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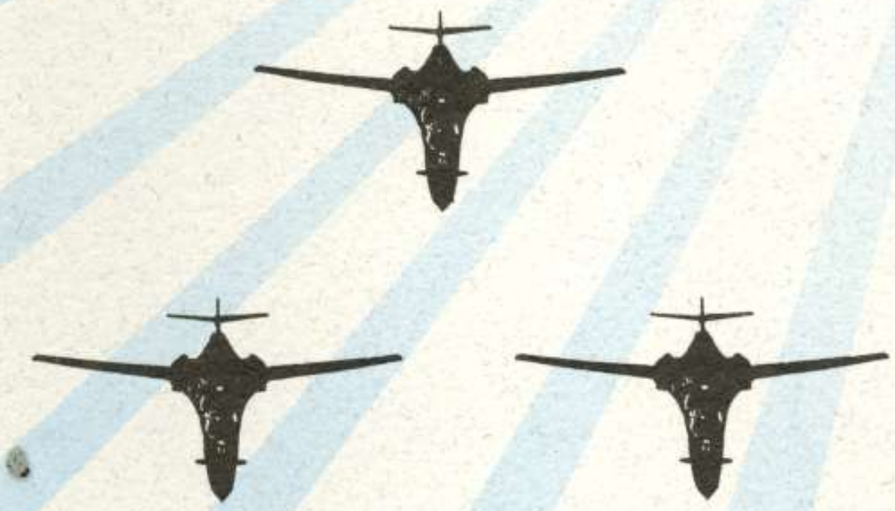
AMERICA'S CENTURY



1900 . 1910 . 1920 . 1930 . 1940 . 1950 . 1960 . 1970 . 1980 . 19

NOTEBOOK

Vietnam diary

By Lewis H. Lapham

If there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American, it is that we should have nothing to do with conquest.

—Thomas Jefferson

Ho Chi Minh City. February 8

It's possible that I've been talking only to very polite people, but as yet I haven't come across anybody who seems to bear any ill will toward America and Americans. The impression is tentative and subject to change without notice. I arrived three days ago on a plane from Paris, traveling with a British television crew on a visa issued in London, and the extent of my knowledge is as meager as the selection of postcards sold by the blind man on Tu Do Street. I don't speak the language, and I'm almost always in the company of government officials. Never before having been in Vietnam, I lack secondary sources of information as well as a basis of comparison with the attitudes in effect during the war.

Even so, I'm struck by the absence of palpable resentment. Given the devastation visited upon this country by American armies over a period of twenty years, I would have thought that quite a few people might express, or at least retain, a feeling of bitter-

third day of Tet, and the city is loud with the beeping of horns (on motorbikes), the music of radios, and the continuous rattle of firecrackers.

At Maxim's, by all reports the best and most expensive restaurant between Bangkok and Singapore, the tinseled signs pasted on the walls wish everybody (in English as well as Vietnamese) Happy New Year. The restaurant offers an eclectic menu (Peking duck, *steak au poivre*, sea slugs, and shark fins), and a string orchestra plays sentimental arrangements of "Yesterday," "I Just Called to Say I Love You," and the theme from *Doctor Zhivago*. The musicians never smile. On three successive nights I have listened to them play the same tunes in precisely the same sequence—as if they were assembling bicycles instead of manufacturing the pathos of the Occident.

Upstairs in the discotheque (so dark and so oddly lighted that everyone's teeth glow like phosphorus), boys and girls who don't look much older than thirteen waltz with the meticulous precision of marionettes. A Vietnamese gentleman seated at the bar, in the company of a bottle of Johnnie Walker that sells for $7, identifies himself as "import-export" and remarks on the suppleness with

The next day's photograph—of a naked child running in terror from the fire in which she had been clothed—instantly became the symbol of the war's aimless cruelty. The director of the television documentary envisioned a sequence dissolving from time past to time present—from the film of the terrified girl to me standing on the same stretch of road and talking about the political effect of the media images that forced the American people to bear witness to the killing done in their name.

But where, exactly, was the same stretch of road? Our translator Mrs. Thuc, who had worked during the war for the press agency in Hanoi, questioned the villagers in the roadside houses and food stalls. The houses, most of them made of mud and thatch and sticks, backed onto rice paddies in which the new plants showed a surface of delicate but brilliant green. In the distance I could see two women walking behind water buffalo.

After about an hour, Mrs. Thuc returned with the brother of the girl in the photograph. The girl, it turned out, had survived her burns and become an official celebrity in Vietnam. Her brother, a smiling and obliging man in his early thirties, explained that she was now studying medicine

AMERICA'S CENTURY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 11, 1989

Contact: Karen Larsen
415 957-1205

KQED PRESENTS "AMERICA'S CENTURY" BEGINNING OCTOBER 21

"America's Century," a six-part PBS series that examines America's rise to world power and subsequent decline of its economic, military and technological supremacy, premieres on KQED, Channel 9, Saturday, October 21 at 9:00 PM and repeat Tuesday, October 24 at 10:00 PM. The program, produced for London's Channel 4 by Panoptic and presented by KQED, San Francisco, and WNYC, New York, will continue every Saturday at 9:00 PM, and repeat on Tuesdays at 10:00 PM through November.

Written and hosted by Lewis H. Lapham, editor of Harper's Magazine and author of Money and Class in America, the series is the first television program to cover comprehensively America's successes and failures of foreign policy in this century. It includes film footage of some of the major 20th century American and international events and interviews with prominent political and military leaders, economists, diplomats and journalists such as George McGovern, Ralph Nader, Clare Boothe Luce, North Vietnamese General Giap, McGeorge Bundy, General Curtis LeMay, Stalin's interpreter Valentin Berezhkov, John Kenneth Galbraith, Malcolm Forbes, and Mexican Author Carlos Fuentes

A six-part PBS series produced by Panoptic Productions and Taft Associates; presented by KQED, San Francisco and WNYC, New York; funded by the PBS Program Development Fund and DHL Airways Express.

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Even so, I'm struck by the absence of palpable resentment. Given the devastation visited upon this country by American armies over a period of twenty years, I would have thought that quite a few people might express, or at least retain, a feeling of bitterness. Apparently not. The Vietnamese whom I encounter in the markets, on ferries, in hotel elevators and restaurants laugh at my long nose and make a point of saying that they're happy to know I'm an American. They try their musical variations of English (recently learned or long remembered) and tell me that they have friends, yes, or relatives, you see, in California, New York, and Louisiana. The children wear baseball caps marked with the insignia of American corporations and T-shirts promoting Madonna and Coca-Cola. It is the third day of Tet, and the city is loud with the beeping of horns (on motorbikes), the music of radios, and the continuous rattle of firecrackers.

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The incident yesterday at Cu Chi, a town thirty miles north of the city, suggests that maybe the gentleman is right. The television crew set up a camera on the old Highway 1 where, on June 8, 1972, a young Vietnamese girl was set aflame by napalm bombs. The next day's photograph—of a naked child running in terror from the fire in which she had been clothed—instantly became the symbol of the war's aimless cruelty. The director of the television documentary envisioned a sequence dissolving from time past to time present—from the film of the terrified girl to me standing on the same stretch of road and talking about the political effect of the media images that forced the American people to bear witness to the killing done in their name.

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After about an hour, Mrs. Thuc returned with the brother of the girl in the photograph. The girl, it turned out, had survived her burns and become an official celebrity in Vietnam. Her brother, a smiling and obliging man in his early thirties, explained that she was now studying medicine in Havana. Having also been wounded in the same bombing raid that killed his six-year-old brother, he remembered well the precise turn in the road. He showed it to us as if we were tourists come to admire a public monument. The scene proved difficult to film because of the traffic and because of the children—curious and barefoot and numbering in the hundreds—who gathered around the camera in the hope of spectacle. The brother took it upon himself to be helpful, gesturing furiously at the drivers of buses and horse carts and

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exhorting the children to silence.

Maybe it is only the Americans who still harry themselves with the memory of the war. In Ho Chi Minh City this week I have counted no fewer than three American television crews—CBS, NBC, and PBS—assigned to the same company of American combat veterans who have been touring the country in search of answers to questions that none of them know how to ask. In my own mind I notice that the war is still present. Late at night, from a fifth-floor window of the old Caravelle Hotel, I find myself looking down into the emptiness of Lam Son Square with the absurd thought that some sort of wraith or apparition will turn up with a prepared statement. In the shadow of the opera house, I look for an army colonel, resplendent in starched uniform, bringing a bulletin from General Westmoreland's headquarters at MACV, or a *New York Times* correspondent, eager and self-important, squinting at his notes in the poor light.

February 9

In an amusement park yesterday afternoon I noticed what looked to be the hull of a wrecked Chinook helicopter, painted blue and yellow and pressed into service as a playground toy. Earlier this morning, on the roof of what was once the American embassy, I picked up a shell casing, which, conceivably, could have contained the last round fired from the last outpost of American empire in Indochina. Otherwise, except for the deformed fetuses lined up in rows on the shelves of the hospital laboratory, I can see no trace of the war. Most of the junked military equipment the Vietnamese transformed into bicycles or sold as scrap to the Japanese. The fetuses, many of them stillborn after eight or nine months in utero, continue to be collected from women suffering the effects of Agent Orange. The tiny, surreal figures stare out of glass jars displayed on three walls of a fairly large room, bearing witness to the wonders of modern military science. I saw a child with three faces superimposed on a single head, another with a large eye instead of a nose, still others with webbed feet or hands and ears protruding from their chests.

The sequence at the embassy later that afternoon took a long time to arrange because the director wanted to match the angle of the light with the film of American helicopters lifting off the roof in April 1975. The navigational markings were still visible on the concrete, and without looking at the footage, I could still see the crowds pushing at the gate and the hands raised in futile entreaty toward the final chance of escape.

While waiting for the sun to drop nearer the horizon, I wandered through the vacant ruin of the embassy and tried to imagine the urgent comings and goings of the American officials bent on teaching the Vietnamese the lessons of democracy and forced to comfort themselves with so many shabby lies. They had to pretend that South Vietnam was an independent nation, that it was governed under the rules of proper constitutional authority, and that it had been treacherously attacked across an international border by a foreign enemy from the communist north.

Unfortunately, none of this was true. South Vietnam was manufactured in Washington, D.C., an artificial state engaged in a civil war, subject to the whim of American policy and money, ruled by a succession of second-rate politicians unable to command the loyalty or affection of the Vietnamese people.

But the American government couldn't afford to see or know anything it didn't wish to see or know. Not having much choice in the matter, the American commanders, both military and civilian, substituted the data bases of preferred fiction for the texts of inconvenient fact. Transposing the war into the currency of debits and credits, they spoke of "kill ratios" and "body counts," of "lucrative targets" and "acceptable rates of return." They defined the enemy as raw material to be processed into the commodity of victory. American soldiers were carried on the books as costs of production—like flares or radios or boxes of ammunition. Aircraft dropped bombs on symbolic map coordinates, not for any tactical reason but in order to send what the Pentagon called "bomb-o-grams" announcing America's courage and resolve. What was real was the image of the war that appeared on the embassy's flowcharts and computer screens. What was not real was the experience of pain, suffering, mutilation, and death.

But now the computers were gone, and so were the map overlays and most of the lights. Through a window thick with cobwebs I could see two dogs playing with a rag, and I could hear, somewhere not far off, the beeping of horns and a radio playing the *Blue Danube* waltz.

Hanoi, February 12

On the flight north, the Air Vietnam plane (a Soviet Ilyushin) follows the curve of the Gulf of Tonkin, and Mrs. Thuc, peeling oranges, announces the names of the cities on the coast—Da Nang, Hue, Quang Tri. The names remind me of old newspaper photographs of American soldiers in attitudes of exhaustion and defeat, of news conferences at which presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, standing behind the same White House lectern, reading newly revised lists and statistical projections, repeating, over a decade, the same false promise of imminent victory.

To my American ear the names of the Vietnamese cities express the tragic ironies of the war, but with Mrs. Thuc I talk about the sweetness of the oranges and the winter in Hanoi. Approaching the city from the east, I can see the railroad bridges across the Red River. The landscape looks like a Chinese painting—muted and gray, the rice paddies in the foreground giving way, at just the right point of perspective, to a line of symmetrical mountains.

February 13

As Mrs. Thuc foretold, Hanoi has the feeling of a European city, and the weather is gray and cold. The architecture is French, and the boulevards (broad and lined with trees) imitate the geometry of Paris. The people seem even poorer than their compatriots in the south, poorer and more dour. In the northern climate it isn't as easy to grow rice or tell jokes. People ride bicycles instead of motorbikes, and the sight of a car in the street is so infrequent as to imply the

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passing of a government minister or a foreign diplomat, most likely a Swede or a Russian.

Yesterday we set up the camera on the grounds of what had been the governor's palace during the years of the French dominion in Indochina. Now vacant, the palace stands within the formal boundaries of a nineteenth-century garden, about 1,000 yards from the wooden house in which Ho Chi Minh lived the last eleven years of what the Vietnamese government has canonized as the life of a saint. The obvious contrast between the two buildings (separated by a grape arbor, a row of poplar trees, and an ornamental fish pond) is meant to be understood as a political and historical metaphor.

In 1945, the politics of the Cold War in Europe persuaded America to accept the burden of empire in Vietnam, a country that in those days not one American in 10,000 would have known how to find on a map. Agreeing to help France regain its lost colony in Indochina, the United States, between 1946 and 1954, supplied military assistance worth $3 billion to a losing colonial war. The Americans paid for the French defeat and gained in return, much to their eventual sorrow, a sense of ideological mission. Imagining that we were protecting all of Southeast Asia against a global communist conspiracy, we invented the specious domino theory, in part to explain why a democratic republic was suppressing a war of independence, in part to justify the gift of American idealism to a cause that was both futile and unjust.

Built along the lines of a peasant's house in the central highlands of Vietnam, Ho's house consists of two rooms, a bedroom and a study, both sparsely furnished. The rooms are raised on stilts; directly below, in the open space where the peasant would have kept his animals, there was a plain wooden table, maybe eight feet long, and eleven wooden chairs. From this table (so said Mrs. Thuc), Ho and his advisers ran the war against the United States, drawing their plans with the stubs of schoolroom pencils.

The simplicity of Ho's military headquarters conforms to a perception of the Vietnam War that turned a generation of Americans against their own government. On one side a few small men, poor and thinly clothed, seated among flowering trees; on the other side the technological splendor of the Pentagon and a regiment of generals, heavily decorated with gold braid, talking to themselves in air-conditioned rooms.

Prior to the defeat in Vietnam, most Americans had been content to think of themselves as honorable people, unerringly drawn to the side of what was true and noble and right—not the kind of people to push women and children away from the last helicopter out of town. If the war proved them wrong in this judgment, it was because the war was never honestly declared and because, at the end of it, nobody, certainly none of its official sponsors, could say why 58,000 American soldiers were dead and another 300,000 wounded. What could be said was that America had lost not only a war but also the belief in its virtue. ■

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NOTEBOOK

Burnt offerings

By Lewis H. Lapham

Routine and ritual constitute the standard substitute for faith of the incandescent, personal, and revolutionary kind. As such faiths—Marxist or liberal-democratic—fade towards mere shibboleth, ritual and routine alone remain.

—William H. McNeill

It isn't often that anybody gets invited to attend the ritual sacrifice of a ballistic missile, and so when the chance presented itself on September 8, I made the journey south to the Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant at Karnack, Texas. Together with a delegation of Soviet observers, roughly 300 representatives of the national and international media gathered at 8:30 A.M. in a clearing in a pine forest.

The Army provided coffee and doughnuts as well as a stand of bleachers for the television cameras and two canvas pavilions under which the duly assembled witnesses seated themselves on folding chairs. A number of ushers in uniform, none of whom appeared to be of lesser rank than lieutenant colonel, handed around earplugs and sheaves of documents in which it was explained that the morning's elimination of the propulsion section of a Pershing II rocket (propellant weight—7,900 pounds; thrust—42,000 pounds; burn time—56 seconds) was the first in a series of eliminations mandated by the INF treaty signed last December by President Reagan and First Secretary Gorbachev at their summit conference in Washington. The Soviet government had begun the destruction of its own arsenal of intermediate ballistic missiles (most notably the SS-20) at ceremonies conducted in Siberia in July, and now it was the turn of the United States to comply with the treaty's fourth and most photogenic protocol.

The rocket casing—painted green and made of Kevlar—rested in a horizontal position on a steel harness bolted to the concrete floor of what looked like a loading dock at the rear of a wooden building not much bigger than a toolshed. From a distance of 1,300 feet the casing was barely visible and no more intimidating than a barrel of linseed oil. While the crowd waited for the arrival of Vice President Bush, who was traveling through Texas that week on his political campaign, the civilian officials presiding over the ceremony encouraged the reporters to ask questions. The response was listless. Most everybody present knew that he or she had been sent to a photo opportunity that would receive no more than a few paragraphs in the back of the paper or, if nothing much happened elsewhere in the world, thirty seconds on the network news. Nobody could think of anything to say.

Embarrassed by the torpor of his companions, a polite gentleman from the BBC in London asked how much it had cost to manufacture the rocket so soon to be offered as alms for oblivion. The briefing officer said he didn't know, and his manner, which was condescending, suggested that he found the question both distasteful and impious. It was as if one of Homer's Greeks standing on the beach of ancient Troy had asked the priest of Apollo how much it had cost to breed the sacrificial bull.

Vice President Bush arrived shortly before 10 A.M. in a swarm of Secret Service agents. A general stepped up to a microphone to say that the countdown now had begun at ignition minus thirty minutes. The cameramen drank the last of their coffee and refined their angles of perspective. A hawk drifted through the clearing, and a light wind ruffled the leaves of the sweet gum trees.

The firing of the rocket divided into four sequences—first a flash of white flame, then a tremendous roaring sound, then a steady orange flame dissolving into a cloud of heavy, white smoke. The effect was surprisingly unimpressive, and I thought of a child's firecracker left to burn itself out on a playground.

When the rocket had been pronounced extinct, Vice President Bush read a brief funeral oration. The words were grandiloquent—"This is the day we began to reverse the arms race. . . . [A day when] the tides of history turned and a new future dawned"—but his voice lacked resonance and conviction.

After the rocket casing had cooled, a forklift carried it a distance of about 400 feet to a trash compactor placed between the firing dock and the canvas pavilions. The forklift labored slowly and clumsily across the uneven ground, its progress under the awkward weight of its burden as hideous as it was primitive. I saw a barrel on a forklift, but I thought of a procession of half-naked men bearing a dead animal to a stone altar. The witnesses arranged themselves in a circle around the crushing machine and watched impassively until the casing had been split open with a sound like that of breaking plastic. A few of the younger and more impressionable reporters attempted a round of applause, but their motion of approval was not sustained by the rest of the crowd—presumably because any display of feeling might be construed as an expression of editorial opinion—and the sound of their tentative clapping subsided into a chagrined silence. Bush smiled pleasantly, as if at a church picnic, and handed a shard of the broken casing to the chief of the Soviet delegation. The cameras took note of the gesture, and the Vice President, late for his next appointment, stepped hurriedly into his car.

Within a matter of minutes the

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television crews were loading their cameras into trucks, and the Army was taking down its makeshift stage set. The reporters departed as abruptly and as noisily as a flock of crows. I looked for the hawk but could see nothing in the pale and empty sky except, far off on the horizon, what was left of the pillar of white smoke drifting east toward Louisiana.

Not being pressed with a deadline or harried by the chore of sending fifty seconds of film to New York or Paris, I had a chance to ask myself what I had seen, and it occurred to me that an anthropologist probably would classify the morning's ritual under the heading of paganism. Certainly it was true that the American government had offered a costly sacrifice—the 859 missiles marked for destruction in accordance with the INF treaty once were worth $2.5 billion—but a sacrifice of what and to whom?

Under the terms of the treaty neither signatory consents to destroy a single nuclear warhead, and both the United States and the Soviet Union still possess (and will continue to possess well into the next century) more than enough megatons of nuclear explosive to obliterate all the targets drawn on all the military maps in Moscow and Washington.

Nor did the broken rocket ever possess any practical value as a weapon. It was a totem, a symbol of power, a magical object not unlike a bronze disc, a shred of mole's fur, or a shrunken head. As long ago as 1950 the nuclear weapons had become so frightful that even the most militant theorists couldn't conceive of sending them against either a strategic or a tactical objective. The secular, military purpose gave way to the theological purpose of sustaining the myth of omnipotence. Because the miracle of deterrence required an arsenal that could stand as both the symbol and the embodiment of absolute power, both the United States and the Soviet Union, like druids assembling polished stones into holy diagrams, continued to pile missile upon missile, guidance system upon guidance system, bomb upon bomb.

To the skeptics who asked what was the point of collecting so many weapons when no more than a few nuclear explosions were sufficient to poison the earth, the policy intellectuals replied in the language of oracle. Deterrence, they said, was not constant, not a revelation that could be measured out in "mere numbers" (either of kilotons of warheads or casualties), but an unutterable mystery that flickered in the fire of perception and resided in the always shifting "interaction of capabilities and vulnerabilities."

What was human became divine. The sum of knowledge invested in the construction of a nuclear weapon comprised as brilliant a work of the imagination as the world had ever seen. The collective genius of hundreds of thousands of mathematicians, physicists, and engineers managed, at incalculable cost, to compress the fire of Heaven into a barrel of Kevlar.

What was temporal became spiritual. Statesmen came and went, but the towers of hideous strength remained in place beyond the curve of the horizon. Each congregation worshiped the terrible magnificence of the idols in their aluminum silos, burnishing them with greater degrees of speed and accuracy and quotients of power.

Soon after the last press bus left Elimination Area A, a tow truck removed the broken rocket casing, and in the dirt under the crushing machine, I could see nothing more than a few grains of burnt Kevlar. Before the walls of Troy, the ancient Greeks had offered burnt meats; on the plains of Texas the latter-day priests of Apollo burned, for fifty-six seconds at Firing Control Building 34-T, 7,900 pounds of propellant. To the post-Christian gods of the empty horizon they had sacrificed not an animal but an image. The INF treaty doesn't promise an end to the threat of nuclear annihilation, but it signifies the symbolic dying of the Cold War. For the time being at least the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed not to define each other as the incarnation of evil. Given a world so willingly beguiled by ritual, the pictures on the evening news and in the next day's papers conceivably might reduce the throw weights of the armed clichés that the politicians hurl, like feathered rattles, at their fear of the dark. ■

NOTEBOOK

North light

By Lewis H. Lapham

The formula "Two and two make five" is not without its attractions.

—Dostoevsky

During the course of the last twenty years I've probably written at least 100,000 words speculating on the actions, motives, attitudes, conspiracies, plots, and subplots of the Soviet Union. It is, of course, the editorial writer's task to spin the straw of rumor into the gold of this week's truth, but much of what I have had to say about the Soviet Union escapes too easily into the realm of geo-political abstraction. True, I had browsed extensively through the history of the Russian Empire, and I had read (in translation) a good deal of Russian literature. But I can't speak the language, and I had never traveled to the country to which I had assigned so many adjectives.

And, so, when I was invited to go to Moscow for a week in early May, I was glad of the chance to compare my improvisations with whatever I could see of the imperial city that for forty years has loomed like a line of dark clouds on the horizon of the American imagination. The occasion was the making of a television documentary for which I had been hired as host and narrator, and because the work entailed access to the spheres of official influence, I was allowed to see more of Moscow than I might have seen if I had been riding an Intourist bus. Like most writers set loose in a foreign country, I kept notes. As follows:

SATURDAY, APRIL 30

Approaching Moscow from the northwest, the plane from London arrives in the late afternoon. The dirt roads and tumbledown villages on the outskirts of the city look as if they had been remaindered from the nineteenth century. The mud, the broken barns, and the collapsed sheds would have been familiar to Gogol.

On the road away from the airport I am surprised by a stand of silver birch trees. I hadn't expected so rural a scene so close to the seat of Mr. Reagan's Evil Empire. We have been met by a representative from Novosti, the Soviet press agency, a man in his early thirties blessed with a sense of humor. He says that some of the more suspicious travelers from the West think that the trees are not trees but missile installations artfully disguised as trees.

The road into the city is as bleak as it is straight, the waste ground near the airport gradually giving way to a dismal arrangement of urban slums, mostly housing projects that look as if they had been constructed by children playing with blocks. The twilight smells of low-octane fuel and sour hay.

About two miles from the center of the city, the road from the airport becomes Gorky Street. It is a wide avenue bordered by trees and a few buildings of monumental proportion. In the public squares on both sides of the avenue most of the statues appear to have been erected to the memory of poets, which is preferable to the memory of generals. In the windows of what I take to be shops, I can see a few meager displays of canned goods, cloth, and pharmaceuticals. The attempts at advertisement lack even a rudimentary talent for graphic design. The man from Novosti explains that Gorky Street corresponds to Fifth Avenue or the Champs Elysées. If so, Gorky Street suffers in the comparison. No neon lights or sidewalk cafés. No billboards, fountains, or shiny new automobiles. Little else but ragged lines of poorly dressed people waiting for buses with shopping bags made of string.

The feeling of depression vanishes in the instant that Gorky Street descends in a long, gentle slope toward the immense space of the Marx Prospect. In the distance I can see a medieval tower and the facade of one of the palaces inside what is obviously the Kremlin. The effect is playful. The buildings are gigantic but look as if they belong in a fairy tale. The red brick tower reminds me of a sand castle. The palace wall is the color of lemons.

LATER THAT NIGHT

At dinner in the National Hotel I'm struck by the sense of having traveled backward in time. The dining room, high-ceilinged but dimly lit, presents the aura of impoverished romance that I associate with restaurants on the left bank of the Seine in the early 1950s. White linen tablecloths, old chandeliers, a balalaika band in traditional costume playing gypsy music. The room is nearly empty. At a table near the band, a man and a woman, both Russian and both expensively dressed, drink champagne. Beyond them, through a high window trimmed with embroidered linen, the yellow walls of the Kremlin palace have been illuminated with floodlights.

The television crew numbers ten people in various states of nervous an-

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ticipation. We sit together at a long table staring at the food, which tastes as poor as it looks—stale bread, cucumbers in sour cream, onions, fried potatoes cut so small and so thin that they resemble cornflakes.

The hotel was built in 1903 and sustains the illusion of faded elegance. The double staircase (stone softened by worn oriental rugs) leads grandly upward through the scent of boiled cabbage and disinfectant. Each landing boasts the presence of a night porter, a stern-faced woman seated at a desk who (so it is said by the man from Novosti) guards the premises against the debaucheries likely to invade hotel corridors in the capitalist West. The room to which I've been assigned is small and austerely furnished, the bed so narrow as to imply a reproach. In the corners of the ceiling I notice four small fixtures that resemble light sockets. I would like to think they were listening devices placed by the KGB, possibly as a subtle form of flattery. The grand hotels in London and New York soothe the guest's vanity with chocolate and bath oil. In Moscow the hotels offer the far more princely compliment of pretending that their guests might say something relevant to the safety of the state.

SUNDAY, MAY 1

May Day, the socialist saturnalia commemorating the Chicago Haymarket riots of 1886. The weather blue and clear, a light breeze rustling the enormous red banners draped across the fronts of the buildings on Marx Prospect. We have been given permission to set up our cameras at a point not too far from Lenin's tomb, and at 9 A.M. we begin showing our cards of official invitation to the first of several army officers commanding the lines of soldiers surrounding Red Square. Each officer in turn studiously examines my face and my passport photograph. But the security seems to be relatively lax, the procedures far less rigid than those I would expect at a corporate headquarters building in New York.

Promptly at ten o'clock, First Secretary Gorbachev and the members of the politburo (all wearing the familiar gray hats and overcoats) appear on the balcony of Lenin's tomb, and the square fills with the sound of heroic music—pre-recorded and much amplified by loudspeakers. Two columns of people surge into the square from the northwest. They carry banners, balloons, paper flowers, placards mounted on bicycle wheels, cherry blossoms, posters of Marx and Engels and Lenin, but mostly of Lenin.

The crowd moves at surprising speed, many people running to hold their places in line, and the impression is one of an impetuous and headlong rush. It is as if I am looking at a river, balloons and posters and paper flowers bobbing in the current of humanity, the tumultuous flood bringing gifts to a society that places more of its faith in its people than it does in its machines.

Throughout the entire procession, nobody in the watching crowd applauds or sits down. Around me in the Tribune of Honor, a stone grandstand that can accommodate 10,000 people under the Kremlin wall, I see people dressed in what I take to be their Sunday best. The clothes lack even the trace elements of style, but the little girls have tied strands of bright ribbon in their hair. The parents smile and murmur to their children in low and loving voices. The little boys stand as still as glass.

The procession ends as abruptly as it began. An immense *corps de ballet* of perhaps 1,000 children performs gymnastic exercises with colored streamers and branches of cherry blossom, and then, precisely at noon, the music stops, the members of the politburo vanish into thin air, the last flags flutter past St. Basil's Cathedral. The emptiness is so sudden that I can imagine the procession having taken place in a dream. On the cobblestones of Red Square I cannot see a single scrap of paper.

TUESDAY, MAY 3

At least five times a day I'm accosted by somebody offering to change currency at the black-market rate—four rubles to the dollar as opposed to the official rate of two-thirds of a ruble to the dollar—and on the sidewalk in front of the National Hotel (i.e., on Marx Prospect within bow shot of the Kremlin arsenal), the cabdrivers, as antic as the carnival hustlers in *Petrushka*, voice their spiels in heavily accented English, promising the dream of heaven (fur hat? nightclub? pretty girl?) at prices commensurate with those in Berlin or Amsterdam. Again I'm reminded of Europe in the early 1950s, when the dollar was still a victorious currency and it was possible to buy a hat or a hotel room for a carton of American cigarettes.

Last night in the hotel bar I listened to a Latvian gentleman (resident of London and by profession an exporter of cut-rate goods to the Eastern bloc) discuss the commercial possibilities implicit in *perestroika*.

"The Soviet economy is a train wreck," he said. "See for yourself. These people have nothing, and there's nothing they wouldn't buy if they had a little money."

We drank the rest of the vodka (neat, in delicate Czechoslovakian shot glasses with gold rims), and the Latvian trader—suddenly conspiratorial—glanced over his left shoulder and unveiled his theory of the geoeconomic devastation of the West.

"Imagine an alliance between the Russians and the Japanese," he said. "The Russians supply the natural resources and the market. The Japanese put up the technology and the goods. They trade a few islands in the North Pacific that nobody ever heard of, sign a treaty, and good-bye Fortune 500."

He laughed uproariously and pointed to what looked like a game show on the television set behind the bar. About twenty contestants, all of them apparently very angry, were playing a variation of roulette and shouting at one another.

"Isn't that the worst thing you ever saw?" the Latvian said. "The color is as bad as the oranges the Russians get from Cuba."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4

Together with Tomlinson and Bygott-Webb, the two historians traveling with the television documentary, I have taken to walking around Moscow in the evenings. This is easy to do, and I'm surprised that I am not followed by the expected premonitions of dread. Not once have I been stopped by a man in uniform. Every now and then an army truck rumbles

at high speed through an empty square, but it doesn't occur to me to think of Le Carré's Moscow Center or the Lubianka Prison. Were I a Russian citizen, a journalist, say, writing satirical articles for *Glasnost*, or the son of a man recovering his political orthodoxy in a labor camp, I might not feel quite so careless. But as a tourist who doesn't speak the language, I'm given a pass through the lines of murderous polemic. Instead of being seized with claustrophobia, I'm astonished by the feeling of immense space. The city seems as wide as the wide-reaching sky that curves over the Black Sea. Like the walls and palaces of the Kremlin, the buildings in the city tend toward the vast and the grandiose, painted in soft pastel colors and often decorated with sentimental sculpture. Seen from a distance and a flattering perspective (i.e., without the intrusion of the modernist concrete structures donated by Stalin and Khrushchev), the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture reminds me of Paris. So does the profusion of trees, many of them just turning green in what has been a late spring. On even the broadest avenues, the street lamps cast little more than a dim glow, and the cobblestoned side streets, utterly dark, might as well lead further backward in time, possibly as far as the year 1848. Tomlinson and Bygott-Webb wonder what Moscow might have looked like before it was burned by Napoleon.

THURSDAY, MAY 5

The waiters take pride in their surliness. If asked for fish and there is no fish, the waiter announces the news—"Is not possible"—with an air of perverse triumph. On a particularly barren evening the waiter can make the same announcement about the lamb, the beef, the stew, the green vegetables, and the black caviar—all listed on the menu but all, alas, not possible. After the waiter has repeated the response four or five times, his voice falls into the rhythm of a liturgical chant. It is as if he were singing a dirge for the consumer society, celebrating, in mournful and solemn antiphons, the sublime truth of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the October revolution.

On leaving the hotel yesterday morning, I noticed six men setting to work to unload a truck parked under an archway adjacent to the hotel's kitchen. It was a small truck, not much bigger than a grocery van. From what I could see of its cargo (twenty or thirty boxes of Finnish glassware), the labor of unloading didn't present insuperable difficulties. When I returned to the hotel at five o'clock in the afternoon, the six men were still busily at work. They had carried off no more than half the boxes, and I understood they had performed a wonderful feat. Somehow they had managed to move only ten or fifteen boxes through the distance of twelve feet and eight hours. Their inspired bungling had triumphed over logic, commerce, boredom, political necessity, and the mechanics of time and space. What brilliant excuses could they have invented? What fantastic stories could they have told themselves? Were the same six men ordered to load the ammunition into a tank on the Polish frontier, I'm sure they could manage to wreck the gun carriage.

"Lazy, shiftless, and stupid," the Latvian gentleman had said of the Russians that night in the hotel bar, "as dumb as stones."

But maybe the Latvian looked too darkly through too bourgeois a lorgnette. I thought of Goncharov's intrepid Oblomov, the hero of the novel named in his honor, who, through the entire 400 pages of the text, seldom gets out of bed, and only once, and then under duress, leaves his house.

FRIDAY, MAY 6

In a practice studio on the sixth floor of the Bolshoi Theater I watch Galina Ulanova, age seventy-nine, teach a master class to Alla Michalchenko, age maybe twenty-four, on the subject of *Giselle*. A bare room filled with light, the plain oak floor canted at an angle of fifteen degrees. The walls painted the color of peaches, a washbasin, four chandeliers, a few wooden benches under a rectangular mirror, the pianist, a woman in her late fifties playing a Bechstein piano with a tone as luminous as an Impressionist painting.

Miss Ulanova carries herself with the strength and grace of a sixteen-year-old girl. She speaks softly in Russian, putting her pupil through the different passages of the dance, gently moving her right hand in a gesture so small as to be nearly invisible. I don't know why I am so delighted with the scene. Maybe because of its clarity. Certainly I am no student of the ballet, but I understand the seriousness of the lesson, and I am content to watch the drafting and redrafting of the figures on the imagined canvas in the frame of a timeless space.

I think of Oblomov, and of Lenin talking to a wall in Switzerland, and it occurs to me that in Moscow I cannot avoid the victories of the poet's play with words—of an art or a life or an idea obstinately transcending the prosody of fact. Backstage, the Bolshoi Theater is as shabby as the National Hotel—the same atmosphere of faded grandeur and jury-rigged intelligence, of dressing rooms too warm in summer and too cold in winter. The obstacles merely excite the mind to more fantastic leaps. The spirit eludes the nets of circumstance, shrugs off the snow and the politicians, slips away from the police, and sets itself free to dance. Or makes icons of a political ideology as crazy as Nijinsky.

SATURDAY, MAY 7

On the way out of town, toward the airport, I sit in the front seat of the car sent by Novosti, exchanging cigarettes with the driver who admires Clint Eastwood. Neither of us speaks the other's language, but we both laugh at the recklessness with which the driver defies, at 50 m.p.h., the principles of sound traffic management. I look at the now familiar buildings on either side of Gorky Street, as threadbare as they were a week ago but oddly comforting because they don't insist on the dream of chrome-plated success or badger passersby with the news of their own failure. In the square under the sovereignty of his not very well-wrought statue, I see Pushkin contemplating a crowd of schoolchildren gathered around a man with a toy bird, and think of a Russian proverb, "A word is not a sparrow, once it flies, you can't catch it." ■

AMERICA'S CENTURY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 11, 1989

Contact: Karen Larsen
415 957-1205

KQED PRESENTS "AMERICA'S CENTURY" BEGINNING OCTOBER 21

"America's Century," a six-part PBS series that examines America's rise to world power and subsequent decline of its economic, military and technological supremacy, premieres on KQED, Channel 9, Saturday, October 21 at 9:00 PM and repeat Tuesday, October 24 at 10:00 PM. The program, produced for London's Channel 4 by Panoptic and presented by KQED, San Francisco, and WNYC, New York, will continue every Saturday at 9:00 PM, and repeat on Tuesdays at 10:00 PM through November.

Written and hosted by Lewis H. Lapham, editor of Harper's Magazine and author of Money and Class in America, the series is the first television program to cover comprehensively America's successes and failures of foreign policy in this century. It includes film footage of some of the major 20th century American and international events and interviews with prominent political and military leaders, economists, diplomats and journalists such as George McGovern, Ralph Nader, Clare Boothe Luce, North Vietnamese General Giap, McGeorge Bundy, General Curtis LeMay, Stalin's interpreter Valentin Berezhkov, John Kenneth Galbraith, Malcolm Forbes, and Mexican Author Carlos Fuentes. Mr. Lapham returns to the scene of many of the events described, and the program features dramatic shots of such locations as the Bay of Pigs, Panama Canal, Disneyland in Tokyo, United Fruit Company's former leisure club in Guatemala, and Ho Chi Minh's headquarters in Hanoi, among others.

In San Francisco, each episode of "America's Century" airs twice weekly, beginning Saturday, October 21 at 9:00 PM and Friday, October 24 at 10:00 PM, and runs for six weeks. For more information about "America's Century" please call (415) 553-2888.

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A six-part PBS series produced by Panoptic Productions and Taft Associates; presented by KQED, San Francisco and WNYC, New York; funded by the PBS Program Development Fund and DHL Airways Express.

KQED
500 Eighth St.
San Francisco,
CA 94103

AMERICA'S CENTURY

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KQED
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San Francisco
CA 94103

Program Fact Sheet

Program Summary

America's Century is a six-part series that examines the rise of the United States as a world power during the 20th century and the triumphs and tragedies that occurred as the United States exercised that power. It is the first television program to cover comprehensively America's successes and failures of foreign policy in this century.

Broadcast Dates

Weekly, for six weeks, beginning in October 1989, on most PBS stations.

Host & Writer

Lewis H. Lapham, editor of *Harper's Magazine* and author of *Imperial Masquerade*, to be published in early 1990.

Production Elements

Footage of major American and international historical events since 1898.

Location shoots throughout the world, including the Bay of Pigs, Ho Chi Minh's headquarters in Hanoi, the Iwo Jima monument in Arlington National Cemetery, the Panama Canal, Chiang Kai-shek's grave in Taiwan, Disneyland in Tokyo and United Fruit Company's former leisure club in Guatemala.

Interviews of prominent leaders, economists, military leaders, diplomats and journalists, including:
George McGovern, Milton Friedman, Ralph Nader, the late Clare Boothe Luce, North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap, McGeorge Bundy, General Curtis LeMay, Stalin's interpreter Valentin Berezhkov, Mexican author Carlos Fuentes, John Kenneth Galbraith and Malcolm Forbes.

Episode Descriptions

Six one-hour programs in the following order:

"Coming of Age" (1898-1939): America's reluctance to enter into "entangling alliances."

"Familiar Enemies" (1917-1989): The U.S.-Soviet relationship since the Russian Revolution.

"The Limits of Power" (1945-1963): The peak of American supremacy.

"Imperial Masquerade" (1945-1975): America's secret wars and covert actions.

"Blowing the Fortune" (1963-1989): How the world's richest nation turns into the largest debtor.

"The Next Century" (1976-1990s): In a world no one nation can control, what should America's role be?

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Produced by	Panoptic Productions, London, for Channel 4, Great Britain
Presented by	KQED, San Francisco and WNYC, New York.
American Presentation funded by	PBS Program Development Fund and DHL Worldwide Express
Production Credits	Nicholas Fraser, series editor and executive producer Susan Crowther, producer and director Peter Bate, producer and director John Taft, co-producer and series originator
Press Contact	Karen Larsen 415.957.1205

AMERICA'S CENTURY

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Program Credits

Lewis H. Lapham Host and Writer

Lewis H. Lapham, editor of *Harper's Magazine* , is a well- known author, speaker and the host and executive editor of *Bookmark*, a weekly PBS series. He is the author of *Fortune's Child*, a collection of essays (1980), *Money and Class in America* (1988) and the upcoming *Imperial Masquerade*, a book of essays to be published in early 1990.

A San Francisco native, Lapham began an illustrious writing career as a reporter for the *San Francisco Examiner* and later for *The New York Herald Tribune*. He was a contributing writer to *The Saturday Evening Post* and managing editor of *Harper's Magazine* before becoming editor-in-chief. He was a syndicated newspaper columnist and has written for many other publications such as *Life, Commentary, Fortune, Forbes, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, National Review, Elle, The American Spectator, Vanity Fair, Parade, Channel, Maclean's* and *The London Observer.*

Lapham has lectured at many of the nation's leading universities and has appeared on American and British television, National Public Radio and Canadian Public Radio. He was educated at Yale University and Cambridge University.

Nicholas Fraser Series Editor and Executive Producer

Nicholas Fraser has worked as a reporter and producer throughout America, Eastern and Western Europe and Latin America. His company, Panoptic Productions Ltd., was founded in London five years ago and is one of the most successful "new wave" small independents started in Britain in the 1980s. It has since produced a great range of series for Channel 4, including *Opinions, My Britain, The Other Europe* (a series about Eastern Europe) and *The Big Company* (a series about the culture of large American corporations). *America's Century* is Panoptic's largest project to date.

Fraser is a council member of the London-based Charter for Broadcasting Freedoms. He has written for *Newsweek, The Times of London, The Listener, The Sunday Times of London* and *Broadcast*. He writes regularly on broadcasting for *The London Observer.*

Susan Crowther Producer/Director

Susan Crowther has worked in television documentaries in the United States and Britain for the past fifteen years. Before moving to the United States in 1982, Crowther produced the current affairs programs, *Newsnight, Tonight* and *Tuesday Documentaries* for the BBC. Most recently she produced, wrote and directed two programs for the PBS/ITV series *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age*. She has also produced investigative pieces for WDVM's *Eyewitness News* and worked as a producer for the *Masterpiece Theatre* series.

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Peter Bate Director

Peter Bate is an award-winning filmmaker and the series producer of the prize-winning BBC/PBS production *The Africans*, shown in twenty countries around the world. Other recent credits include *Hanging Fire*, a series on Israel for the BBC, Central Television's *Scandal*, airing in 1990, and many segments of *Panorama*, the BBC's most prestigious current affairs program. Bate has fifteen years experience making documentary films in more than 40 countries. He is currently working on *Legacies*, a biographical series scheduled for production in 1990.

John Taft Co-Producer and Series Originator

John Taft, most recently a co-producer of *After the War*, is the author of *Mayday at Yale*. Taft received his undergraduate degree at Yale University and an M.A. in economics and foreign relations from Oxford University. In addition to serving as series co-producer for Panoptic, his own company, Taft Associates, is developing a number of projects for network TV in the United States.

DHL Worldwide Express

The United States presentation of *America's Century* is provided by the PBS Program Development Fund and DHL Worldwide Express, the world's oldest and largest international air express company, celebrating its 20th year in business. It is the first time DHL has funded a PBS program.

Based in Redwood City, California, near San Francisco, DHL provides express mail and package service to more than 50,000 locations in 183 countries. DHL has five types of express services: International Documents Service for business correspondence, Worldwide Package Express for commercial shipping, USA Overnight Service for letters and packages, WorldMail for high-volume international business mail and FAXLYNK for satellite transmission of documents.

AMERICA'S CENTURY

Press Contact:
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Backgrounder

The transformation of the United States from an isolationist republic into a global nation state is one of history's most dramatic stories. *America's Century* is the first television series to examine America's 20th century rise to dominance and its short-lived experiment at creating an American empire.

The six-part PBS series was commissioned by Channel 4 of Great Britain and produced by Panoptic Productions, a British company. It is presented on PBS by KQED, San Francisco, and WNYC, New York, and will begin in October 1989 on most PBS stations.

America's Century chronicles the evolution of America's foreign policy history, beginning with the "Big Stick" of Teddy Roosevelt's gunboat diplomacy, and moving chronologically through Woodrow Wilson's internationalism and moral politics, the Depression, the shock of Pearl Harbor, the United States' short-lived monopoly of The Bomb, the military "adventures" in the Third World, and America's flip-flop from richest nation to largest debtor.

Lewis H. Lapham, journalist and editor of *Harper's Magazine*, is the host and writer of *America's Century*. The series also features interviews with many of the prominent leaders and personalities who have influenced and observed America's policies since World War II, including McGeorge Bundy, Milton Friedman, George McGovern, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Eric Sevareid, Ralph Nader, North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap, the late Clare Boothe Luce, Malcolm Forbes and General Curtis LeMay, among others.

To demonstrate where American foreign policy was made and un-made, Lapham takes viewers beyond America's borders for on-location shoots that include the Bay of Pigs, Ho Chi Minh's headquarters in Hanoi, the Panama Canal, the Iwo Jima monument in Arlington National Cemetery, and United Fruit Company's former leisure club in Guatemala.

America's Century also makes extensive use of archival footage of the most dramatic events and social movements during the 20th century, including the "great wars," the Jazz Age, the Depression, the McCarthy hearings, Vietnam, and the turbulent Sixties.

America's Century's first program, "Coming of Age," shows America slowly being pulled into its role as world savior, from the Spanish-American War in 1898 to Germany's blitzkrieg in Poland in 1939, when the United States had to deal once again with what appeared to be another European war.

"Familiar Enemies," the second episode, steps back and looks at the on-again, off-again relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union since the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The third program, "The Limits of Power," chronicles America's age of supremacy from 1945-1963, when the United States held what seemed to be its permanent place as the world's economic, technological and moral leader.

"Imperial Masquerade," the fourth program, covers 1945-1975 when much of United States military and foreign policy was carried out in the form of secret wars and covert actions in places such as Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Indochina and Africa.

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"Imperial Masquerade," the fourth program, covers 1945-1975 when much of United States military and foreign policy was carried out in the form of secret wars and covert actions in places such as Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Indochina and Africa.

The fifth program, "Blowing the Fortune," examines the United States transformation from the world's richest nation in 1963 to the largest debtor by 1989.

America's Century's final episode, "The Next Century," begins with Jimmy Carter's moral politics and takes us through the 1980s as America begins to face the limits of its economic and political power.

Looking at the ongoing tension in America between the forces of isolationism and global responsibility, *America's Century* makes the case that while America's dream of empire is no longer possible — or even desirable — the country's economic, military and democratic influence has not faded. As we enter the last decade of the 20th century, America, and other nations, will continue to discuss what role the United States should play in bringing about prosperity and peace.

The *America's Century* series can trace its origins to many of the people associated with *After the War*, a one-hour PBS program about the Marshall Plan televised in 1987. In addition to Lewis Lapham, who was host of *After the War*, *America's Century* co-producer John Taft and series editor and executive producer Nicholas Fraser worked on *After the War*. Susan Crowther, who has worked on several BBC and PBS documentaries is co-producer and co-director of *America's Century* along with Peter Bate, an award-winning director who has worked on documentaries in more than 40 countries.

United States presentation of *America's Century* is provided by the PBS Program Development Fund and DHL Worldwide Express, the world's oldest and largest international air express company, based in Redwood City, California. This is the first time DHL has participated in the funding of a PBS program.

AMERICA'S CENTURY

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America's Century: Learning the Limits of Power

From Isolationism to World Savior

Can a democratic republic build an empire and remain a democracy? Can a nation founded on the principle of laissez-faire government lead the world's nations toward international government? How will the United States adapt to a new limited definition of what it means to be a superpower?

These and other questions are explored in *America's Century,* the first television series to cover U.S. foreign policy during the 20th century.

While the possibility of an American empire has faded, the United States' influence remains enormous. Still the world's most powerful nation, America is re-evaluating its role, while the vision of a world divided into spheres controlled by the United States and the Soviet Union is replaced by that of a world with no monopolies of power and influence.

In six one-hour programs, *America's Century* examines America's rise to world power and the subsequent decline of its economic, military and technological supremacy. The series is hosted and written by Lewis H. Lapham, editor of *Harper's Magazine*, and the author of *Money and Class in America.*

The series combines footage of the 20th century's most significant events and social movements with on-location shoots from around the world. Each episode includes interviews with some of the most prominent economists, journalists, political leaders and foreign policymakers who have shaped and observed America's role on the world stage.

Before America attained status as a great power in the first half of this century, its foreign policy for more than 100 years consisted of following the advice of George Washington to "beware of entangling alliances." Theodore Roosevelt's charge at San Juan Hill during the Spanish American War was America's first step towards empire building. The torch of international involvement was then picked up by Woodrow Wilson, who pushed a reluctant America into a late but decisive role in World War I.

Despite its heroic role in World War I, America got cold feet and joined the Old World in rejecting Wilson's attempt to form the League of Nations. *America's Century*'s first program ends with Germany's blitzkrieg in Poland, starting a war destined to eliminate any remnant of American isolationism.

The 18 years that followed World War II may be considered the peak of America's world supremacy. Having made the world "safe for democracy," the victorious United States began what many historians call " America's Century."

As the master rebuilder of Europe and Asia, and as the sole owner of The Bomb, the United States became step-parent to the Western World. It also became the Western World's protector from the "menace" behind the newly- defined "Iron Curtain." *America's Century* explores the implications of the Cold War and the construction of what President Dwight Eisenhower first described as the "military-industrial complex."

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The Limits of Power

If the beginning years of the Cold War were a zenith of unilateral American strength, the Kennedy years were the zenith of hope in America. The "golden boy" was at the helm, leading "the best and the brightest." *America's Century* analyzes the dreams, the reality and the results of John F. Kennedy's presidency on America's foreign policy. But the threat of violence during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the shock of the Kennedy assassination closed the door on the last dreams of an empire. Never again would an administration have the power to make overt foreign policy decisions so heedless of public and world opinion.

World War II was the last declared war, but not the last war. As *America's Century* points out, covert actions and secret wars soon became the United States' *modus operandi* on foreign soil. From Korea to Guatemala, from the Bay of Pigs to Iran, and, most of all, in Vietnam, the battles of the Cold War were waged. The gap between the power brokers in Washington and the American public became larger, perhaps, than it would ever be again, the Iran-Contra scandal not withstanding.

In 1963, the United States was the world's richest nation; less than a generation later, America is the world's largest debtor. During the 1960s, the United States was still the spendthrift of the west, and the stock market was booming. But Lyndon Johnson chose to continue what Kennedy had started in Indochina, and the bills would come due all too quickly in the next decade.

In the 1970s the United States retrenched as the cost of Vietnam and unredeemable foreign debt in the developing world coincided with the energy crisis and threatened to trip up America's dream of control. To help pay for the American lifestyle, the United States dropped the gold standard.

As if to reinforce its economic vulnerability, America was plunged into moral crisis with Watergate. The scandal ushered in Jimmy Carter as president, elected to salve the wound of a country feeling politically and economically betrayed by its leaders. With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, it was as though the recession of the previous decade — complete with 17 per cent interest rate — had never happened. But to finance the Reagan administration's "economic turnaround," the United States accumulated more debt than in the previous 200 years combined. By 1989, the United States was spending more than $100 billion a year just to service the interest on that debt.

An analysis of America in the 20th century would not be complete without examining its relationship with the Soviet Union. *America's Century* looks searchingly at the sometimes arms- length, sometimes "eyeball- to- eyeball" relationship between the two, from friendship to enmity, from war allies to suspicious world powers. The newest stage of the superpower relationship is symbolized in *America's Century* by footage of George Bush presiding over the destruction of the first nuclear missile in the summer of 1988.

The technological age has made the idea of empire obsolete. The increasing connectedness of world finances has created a global economy. Threatening ecological realities are making shared anti-pollution initiatives imperative worldwide. No nation can protect its people from acid rain, radioactivity, satellite spying or drug problems. And neither the United States nor the Soviet Union can afford an arms race when its costs, like its material, threaten to destroy the societies it is intended to protect.

In this environment, the United States has had to come to grips with the limits of its power. *America's Century* concludes by exploring how, and to what extent, America has redefined its power and purpose. More importantly, it poses the question, "What are America's prospects for democracy and prosperity?" It is a question that will continue to frame the debate among social, economic and political leaders for years to come as America faces the reality that it is no longer omnipotent.

AMERICA'S CENTURY

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Suggested Newspaper Listings

"America's Century: Coming of Age"

PBS airdate:

The first program in a six-part series that examines America's rise to world dominance and its problems in dealing with the limits of power, "America's Century: Coming of Age" shows America slowly being pulled into its role as world savior, from the Spanish-American War in 1898 to Germany's blitzkrieg in Poland in 1939, when the United States had to deal once again with what appeared to be another European war.

"America's Century: Familiar Enemies"

PBS airdate:

Will the United States and Russia ever become allies again? "America's Century: Familiar Enemies" looks at the on-again, off-again relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union since the 1917 Russian Revolution. How did two young nations become the world's superpowers, and what is the price each has paid to maintain the appearance of an empire?

"America's Century: The Limits of Power"

PBS airdate:

In the 18 years from 1945 to 1963, the United States held what seemed to be a permanent place as the world's economic, technological and moral leader. The rebuilding of Europe and Japan was followed by the battle against the worldwide threat of communism. Fear of communism spawned the national security state: the CIA, the Pentagon and the National Security Council. "America's Century: The Limits of Power" follows the foreign policy education of the United States as it takes the mantle of democratic savior.

"America's Century: Imperial Masquerade"

PBS airdate:

An America committed to making the world safe for democracy was unwilling to support covert wars. "America's Century: Imperial Masquerade" covers the 1945-1975 period when much of U.S. military and foreign policy was carried out in the form of secret wars and covert actions in places such as Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Indochina and Africa. Two early successes in Iran and Guatemala led to the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the United States' most costly attempt to police the world – Vietnam.

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"America's Century: Blowing the Fortune"

PBS airdate:

How did the world's richest nation become the world's largest debtor in just 26 years? "America's Century: Blowing the Fortune" witnesses the transformation of a country that could buy anything into a nation that now spends more than $100 billion a year on the interest alone for the national debt. The prosperity of the 1960s surrendered to the Age of Scarcity and the crushing cost of oil, as America dropped the gold standard for good.

"America's Century: The Next Century"

PBS airdate:

For the first time in history, no nation believes it can build and maintain a world empire. "America's Century: The Next Century" shows the world's leading nations coming to grips with the reality that they no longer control events as they traditionally have. America now works interdependently with Europe, Japan and, cautiously, the Eastern Bloc nations. What has America learned about the limits of power? What should the United States' role be?

AMERICA'S CENTURY

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America's Century Episode Highlights

Coming of Age Premiere Episode

Airdate: Late October, prime time, over most PBS stations.

America's dominance of the world after World World II and the subsequent erosion of its economic, military and technological supremacy in just 26 years is one of the great unexamined stories of the modern era. *America's Century* is a six-part PBS series that examines the domestic and international forces that created and tarnished America's star performance on the stage of world power. Until now, no television series has developed such a comprehensive vision linking Teddy Roosevelt's gunboat diplomacy and Woodrow Wilson's politics of morality with the draft card burnings of the 1960s and "the auctioning of America" in the 1980s.

Produced by Panoptic Productions, London, and Taft Associates, Washington, for Channel 4, Great Britain, and presented by KQED, San Francisco and WNYC, New York, *America's Century* is hosted, narrated and written by Lewis H. Lapham, editor of *Harper's Magazine* and author of *Money and Class in America.*

The premiere episode, "Coming of Age," focuses on America's transformation from an isolationist nation to the role of global police officer, a role that was established by the end of World War II. Beginning with the Spanish-American War in 1898 and ending with the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, "Coming of Age" shows an America uneasy with its power. The episode chronicles the tension between America's isolationist traditions and the call for "entangling alliances" from Europe and the diplomatic elites of America.

"Coming of Age" includes interviews with Jeane Kirkpatrick, George McGovern, Eric Sevareid, George Ball, Milton Friedman, John Kenneth Galbraith, U.S. arms negotiator Paul Nitze and former presidential advisor Clark Clifford. The episode also includes an interview with the sister of John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles, Eleanor Dulles, who talks about her presence at the Versailles Treaty deliberations in 1919.

"Coming of Age" includes on-location shoots in Washington, D.C. and the Panama Canal, and archival footage covering Teddy Roosevelt's presidency, World War I, America's Jazz Age and the Depression.

A six-part PBS series produced by Panoptic Productions and Taft Associates; presented by KQED, San Francisco and WNYC, New York; funded by the PBS Program Development Fund and DHL Worldwide Express.

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America's Century Episode Highlights

Familiar Enemies Episode 2

Airdate: Late October, prime time, over most PBS stations

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"Familiar Enemies," *America's Century's* second episode, traces the roller coaster relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union since the Russian Revolution in 1917. In the 72 years since the birth of communism, America and the Soviet Union have been friends, enemies, allies and nervous associates, in a sometimes convenient relationship that has allowed each to portray the other as a source of evil.

From Lenin's rallying cry against America's capitalist oppression to President Ronald Reagan's warning about the Evil Empire, "Familiar Enemies" shows how two young nations grew to become the world's greatest superpowers, locked in a dance that prevents each from dominating the world with its own version of a moral empire.

The second episode includes interviews with leaders from countries that helped define the American - Soviet relationship, including General Curtis LeMay, diplomat McGeorge Bundy, U.S. arms negotiator Paul Nitze, Russian negotiator Colonel General Nicolai Chervov, Caspar Weinberger, pioneer union leader Victor Reuther and a rare interview with Stalin's interpreter, Valentin Berezhkov.

The program ends with the further thawing of the Cold War: the coming of Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* as President George Bush presides over the destruction of a United States nuclear missile in the summer of 1988.

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America's Century Episode Highlights

The Limits of Power Episode 3

Airdate: Early November, prime time, on most PBS stations

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"The Limits of Power" covers what many have called the peak of the American Empire, the 18 years from 1945 to 1963 when America's supremacy as the leader of the world was unquestioned. From the rebuilding of Europe and Japan following World War II to the fight against communism, the United States became the world's golden child, wealthy and confident. It was the time of the Ugly American, acting out a cultural imperialism based on economic dominance.

The third episode also looks at the foundations of the Cold War and the infancy of the national security state apparatus of the CIA and the renamed Department of Defense. "The Limits of Power" follows the gradual building of the military-industrial complex, despite the warnings of President Eisenhower and even the National Association of Manufacturers.

This episode of *America's Century* includes interviews with linguist and political commentator Noam Chomsky, foreign policy advisor McGeorge Bundy and a recent interview with the late Clare Booth Luce, diplomat, congresswoman, and wife of *Time* magazine founder Henry Luce.

"The Limits of Power" ends with the Cuban missile crisis and the assassination of John F. Kennedy, who embodied the crusading American, willing to fight communism at the Berlin Wall, in Indochina or anywhere else.

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America's Century Episode Highlights

Imperial Masquerade Episode 4

Airdate: Mid- November, prime time, on most PBS stations

America's dominance of the world after World World II and the subsequent erosion of its economic, military and technological supremacy in just 26 years is one of the great unexamined stories of the modern era. *America's Century* is a six-part PBS series that examines the domestic and international forces that created and tarnished America's star performance on the stage of world power. Until now, no television series has developed such a comprehensive vision linking Teddy Roosevelt's gunboat diplomacy and Woodrow Wilson's politics of morality with the draft card burnings of the 1960s and "the auctioning of America" in the 1980s.

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The fourth episode of *America's Century* covers the story of America's military "excursions" from the end of World War II to the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam. A nation committed to making the world safe for democracy was unwilling to support a government policy of secret wars and covert operations in countries such as Cuba, Guatemala, Iran, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The frustration and deaths in Korea were a fresh reminder that empire-building has a price.

Justified as a reaction to the Iron Curtain, the Domino Theory, and the "we will bury you" communist threat, America's policymakers called for action behind the public's back. Two early successes - putting the Shah in power in Iran in 1953 and overthrowing Guatemala's government in 1954 - led to the Bay of Pigs fiasco and America's most costly attempt to police the world - Vietnam - which some critics termed a prolonged covert action.

We see the moralism of Kennedy's "best and brightest" at the highest levels of government, while on the street draft card burnings, anti-nuclear protests and race riots were saying, "enough is enough."

The program ends with helicopters rising from the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon as America withdraws from Vietnam, the Watergate scandal and an American public - disillusioned with the government's foreign and domestic behavior - electing Jimmy Carter president.

In addition to historical footage of the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Watergate, "Imperial Masquerade" includes interviews with George McGovern, former CIA director William Colby, Mexican author Carlos Fuentes and a rare interview with General Vo Nguyen Giap, commander of North Vietnam's army during the Vietnam War. The segment also features on-location shoots at the Bay of Pigs, Ho Chi Minh's headquarters in Hanoi and the offices of the United Fruit Company in Guatemala.

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America's Century Episode Highlights

Blowing the Fortune Episode 5

Airdate: Late November, prime time, on most PBS stations

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How did the world's richest nation become the world's largest debtor in just 26 years? *America's Century's* fifth episode, "Blowing the Fortune," lets us witness the transformation of a country that could buy anything into a nation that now spends more than $100 billion a year just on the interest for the national debt.

"Blowing the Fortune" begins with the prosperity of the 1960s and a booming stock market, when the United States paid for both the Great Society and Vietnam. But the bills came due in the 1970s, as the costs of guns and butter forced the United States to drop the gold standard for the first time. With an oil shortage and bad Third World debts, Americans no longer could afford the American way of life.

By the 1980s, America was behaving like the heir that has squandered its fortune but won't give up its spending habits. "Blowing the Fortune" shows the United States auctioning its "heirlooms" - major companies, real estate and the dollar - to keep from going bankrupt. From 1980 to 1988, the United States accumulated more debt than in the previous 200 years combined. What will America's checkbook look like in 10 years?

"Blowing the Fortune" features interviews with some of the most prominent players and observers of the international economy, including Malcolm Forbes, John Kenneth Galbraith, Milton Friedman, Ralph Nader and Victor Reuther.

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America's Century Episode Highlights

The Next Century Final Episode

Airdate: Late November, prime time, on most PBS stations

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The final episode of *America's Century* looks at America's prospects for the future. For the first time in history, no nation believes it can build and maintain a world empire. Detente has turned into *glasnost* and *perestroika.* "The Next Century" looks at America's new place in the world - as a nation working interdependently with Japan, Europe and, cautiously, the Soviet Union.

This program shows the world's leading nations coming to grips with the reality that they can no longer control events as they once did. No country can protect its people from acid rain, radioactive clouds, satellite spying, drugs and currency speculation.

"The Next Century" steps back and examines the lessons America has learned about power. The United States is not a nation in decline, but rather a country that is beginning to understand the limits of its power. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union can afford the blood and costs of the spiraling arms race.

With interviews that include Caspar Weinberger, McGeorge Bundy and Mexican author Carlos Fuentes. "The Next Century" asks the questions that must be answered as America redefines its power and its purpose.

What kind of power? The power to do what, to whom . . . and why?

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The Global Connection

DHL finds PBS series a match.

The broadcast of the television series, *America's Century* on PBS this fall marks the debut of a new national program underwriter, DHL Worldwide Express. In partnership with the PBS Program Development Fund, DHL is providing the complete funding necessary to bring this six-part examination of American foreign policy to an American television audience. The matching of DHL, a worldwide courier service with a network of destinations in more than 180 countries, with a television series with such an international focus was no coincidence.

According to KQED Vice President for Marketing and Development, Christopher S. Dann, "We approached DHL suspecting they might have a business interest in presenting this series to public television audiences. We suspected they might want to identify themselves particularly among business people interested in European business and economics."

DHL was receptive. "DHL has a natural commitment to international understanding," says Richard Rossi, Director of Marketing Services. "We think it's important that Americans understand the shift toward a global community. *America's Century* should inspire us to explore the cultural and economic opportunities that develop as our international ties deepen."

Dann adds, "DHL's underwriting of *Americoca's Century* demonstrates both a wise investment and a gratifying tribute to the millions of Americans whose individual support for public television makes it possible for PBS to invest in such programming."

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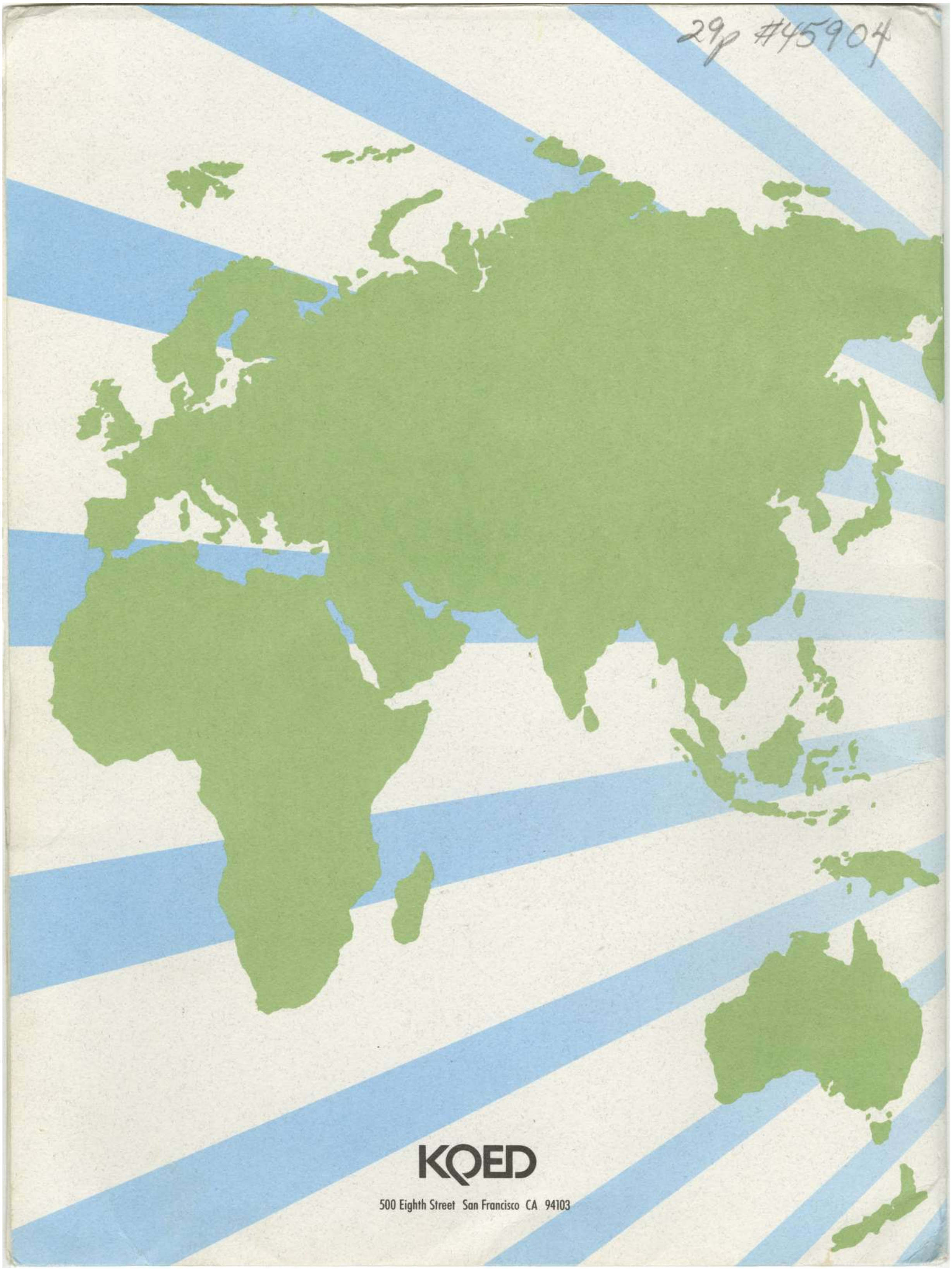

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