

FIELD MESSAGE

U. S. INFORMATION SERVICE

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

UNCLASSIFIED

Classification

FROM: USIS BANGKOK

TO: USIA WASHINGTON

REF:

SUBJECT: Volunteer Speaker - Dr. Walter La Feber

16

MESSAGE NO.

April 12, 1976

DATE

105/D- APR 10 1976
INFORMATION CENTER
Schaeffer
APR 27 12 59 PM '76
Beard
INFORMATION AGENCY
5/16/76
EVALUATION

AGENCY USE

ACTION

INFO.

726
IKS
TOP/6
DR
DIS
BEA

SUMMARY: DR. WALTER LA FEBER, NOLL PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY, LECTURED ON FOREIGN POLICY BEFORE MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCE AND HISTORY FACULTIES OF CHULALONGKORN AND CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITIES NOVEMBER 12 AND 13. IN HIS LECTURES, HE CONTRASTED U.S. FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE IMMEDIATE POST WORLD WAR I PERIOD WITH THE 1970'S. HE PORTRAYED THE UNITED STATES AS A RESPONSIBLE WORLD POWER ADJUSTING TO THE NEW POLITICAL REALITIES IN INDOCHINA AND INTERESTED IN THE MAINTENANCE OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THAILAND. IN HIS FORMAL PRESENTATIONS AND IN SOCIAL GATHERINGS, DR. LA FEBER SERVED TO SUPPORT THE POST'S FIRST AND THIRD OBJECTIVES REGARDING THE RESILIENCY OF CURRENT U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THAILAND.

In programs focused on current and past U.S. foreign policy, Dr. Walter La Feber, Noll Professor of History, Cornell University appeared before leading Thai scholars at the universities of Chulalongkorn and Chiang Mai, November 12 and 13. The programs were related to and in support of the post's first and third objectives which endeavor to demonstrate U.S. interest in maintaining mutually beneficial relations with Thailand and to underscore the ability of the United States to formulate positive and responsible foreign policies in response to current political developments.

In both university programs, Dr. La Feber examined with his audiences of political scientists and historians the critical similarities and differences in American foreign policy after World War I and in the 1970's. In each of the two lectures, he made the point that the U.S. in the 1970's was not likely to revert to a policy of isolation as it did in the 1920's when America chose not join the League of Nations.

PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

DRAFTED BY

E.J.S.
PCO-EJSlack:kd /TPO-PTHodai

DATE

4/12/76

APPROVED BY:

CPAO-JAMcGinley

USIS AND OTHER CLEARANCES

DPAO-MWHaratunian

UNCLASSIFIED

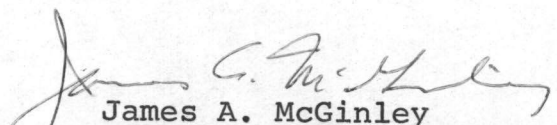
Classification



In the discussions that followed his lectures, he was questioned sharply on American foreign policy intentions. In particular, his audiences were interested in the direction American foreign policy was likely to take in the post-IndoChina period. Several of the scholars at each lecture argued that the collapse of American-supported governments in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia would tempt U.S. foreign policymakers to adopt policies similar to those of the 1920's. Some questioners asserted that the reversals in IndoChina immobilized the United States, rendering it incapable of redirecting its energies and attention to current challenges and opportunities. In rebuttal, La Feber, who had earned the respect of his audiences as a serious scholar and for his willingness to exchange ideas, reiterated his contention that the U.S. would remain a major force in world affairs. He cited several examples of recent U.S. foreign policy moves in Europe, Latin America and S.E. Asia which reflected, in his view, the ability of American foreign policymakers to formulate new policies in response to world developments.

In his programs and in informal social gatherings, Dr. La Feber was articulate and persuasive in an unassuming and friendly manner. His stature as a scholar and his extensive knowledge of history and foreign affairs made him an excellent program resource. His subject was particularly pertinent. It served to remind Thai academicians that the United States will remain a friend of Thailand and an important and viable force in world affairs.

In establishing this thesis, he argued convincingly that the United State rejects a policy of isolation as outmoded and unrealistic in the 1970's.


James A. McGinley
Country Public Affairs Officer

cc: USIA/IEA

Agency please pass other IEA posts
and three copies to USIS Bangkok.

Copy from the National Archives
Record Group 306: Records of the United States Information Agency
Office of the Associate Directorate for Programs.
Office of Program Coordination and Development
Entry P-73
VOLUNTEER SPEAKERS FILES, 1968-1981
File: LaFeber, Walter 1976