

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

A P R E S I D E N T ' S V I S I O N

PRIMARY SOURCE WORKSHEET

CLARK CLIFFORD, LETTER TO PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON, MAY 17, 1965.

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CLARK M. CLIFFORD
615 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20009

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May 17, 1965

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

I am returning herewith the letter of the Director of Central Intelligence, dated May 8, 1965, together with enclosures.

I wish to make one major point.

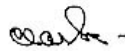
I believe our ground forces in South Vietnam should be kept to a minimum, consistent with the protection of our installations and property in that country. My concern is that a substantial buildup of U. S. ground troops would be construed by the Communists, and by the world, as a determination on our part to win the war on the ground.

This could be a quagmire. It could turn into an open end commitment on our part that would take more and more ground troops, without a realistic hope of ultimate victory.

I do not think the situation is comparable to Korea. The political posture of the parties involved, and the physical conditions, including terrain, are entirely different.

I continue to believe that the constant probing of every avenue leading to a possible settlement will ultimately be fruitful. It won't be what we want, but we can learn to live with it.

Respectfully yours,



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QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. When did the United States commit troops to the war in Vietnam? At what point in the war did Clark Clifford write this letter to the president?
2. Rewrite Clifford's "one major point" in your own words.
3. What word does Clifford use to identify what American involvement in Vietnam could become? Look that word up in the dictionary and rewrite the definition in your own words.
4. Clifford suggests "the constant probing of every avenue" to reach a possible settlement of the war. What avenues would you suggest the United States explore instead of committing more ground troops to Vietnam?
5. Reread the last paragraph. Clifford hopes for a fruitful "settlement" to the war in Vietnam. Do you feel that a "settlement" is the same outcome as a "victory"? Explain your answer.

ACTIVITIES

1. Clifford compares the Vietnam War to the war in Korea. Research the Korean War and write a brief description of it, describing the reasons for the conflict and the outcome. Do you feel that the Vietnam War was similar to or different from the Korean War? Explain your answer.

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