

President Lyndon Johnson  
Speech at Johns Hopkins University, April 7, 1965

**Task:**

- (1) Read the speech and while doing so, **HIGHLIGHT** his reasons or arguments for the American war in Vietnam
- (2) Identify his **2 strongest arguments**; **why** are they his strongest?
- (3) Get with a partner and discuss these arguments and whether or not they are valid
- (4) Consider the wider implications for American interventionism.

1	Viet Nam is far away from this quiet campus. We have no territory there,
2	nor do we seek any. The war is dirty and brutal and difficult. And some 400
3	young men, born into an America that is bursting with opportunity and
4	promise, have ended their lives, on Viet-Nam's steaming soil.
5	Why must we take this painful road?...
6	The first reality is that North Viet Nam has attacked the independent nation
7	of South Viet-Nam. Its object is total conquest.
8	Of course, some of the people of South Viet-Nam are participating in attack
9	on their own government. But trained men and supplies, orders and arms,
10	flow in a constant stream from north to south....
11	Over this war and all Asia is another reality: the deepening shadow of
12	Communist China. The rulers in Hanoi are urged on by Peking. This is a
13	regime which has destroyed freedom in Tibet, which has attacked India,
14	and has been condemned by the United Nations for aggression in Korea....
15	Why are these realities our concern? Why are we in South Vietnam?
16	We are there because we have a promise to keep. Since 1954 every
17	American President has offered support to the people of South Viet-Nam.
18	We have helped to build, and we have helped to defend. Thus, over many
19	years, we have made a national pledge to help South Viet-Nam defend its
20	independence. And I intend to keep that promise...
21	We are also there to strengthen world order. Around the globe, from Berlin
22	to Thailand, are people whose well being rests, in part, on the belief that
23	they can count on us if they are attacked. To leave Viet-Nam to its fate
24	would shake the confidence of all these people in the value of an American
25	commitment and in the value of America's word. The result would be
26	increased unrest and instability, and even wider war.
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28	We are also there because there are great stakes in the balance. Let no one think for a moment that retreat from Viet-Nam would bring an end to conflict. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another. The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. To withdraw from one battlefield means only to prepare for the next."
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