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September 10, 1963

President John F. Kennedy
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

An article on page 1 of the New York Times yesterday, reported that the U.S. is continuing payments of a quarter of a million dollars a month to the "special forces" of Colonel Le Quang Tung in South Vietnam which were involved in the raids on the Buddhist temples there recently. We were aghast, horrified, indignant and ashamed. We protest the use of our money for such purposes which are completely contrary to our ideals, principles and beliefs.

In the same paper, page 13 is a lengthy discussion on the "propaganda war" between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. which quotes a memorandum from you to the U.S.I.A., in part, "encourage constructive public support abroad for the goal of a peaceful world community of free and independent states, free to choose their own future and their own system so long as it does not threaten the freedom of others; identify the United States as a strong, democratic, dynamic nation qualified for its leadership of world efforts toward this goal,". Of what use are these words, regardless of how many languages they are repeated in, when our actions give them the lie?

When? Oh! When will we as a nation stop trying to be Janus and recognize that a strong military with consequent militarily oriented policy is incompatible with democratic principles? The situation in Vietnam is a perfect example of the folly of arrogating to military policy the status of principle. Perhaps is is also a warning, "Change, before it is too late."

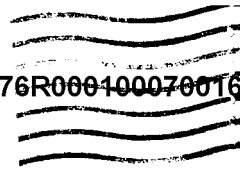
Sincerely,

John J. Runnings
Louise Ann Runnings
Mr. and Mrs. John J. Runnings

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