a world whose institutions are as varied as humanity itself. It will be a world in which nations follow where reason and experience lead, never sacrificing man to the abstract arrogance of ideology. It will be a world where each nation is free to take its own path to change.

This is the course of history. Domination and empire, conquest and aggression, are relics of a bloody past. But we must protect our future against that past.

How fortunate we are to have been given the power and the courage to match this vision in this enormous time in the life of man.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President read the statement to members of the press at 12:10 p.m. on the front lawn at the LBJ Ranch, Johnson City, Tex. Early in his remarks he referred to Joseph W. Grainger of West Hartford, Conn., who was killed in January by the Viet Cong. Details of the tragedy were reported on April 13 by the United States Embassy in Saigon. Mr. Grainger was kidnaped in August 1964 while directing U.S. development aid in Phu Yen province, a coastal area between Saigon and the North Viet-Nam border. After 5 months' imprisonment he escaped, but after a week was tracked down and recaptured by a Viet Cong patrol, and shot when he refused to return to captivity.

For the President's suggestion of the previous week that industrialized countries join in helping the people of southeast Asia, see Item 172.