

## **John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum** **Online Resources: Vietnam**

### **[Lesson Plan-Military Advisors in Vietnam: 1963](#)**

In this lesson plan, students analyze a letter to President Kennedy from a woman who had just lost her brother in South Vietnam along with Kennedy's reply, explaining his rationale for sending US military to that country.

### **[JFK in History: Vietnam](#)**

This web page provides a brief history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1945 – 1975.

### **[Cable 243](#)**

Described by some historians as the "single most controversial cable of the Vietnam War," Cable 243 was drafted on Saturday August 24, 1963 when President Kennedy, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, and CIA Director John McCone were all out of town. The telegram set a course for the eventual coup in Vietnam on November 1, 1963 leading to the fall of President Diem and his assassination on November 2, 1963.

The "green light" cable is the second document in the digitized National Security Files (Digital Identifier JFKNSF-316-008), Meetings on Vietnam: General, August 1963: 24-31.

### **[The President's Desk: JFK Library website](#)**

Open the vault to hear excerpts from White House presidential recordings of four meetings between President Kennedy and his highest level Vietnam advisors in late August of 1963. After Cable 243 was sent and during the course of four days, President Kennedy met with his advisors to discuss the evolving situation in Vietnam and what steps should be taken. There was considerable disagreement between the State Department advisors, who had drafted Cable 243, and the President's military and intelligence advisors on whether the coup was advisable and what support it would have in Vietnam with the Vietnamese military.

### **[National Security Action Memoranda](#)**

This web pages includes a selected listing of 272 National Security Action Memoranda (NSAMs) originating from the Meetings and Memoranda Series of the National Security Files, a sub-file of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Papers. The memoranda were sent from President Kennedy or his National Security Advisor, McGeorge Bundy, to various government agencies and staff members. Several of these NSAMs are related to Vietnam.

### **[Federick E. Nolting Oral History, 5/14/1966](#)**

This is the transcript of Ambassador Nolting's oral history, recorded in 1966. Nolting was Ambassador to South Vietnam from 1961 until the summer of 1963. Two other interviews, taken May 6 and May 7, 1970 are also available on our website.

### **[Henry Cabot Lodge Oral History, 8/4/1965](#)**

This is the transcript of Ambassador Lodge's oral history, recorded in 1965. Lodge was Ambassador to South Vietnam from the summer of 1963 until 1964, and then again from 1965 until 1967.

### **[McGeorge Bundy Oral History #1, 1964](#)**

President Kennedy's National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy's oral history is available on the website. Many topics are covered including Kennedy and Vietnam. Four other interviews of Mr. Bundy taken in 1970, 1971 and 1972 are also available on the Library's site.

### **Audio and Transcript of Broadcast with Walter Cronkite Inaugurating a *CBS Television News Program*, September 2, 1963**

This is the [sound recording of Walter Cronkite's interview with President Kennedy](#) which includes a discussion of US involvement with South Vietnam. [A transcript of the interview](#) is part of the American Presidency Project, which includes the public papers of the Presidents from 1929-2006.

### **[Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy at the Conference on Vietnam Luncheon in the Hotel Willard, Washington, D.C., June 1, 1956](#)**

Visit this URL for a transcript of JFK's speech made at this 1956 event, sponsored by the American Friends of Vietnam. The Kennedy Library website includes many speeches made by JFK from his days as a congressman to his more famous presidential addresses.

### **[Vietnam and the Presidency Conference Video and Transcripts](#)**

On March 10 and 11, 2006, the Kennedy Library hosted "Vietnam and the Presidency," a two-day conference sponsored by all the Presidential Libraries and the National Archives and Records Administration. The above noted URL includes links to videos and transcripts from the conference. Conference sessions included: (1) *How We Got In: The United States, Asia, and Vietnam* (2) *Vietnam and Presidential Tapes*; (3) *Keynote Speaker: David Halberstam*; (4) *Inside the White House*; (5) *The Media and the Role of Public Opinion*; and (6) *Lessons Learned*. Participants included General Alexander Haig, Henry Kissinger, Theodore Sorensen, General Wesley Clark, and Chuck Hagel, as well as numerous historians and news reporters.

### **[Forum: The Presidents at War \(10/4/2004\)](#)**

Visit this URL for a transcript of a 2004 Kennedy Library forum featuring former JFK advisor Arthur Schlesinger Jr., veteran political analyst Kevin Phillips, and journalist Tom Wicker who explored the legacies of our wartime presidents. Political advisor, author, and professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, David Gergen, moderated.

### **[Forum: Last Days of Vietnam \(4/22/2015\)](#)**

Visit this URL for video and a transcript of the 2015 Kennedy Library forum which began with a screening of Rory Kennedy's film, *Last Days in Vietnam*. Ms. Kennedy - youngest daughter of Robert F. Kennedy - discussed the film with White House correspondent Jonathan Karl.