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September 11, 1963

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President Kennedy
White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Kennedy:

We have always been ardent supporters of your foreign and domestic policies; however, we find ourselves quite distressed over the American Government's current position in South Vietnam. Also the recent disclosures about the alleged continuation of aid to the Special Forces by the C.I.A. disturbs us.

Why should we financially support a regime against the Communists when this said regime is not representative of the people but is as dictatorial, autocratic, and repressive as the Communists of North Vietnam and China? In one breath you have condemned the Nhus and Diem and what they stand for and in the next breath admit that we will not withdraw aid. The matter of saving face in Asia where saving face is so important to the Orientals is a fine sentiment, but it should be tempered with a realistic approach which is not a humiliating one for the United States Government.

It is true that we have no better solution to offer simply because we are not schooled in foreign diplomacy or in political science. All we know is that we resent seeing our country blackmailed and humiliated by the people who take our aid for granted.

Two articles in the September 9 edition of the "New York Times" are of interest. One states that the United States is considering a cut in Saigon aid to force reform. Next to this article is one reporting the payments by C.I.A. officials to the Special Forces. Since the C.I.A. is under the final jurisdiction of the President of the United States it is confusing to read these two conflicting thoughts.

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Vietnam

To add to our confusion, the 10 September edition of the "New York Times" reports an interview you had on a news program in which you stated a different philosophy.

In summary, we feel that:

- a. The United States Government should not support a repressive regime.
- b. Since conflicting statements by you on consecutive days is confusing to us, it must be confusing to others, including foreign governments. We feel that quiet diplomacy is better than indecisive statements aired in public.

Sincerely yours,

Carole E. Himmelfarb

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