

Telecon  
The President  
11/03-04/ 69 Midnight

The P asked K if he made it clear in his briefings how the speech was prepared. K said yes, he made that part of his opening statement. K said there is nothing the P has labored over more seriously, more personally, and with more concern than this. He asked for proposals, and worked on it every evening. He read an outline to us and we all supported it. He went to Camp David and rewrote it. K said when Chancellor introduced the P before he started the speech C made a point that it was the P's speech, that it had engaged him more personally than almost anything he had done since entering office.

K said Gen. Haig had just given him a note about a call he took from parents of a boy who had been killed in Vietnam. They thought it was wonderful; said it was marvelous, and this is what he had died for.

K said actually Chancellor was good; he didn't harrass the P. He had Scammon on. The P said Rogers and Laird were waiting to see public reaction. The P said these guys should be shouting, he had mentioned them and their efforts, but they weren't. The P said he wanted that letter to them by tomorrow afternoon, and he wants it to be tough, strong, really lay it out. K said it is all drafted; the P can have it whenever he wants it. The P said Laird and Rogers don't have the guts to make the grand effort. The P said he thought there would be a great reaction from the average person. K said we were getting truckloads of cables; people are complaining that they can't get to Western Union.

The P said he had deliberately delivered it low-key, firm but not belligerent, and that he thinks that was the right thing. K said yes it was the right thing because the words were strong. It was a solemn occasion, not the beginning of a war. K asked about McCormack. The P said he was delighted and Agnew was pleased. K said the people who would say that the P should have announced the beginning of withdrawal tonight, if the P had announced withdrawal of two hundred thousand, they would have screamed for three hundred thousand. K said you can't placate the doves. The P said that for the first time it had been explained why we are there and what we are doing, and the part about others not being able to humiliate Americans, only Americans can do that--that was a good point. that got through. And K said the ending was very strong, it was a most effective speech. Of course the peaceniks wouldn't like it. The P asked if K's staff had liked it, and K said yes, they were very enthusiastic. The P said they should be; and K said but they had no advance warning. K said they felt much as Bundy did; it was the first time it had been explained

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what it is all about. The P said nobody has explained it--Johnson, Kennedy, and of course Eisenhower--because nobody understood it. K said and you had the courage to say we should be in Vietnam. For the mothers of the boys killed there, if the President were to imply that they died in vain would be unbearable. The P said that's why the call that Gen Haig reported was so important.