

VIETNAM

myth & reality

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"In times of war the first casualty is truth."—U Thant

HAROLD LEVIEN



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Harold Levien

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"The Vietnamese are fighting a war of national independence, not a war of communist aggression. The war cannot be brought to an end until the United States and her allies recognise this fact."—30/7/67.

"I am deeply concerned that so many people are willing to turn a blind eye, or at best become hardened, to the sheer human suffering involved in the continuation of this conflict."

"The cruelty of this war and the suffering it has caused the people of Vietnam are a constant reproach to the conscience of humanity."—30/8/66.

"... If the present trend continues, I am afraid that a direct confrontation, first of all between Washington and Peking, is inevitable. I hope I am wrong. I am afraid we are witnessing today the initial phase of World War III." 12/5/67.—U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations.



U. Thant.

"Is the U.S. laying such great stress on maintaining its military credibility that it has become blind to other attributes of power that are at least as important to American world leadership . . . Credibility for political wisdom will have a greater influence on the world Washington aspires to lead than credibility for disposing of overwhelming military might."—Kahin and Lewis in *The United States in Vietnam*.

Foreword

This booklet is important for three reasons—it represents the right to dissent, it questions the glib statements of Australian policy in Asia, and it acknowledges a wide range of responsible world opinion against the Vietnam war.

As soon as Australian troops begin to fight and die in Vietnam the pressure to silence dissent becomes intense. The propaganda machine works overtime to put the best possible constructions on U.S. and Australian policy. Steadily we insulate ourselves against outside opinion whether expressed by U Thant, Pope Paul, Senator Fulbright or Thich Nhat Hanh.

As a nation we lose sight of the moral issues involved in our own military action, overlook the wishes of the Vietnamese people themselves, and shut our eyes to the appalling casualties they suffer.

If nothing else will, the threat of World War III should stimulate in Australians a determination to re-appraise with complete integrity the basis and the implications of the Government's Vietnam policy and the courage to change it, even where this involves an admission of error. This booklet is to be commended as part of that stimulus.

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Introduction

James Reston, Associate Editor of *The New York Times*, in his recently published book, *The Artillery of the Press*, comments that the increasing power of the U.S. and in particular of the President requires "not a more compliant Press but a relentless barrage of facts and criticism as noisy but also as accurate as artillery fire. . . . Our job in this age is not to serve as cheerleaders for our side in the present world struggle but to help the largest number of people to see the realities of the changing world in which American policy must operate."

Has the Australian press permitted the Australian public "to see the realities of the changing world" as far as the Vietnam war is concerned? The reason for publishing this booklet is the emphatic belief that it has not. It brings together some of the most relevant observations on the war and relates them to the major arguments which the U.S. and Australian Governments employ to justify their involvement. I believe these observations demonstrate such arguments to be myths.

The bulk of the comment has been collected from press, radio, U.S. government and U.N. reports, from articles, journals and books whose authors and editors have established reputations for objective reporting and comment, and from statements by persons whose positions impel readers to treat their views with respect. None can be accused of special pleading for the communist cause.

* * *

There are several alarming conclusions which follow from the material presented in the following pages:

First, the U.S. and Australian Governments have shown a Goebbels-like disregard for the truth in defending their Vietnam involvement. No amount of gobbledegook can disguise the fact that this began as a civil war, and that this arose from an American puppet government's implacable opposition to the provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreement, which ended the war with the French, and from the people's reaction to the corrupt, inefficient, oppressive dictatorships which they have had to suffer under the various Saigon regimes since 1954.

Secondly, despite the magnificent technology of television, radio and press and their enormous volume of news, the great majority of people knows perilously little of the realities of the Vietnam conflict. Trivia, superficial reportage and the continued repetition of the conventional myths keep them in a cocoon of ignorance. Yet Vietnam is probably the most critical international issue since World War II.

Thirdly, civilians and combatants alike are being killed and maimed in staggering numbers.

Fourthly, there is a great public apathy towards this barbarity. The Aberfan mine disaster in Wales, the Hobart bushfires, the Winton air crash, the Voyager disaster, produced concern and sympathy throughout the nation. But more than the equivalent of all these tragedies occurs in Vietnam daily.

A mine disaster, a bushfire, an air crash, a naval tragedy leads to a detailed public investigation to establish the cause. Thousands of man hours are spent in searching out every relevant fact. (Our governments claim that human life is sacred.) Yet the community hastily accepts the decisions of a handful of leaders which destroy life and produce suffering to an extent which makes this the most barbarous war in history.

The Western democracies raised their voices in horror against the barbarism of Nazi Germany; but officially we rationalise behaviour which has a similar result when perpetrated by the U.S. and its allies. And the few voices which *are* raised against the mass slaughter of troops and civilians and the torture of captured troops or suspects are silenced by the tactic of labels, and an overwhelming counter-offensive of "we are doing this in the cause of 'freedom'."

Fifthly, the double standards of thinking which promote this compassion on the one hand and unconcern on the other extend to the formulation of political policy. In 1956 the U.S. and Australia, to their credit, deplored Soviet intervention in the Hungarian civil war designed to frustrate the popular will and ensure that a Soviet-oriented Government would be maintained in office. Yet today, the U.S. and Australia pursue a policy exactly similar in principle—but with two major differences in detail: first, the Soviet Union could argue that because the two countries had a common border it couldn't afford a change in the status quo in a world hostile to a militarily inferior Soviet Union; second, the Soviet intervention although ruthless and inhuman lasted for a few days and caused a level of destruction which pales into insignificance by comparison with Vietnam. Could the West ever again moralise about another Hungary? How would the U.S. react to the U.S.S.R. sending to North Vietnam over half a million troops and 1,000 aircraft to eradicate a popular revolutionary movement?

Sixthly, there is an immensely dangerous precedent. If successful, the U.S. may well act similarly whenever the Administration believes U.S. interests to be threatened. Every social revolution could produce another Vietnam.

Finally, there is a real and increasing risk that the conflict could escalate into a third World War.

These conclusions are drawn from the following examination of the principal arguments which the U.S. and Australian Governments employ to justify their Vietnam involvement.

Myth A: We are fighting to protect the freedom of nations to choose their own form of government.

The Reality

1. *The Australian* of September 14th, 1967, reported: "One of America's most influential service chiefs, Admiral R. L. Johnson, believes Vietnam will remain a U.S. garrison area after the war ends. His opinion is known to be supported by senior Australian cabinet ministers and defence chiefs. Speaking in Canberra yesterday, Admiral Johnson, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said he could not foresee a complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam if the war ended. The garrison theory is a complete rejection of the pledge made by the allies of South Vietnam at the Manila Summit almost a year ago." (This was a pledge to withdraw all allied forces after a negotiated settlement.)

2. Despite the recent elections the present South Vietnamese Government, like each Government since the 1954 Geneva Agreement, is a military dictatorship with little popular support. There is the same Thieu-Ky military partnership which was in power before the elections. The following facts are relevant to any assessment of these elections.

First, Thieu and Ky were elected as President and Vice-President by a minority vote of 34.8% of those permitted to vote. The candidates opposed to the military ticket received over 65% of the vote; but this vote was split between ten candidates. All of these, except one minor candidate, stood on positive peace proposals. Only one candidate, Mr. Dzu, had the courage to recommend immediate direct negotiations with the N.L.F.; he has now been sentenced to nine months imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine on a financial charge.

Second, the Ky-dominated Assembly disqualified six candidates from standing for the Presidency on the grounds that they were "pro-Communist" or "neutralist". Unlike Mr. Dzu, they proclaimed support for negotiating with the N.L.F. *before* the Assembly endorsed the candidates. In a large advertisement in *The New York Times* of May 21st, 1967, the Buddhist Socialist Bloc in Vietnam (self-described as "a loose coalition of religious and secular groups—including Catholics—under Buddhist guidance, founded in 1964 as a vehicle for articulating a *third way* in Vietnam") stated:

"By disqualification of any candidate who openly supported peace and neutrality, and through a series of other technicalities, the range of choice was kept within "safe" limits. Premier Ky was

not willing to take a chance on submitting the question of peace and neutrality to the electorate—and yet peace and neutrality were the prime considerations behind the demand for elections.

“To protest this ‘sleight-of-hand’ by the Premier, the more politically active followers of the Buddhist Socialist Bloc organised a series of massive demonstrations last May and June, demonstrations which even attracted significant support from the Vietnamese army. Poorly reported and totally misunderstood in the West, these demonstrations were crushed by a joint Washington-Saigon action whose sheer brutality probably alienated more Vietnamese from the Saigon Government than any single action.

“In the year that has passed since that massacre, the popular desire for an end to the fighting has become greatly intensified—and the Ky Government’s repressive measures against those who dare to articulate the popular wishes have increased accordingly. Anti-American feeling has grown at an equal if not faster rate.”

Two of the disqualified candidates were very important political personalities, including one, Au Truong Thanh, who was Ky’s finance minister until he resigned from the Government, along with several other cabinet ministers, just prior to the 1966 Manila Conference on the grounds that the Government was corrupt, inefficient, and using police-state methods.

Third, large areas of South Vietnam were disfranchised because they were under Viet Cong “control” or “influence”. *The New York Times* of September 3rd, 1967, reported “known ‘communists’ and ‘neutralists’ were barred from voting in Government controlled areas”. (In October, 1965, three demonstrators were shot in Saigon’s public square on the Government’s charge of supporting a neutral South Vietnam.)

Fourth, according to *The New York Times* of September 3rd, 1967: “The Vietnamese peasants have always felt that the wisest course was to vote for the man organising the election.” According to Professor Mirsky, Co-director of the Asian Studies Centre at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, U.S.A., who was in Vietnam during the election campaign, the provincial chiefs instructed the peasants to vote for the Thieu-Ky ticket. The ABC’s Saigon reporter broadcast on August 31st, 1967, that these instructions were often combined with threats. *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* of September 5th, 1967, stated: “Generals Thieu and Ky had unfair advantages both in freedom to move about the country and in active support from officials and police.”

Fifth, the Generals had enormous publicity advantages through the firmly controlled press and radio. Considerable restrictions were placed on the civilian candidates’ publicity. They were permitted only one 15-minute speech in each of the 43 provinces.

Finally, the coup de grâce: On September 30th, 1967, a

special committee of South Vietnam’s Constituent Assembly established to investigate alleged election irregularities voted 16-2 to recommend that the Constituent Assembly invalidate the elections “because of irregularities concerning *more than half* of South Vietnam’s 9,000 ballot boxes”. The Chairman of the Assembly said he expected the Assembly members to pass the recommendation *even though the Government might arrest some of them if they did* (my italics). However, on October 2nd the Assembly voted 58-43 to reject the recommendation and declared the elections valid. The Chairman of the Assembly subsequently resigned as Chairman, stating: “The election was rigged . . . I have seen nine fraudulent elections in South Vietnam.”

It is therefore hardly surprising that the election result contrasts with a poll sponsored by the U.S. C.B.S. radio and television network which found that 81% of Vietnamese in Government-controlled areas want peace above all as against 4% who want victory over the Viet Cong above all.

Americans for Democratic Action* commented on the South Vietnam poll on September 26th, 1967: “It is clear we are in league with a corrupt and illiberal government supported by a minority of people.”

3. “According to Article 12 of the new Constitution: ‘The state respects freedom of thought, speech, press, and publishing as long as it does not harm personal honour, national security, or good morals.’ . . . The same rulers who until now have shown little or no respect for fundamental civil liberties will decide what constitutes (such harm) . . . Ky has given the world some indication of what he meant by a ‘free government’ . . . (when he) announced on May 14 that if the candidate ‘is a Communist or if he is a neutralist, I am going to fight him militarily.’” U.S. Senator Stephen Young writing in *The Progressive*, July, 1967. Senator Young went on to comment: “The one right which is guaranteed unconditionally is the right of private property . . . I do not consider this Constitution is even a step toward democracy . . . in South Vietnam.”

Mr. Dzu, the Presidential candidate with the second largest number of votes, was arrested on September 29th on the charge that he had called an illegal press conference. He was to have led a large protest march against election irregularities on the

* Americans for Democratic Action, whose chairman is Professor J. K. Galbraith, is a national organisation of academic and professional people and labour and civic leaders established in 1947 to promote liberal ideals and liberal legislation. It has always supported the Democratic Presidential candidate. ADA’s leaders were appointed to key posts in the Kennedy administration.



"We've still got 1-3rd of the pacified 3-5ths of the southern 1/2 of Vietnam on our side."

day he was arrested. On October 2nd the police using clubs and tear gas smashed an attempted demonstration against the elections by 200 university students.

4. Thich Nhat Hanh, Director of the Saigon School of Social Studies, a Buddhist and an anti-communist, said on October 27th, 1966, during his visit to Sydney: "The Ky regime has begun a reign of terror that makes it indistinguishable from Diem's Government (which governed from 1954 until 1963). I think the best I can hope for when I go back to Vietnam is to be gaoled. . . . The Ky Government represents the U.S. and not the people of Vietnam." At the time of writing Thich was in Paris.

5. According to French writer and authority on Vietnam, Professor Devillers, President Diem in 1957 began a series of manhunts against all opponents and critics in which thousands of political prisoners were gaoled without trial; opposition was not tolerated. Eight million peasants were forcibly resettled in "strategic hamlets". Warner in *The Last Confucian* shows that peasants were forced, usually at gunpoint, to leave their ancestral villages, which were then burnt down. Their rice was destroyed and their livestock killed or confiscated. They were forced without pay to build fortifications around their new settlements; the government troops were often brutal, and the result was to

drive many more peasants over to the Viet Cong. "Without warning, preparation or consent, peasants saw their homes, and often their belongings, burned behind them. They were uprooted at bayonet point and planted down in new areas which had not been prepared to receive them . . . they lost not only their homes but also their land."

The South Vietnamese Embassy in Canberra in its Bulletin of 1/11/1963 said: "For nine years the Diem Government had pursued a dictatorial and tyrannical policy . . . the natural and necessary outcome had to be the overthrow of the Diem regime." Such an admission surely provides even South Vietnamese justification for the revolutionary activities against the Diem Government until Diem was overthrown by a council of generals and shot in 1963. And according to Thich Nhat Hanh the present government is indistinguishable from Diem's.

Yet in 1957 R. G. Casey, then Minister for External Affairs, told the Australian Parliament: "President Diem's Government has won widespread support. What President Diem and his colleagues have achieved in South Vietnam provides an example and an inspiration to the whole area." And on 14th May, 1961, the then Vice-President Johnson after visiting Saigon described South Vietnam as "a bastion of freedom".

6. The U.S. reported 160,000 desertions from South Vietnam's forces between January, 1964, and September, 1965. This is about 1 in 4 of all conscripts. In May, 1966, U.S. Defence Secretary McNamara testified that the desertion rate had reached between 10,000 and 12,000 a month. (*The New York Times*, May 12th, 1966.) Late in 1966 the U.S. decided to withdraw the South Vietnamese army, apart from a few battalions, from all military action. Since then the South Vietnamese have been used mainly for the "pacification" of conquered areas—but under the direction and control of the U.S. army.

Newsweek's correspondent in South Vietnam commented (*Newsweek*, October 9th, 1967): "The South Vietnamese army is sick like the society which created it . . . A Vietnamese colonel recently remarked to me: 'The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong fight like lions while our soldiers fight like rabbits . . . They have something in their heads and hearts and know what they are fighting for'." The correspondent continues: "The South Vietnamese . . . usually have no reason for wanting to fight at all . . . Yet they come from the same stock. Often, they even come from the same families."

Before his tragic death in Vietnam on February 21st, 1967, Bernard Fall was Professor of International Relations at Howard University, Washington. His many books and articles on Vietnam established him as a leading world authority on Vietnam.

In *The New York Review* of February 9th, 1967, Fall writes: ". . . in Vietnam during 1966 a total of 20,242 defectors came out of the jungle, bringing with them a total of only 1,963 weapons—that is, most of these defectors were unarmed civilians, a fact which is not denied (in Saigon)."

7. In a statement issued on their return from South Vietnam on January 15th, 1965, several Democrat members of Congress said: "We are backing a government there that is incapable of winning a military struggle or of governing its people. We are fighting a determined army of guerillas that seems to enjoy the co-operation of the countryside, and that grows stronger in the face of foreign intervention. Extending the war to North Vietnam would not seriously weaken the Viet Cong, who depend for 80% of their weapons on captured U.S. equipment, and for food on a sympathetic local peasantry."

8. Jerry Rose, *Time-Life* correspondent in Saigon, wrote in 1961: "To one degree or another 70% to 90% of the entire peasant population now leans toward the Viet Cong. . . . though Communist led it is *not* founded on a Communist ideal . . . its prime objective is *against* something, not *for* something . . . the Viet Cong is against the Government of Diem."

Douglas Pike, author of *Viet Cong*, works for the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office, a Government organisation. According to Bernard Fall he is the No. 1 Viet Cong expert. "In his job", Fall wrote in *The New York Review* of February 9th, 1967, "Pike sees more material (on the N.L.F.) than anyone except the N.L.F. leaders themselves. He has read reports from captured Viet Congs (and) translations of the huge quantities of captured documents. . . ."

"What struck one most forcibly about the N.L.F.," Pike writes, 'was its totality as a social revolution first and as a war second. . . . Even more important, it openly communicated its intentions to the population'. Here is an enemy who, according to Pike, lives by a highly moralistic mystique 'far more moral than ideological. Virtue was the golden word. . . . Idealistic appeals abounded'. To see how far we are from that kind of appeal one has only to look at downtown Saigon."

"Pike agrees that an overwhelming number of the original N.L.F. supporters were not necessarily Communist but anti-Diem, simply because they had no other choice: 'Many of the original participants in the N.L.F. turned to it because they were denied participation in South Vietnam's political process, even in the role of loyal opposition. . . .' If there is any illusion in America that the same opposition is being offered any better alternative today, that illusion should be dispelled by what one of the highest civilian officials of the Ky government told me:



—Petty in *The Australian*

'If somebody wants to oppose us, let him do it in Hanoi; not here'."

9. The Royal Institute of International Affairs (London) in its Survey for 1959-60 commented: "The greatest threat to the future of the Saigon Government probably lay in North Vietnam's economic progress and in particular to the degree of success achieved by Hanoi in demonstrating its ability to solve North Vietnam's perennial economic problems."

Within areas it controls full time the National Liberation Front has carried out land reform, and set up its own schools, hospitals and social services. *The Australian's* defence correspondent Kenneth Randall stated on 1st July, 1965, "No government of South Vietnam has ever created and held popular support to match the Viet Cong."

The *Melbourne Herald* of 29th January, 1966, reported Marshall Ky as saying "The Communists are closer to the people than we are."

10. John Kenneth Galbraith, author of *The Affluent Society*, appointed by President Kennedy as U.S. Ambassador to India in 1961 and now Professor of Economics at Harvard University, in an address in Washington on April 15th, 1966, commented: "The United States has a reliable association with

nations only if it has a clear identification with the needs and aspirations of their people. A government (in Saigon) that reflects the interest of the people will reflect their suspicion of foreigners, their struggle for a national identity, and their terrible war weariness. It will not fight."

Neil Sheehan, *The New York Times* correspondent in South Vietnam from 1964 to 1966, reported on October 20th, 1966: "The military junta in Saigon would not last a week without American bayonets to protect it."

11. In other areas of the world the U.S. has not seemed interested in protecting the freedom of nations to choose their own form of government. On April 21st, 1967, the Greek army ejected a popularly elected government and established a police state. Many distinguished politicians and liberals were gaoled. Some were shot. The U.S. took no action to help prevent the military from extinguishing democracy. Instead the U.S. promptly recognised the new government. In 1966 the Argentine army ousted a popularly elected government. U.S. recognition followed within a few days. In 1965 the U.S. landed 27,000 troops in the Dominican Republic to suppress a popular rebellion against a tyrannical government. In 1964 after a right-wing coup in Brazil the newly installed head of state received U.S. Presidential congratulations within 24 hours. In 1961 the U.S. Government assisted Cuban emigrés to invade Cuba in the Bay of Pigs fiasco despite overwhelming evidence of popular support for the Cuban regime.

Are we really fighting to protect the freedom of nations to choose their own form of government?

Myth B: We are fighting to protect South Vietnam from external aggression.

The Reality

1. All persons fighting on the side of the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) in South Vietnam are Vietnamese. And official U.S. statements show that even with the greatly increased infiltrations from the North over 70% of the N.L.F. troops are from the South. Official Pentagon reports show that out of a total NLF-North Vietnamese force of 300,000 (as at September, 1967) only 50,000 (17%) are North Vietnamese. But before large-scale U.S. intervention in 1964 there were few North Vietnamese in the South. Senator Mansfield, U.S. Senate Majority Leader, stated on June 16th, 1967: "When the bombing of North Vietnam began there were some 400 North Vietnamese soldiers in South Vietnam." On June 28th the U.S.

Defence Department confirmed that this was so, following an enquiry from *The Washington Post*.

The New York Times correspondent in Vietnam, David Halberstam, on 6th March, 1964, stated: "The war is largely a conflict of southerners fought on southern land." And L. A. Crozier, a Government adviser on South Vietnam to Australia's Department of External Affairs, stated on 29th January, 1965: "The great majority of the rank and file of the guerillas come from the villages of the South not the North." Gerald Stone in *War Without Honour* comments: "Even if all North Vietnamese troops and all infiltrators withdrew in a negotiated cease fire, the Viet Cong would still have 150,000 men under arms, retain a large portion of the country, and enjoy considerable popular support." (Since Stone wrote this the Viet Cong numbers have greatly increased.)

The Australian of September 16th, 1967, reported: "The Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Miki, met yesterday with the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Rusk, for talks on Asian problems. Informed Japanese sources said Mr. Miki told Mr. Rusk that Japan . . . did not believe the Viet Cong was a tool of North Vietnam. Japan believed that the Viet Cong was fighting a war of liberation and was not completely dominated by Hanoi."

2. *The New York Times* of 8th February, 1965, quoted U.S. military advisers to the effect that the majority of Viet Cong weapons were U.S.: captured, lost in battle, or sold by enterprising South Vietnamese. A U.S. Army report shows that nearly twice the number of weapons were lost to the Viet Cong as were captured from them. Since then, as U.S. involvement has increased, China and the U.S.S.R. have supplied an increasing proportion of Viet Cong weapons. The Viet Cong have not a single aircraft.

3. The South Vietnamese Government is assisted by over 525,000 U.S. servicemen (which General Westmoreland now wishes to increase to 600,000), over 47,000 South Koreans and 8,000 Australians. The U.S. has supplied an enormous armoury of modern weapons and is currently operating over 1,000 bombers and helicopters equipped with the most destructive non-nuclear bombs yet conceived.

4. North Vietnam and South Vietnam are not separate states. The Geneva Agreement of 1954 which terminated the war between the Viet Minh and the French, stated: "The military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. . . . In order to ensure . . . that all necessary conditions obtain for the free expression of the national will, general elections shall be



"They make a wilderness and call it peace."—Tacitus, 100 AD.

held in July, 1956, under the supervision of an international commission."

In his *Memoirs*, Sir Anthony Eden writes: "The Viet Minh held out tenaciously for elections within six months and only after long and difficult negotiations eventually accepted the postponement to two years insisted upon by France and the United Kingdom."

The cease fire came only after a firm agreement on holding unifying elections and agreement on the date of these elections. *These elections were to complete the war of independence which the Viet Minh had waged for eight years.* However, Diem, the President of South Vietnam, violated the Agreement and refused to hold the elections.

In his memoirs *Mandate for Change*, published in 1963, former President Eisenhower stated that had free elections been held in Vietnam, 80% of the population would have voted for Ho Chi Minh. The U.S. refused to support free elections in South Vietnam in 1956 because "we were sure we would lose them" according to John Gorge, Director of the Institute of International Studies, University of Oregon, who served for some years in the U.S. State Department.

Walter Lippmann, the internationally famous American

newspaper columnist, the doyen of American political commentators, whose column is published regularly in *Newsweek* and scores of newspapers, wrote in April, 1966: "South Vietnam is not a nation fighting for its independence against a foreign invader. South Vietnam is not now and has never been a separate nation. The people who are fighting in South Vietnam today are all of them Vietnamese, whether they are recruited in the South or infiltrated from the North. What is more, if there is any national South Vietnamese leader, his name is Ho Chi Minh. There is no comparable national leader in Saigon."

5. The Geneva Agreement provided that pending reunification neither zone was to form a military alliance with a foreign power nor offer it any military bases. No introduction of troop reinforcements or arms (apart from replacements) was permitted. Although the U.S. did not sign the Agreement it issued a statement pledging to take no action to violate the Agreement. However, in February, 1955, the U.S. took charge of the training and organisation of the South Vietnamese army, bringing into Saigon several hundred "military advisers". This was five years before the formation of the N.L.F. Between 1955 and 1960, U.S. military assistance to Diem's Government amounted to \$300 million per annum.

The reports of the International Control Commission show that the U.S. repeatedly violated the Geneva Agreement, noting "many instances of the arrival of U.S. military personnel and war materials in South Vietnam". The I.C.C. Sixth Interim Report says that from 1955 its authority was continually flouted by the Diem regime. "Broadly satisfactory co-operation" was received from the regime in the north.

6. Since the essential conditions of the Geneva Agreement had been breached—failure to hold elections, forming a military alliance with the U.S., receiving U.S. arms and training—South Vietnam could hardly expect North Vietnam to continue to respect the Geneva Agreement. As Kenneth Randall, *The Australian's* defence correspondent, put it: "When a military struggle for power ends on the agreed condition that the competition will be transferred to the political level, can the side which violates the agreed conditions legitimately expect that the military struggle will not be resumed?"

According to a U.S. State Department report issued in 1961, the Viet Cong did not use violence to try to overthrow the Government between 1954 and 1956. Thus it was not until the Diem refusal to hold elections as laid down in the Geneva Agreement that the revolution began.

7. In their important new book (perhaps the most lucid

and thorough coverage of the Vietnam conflict yet published), *The United States in Vietnam*, George Kahin (Professor of Government at Cornell University and Director of Cornell's South-East Asia Programme) and John Lewis (Associate Professor of Government at Cornell) comment:

"The insurrection . . . arose at Southern initiative in response to Southern demands. The N.L.F. gave political articulation and leadership to the widespread reaction against the harshness of Diem's government. It gained drive under the stimulus of South Viet Minh veterans who felt betrayed by the Geneva Conference and abandoned by Hanoi . . . they lost patience with the North and finally took matters into their own hands . . . The most knowledgeable non-communist French specialists have long known this, but their views have been studiously ignored in Washington. . . . The NLF is not 'Hanoi's creation'; . . . The insurrection (arose) . . . not as a consequence of any dictate from Hanoi, but contrary to Hanoi's injunctions" (my italics).

Kahin and Lewis point out that not until September, 1960, did Hanoi give support to the NLF. Even then, aid was slow in coming. As late as 1963 General Harkins (Westmoreland's predecessor) stated: "The guerillas are not being reinforced or systematically supplied by North Vietnam, China or anywhere else" (*Washington Post*, March 6th, 1963).

They add: "A crucial distinction remains between American and Northern intervention: while American support of Saigon is critical in that Saigon would quickly collapse were it withdrawn, the NLF, even if it received no assistance from Hanoi, could probably sustain a widely based guerilla resistance for many years against both American and Saigon forces, and could, on its own, overcome Saigon if the latter lost U.S. backing."

8. In his new book, *To Move a Nation*, Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs at the time of Kennedy's assassination (after serving as Director of the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research), states: "Kennedy made it clear to me that what he most wanted to avoid was turning Vietnam into an American war." After Kennedy's death, Hilsman says, the military increased the pressure for bombing North Vietnam. (Hilsman continued as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs under President Johnson until 1964 when he resigned because he was convinced that Johnson planned to abandon Kennedy's more cautious policy in favour of "a military solution".)

The bombing of North Vietnam, he says, broke a tacit understanding between Washington and Hanoi that the U.S. would not attack the North while infiltration was confined to

Southerners who had originally gone North after the 1954 Geneva Agreement. It was not until after the U.S. commenced bombing the North, he says, that Hanoi began sending divisions of regulars into South Vietnam.

Are we, then, fighting to protect South Vietnam from external aggression?

Myth C: We are fighting to contain China.

The Reality

1. All the troops fighting on the side of the N.L.F. are Vietnamese. There are no Chinese or nationals of other countries in South Vietnam with the N.L.F.

2. During Marshall Ky's visit to Australia he said that China was unlikely to send troops to Vietnam as "this would unite the people of the north and the south" so great was the hostility to any threat of Chinese occupation. Yet the Liberal Government's election policy in November, 1966, said the Vietnam war was being fought to block the downward thrust of Chinese communism.

The more America bombs North Vietnam, the more Ho Chi Minh is forced to seek China's assistance to help repair the bomb damage and provide essential supplies. In this way the air raids appear to be achieving the very result which directly conflicts with long-term U.S. interests and aims.

3. U.S. criticism of China's moral and material support to North Vietnam involves much double thinking. For years the U.S. has been insisting on a sphere of influence over the whole of North and South America.

U.S. actions have involved incomparably more interference with the internal affairs of other states than is involved in China's assistance to her neighbour. And the latter aid is in response to massive intervention to thwart what appears to China as a popular revolution on her border and to sustain in power an unpopular, violently anti-Chinese Government.

4. U.S. *Newsweek* of March 15th, 1965, claimed: "The Chinese navy is purely a defensive unit geared to operate in shallow waters, (and) . . . one of the striking facts about China's military establishment is that it is organised almost exclusively for defence rather than attack . . . after 16 years China has an amphibious force capable of landing only two battalions."

5. Australia's Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Hasluck, said on April 23rd, 1965, that there was "no foreseeable threat" of an invasion of Australia from any quarter. Indeed, Australia's trade with China in wool, wheat and steel appears to

indicate that the Government does not believe its public statements that the Vietnam war is part of the downward thrust of Chinese communism.

6. China, an industrially weak power quite incapable of sustaining any major military action against a well-armed power, is ringed with giant U.S. bases, nuclear aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines.

Can we therefore claim we are fighting to contain China? If not, why are we fighting?

Myth D: We are fighting to contain Communism.

The Reality

1. Communism is an international ideology controlled by neither Moscow nor Peking. The differences between the U.S.S.R. and China, and between the U.S.S.R., Rumania, Poland and Yugoslavia show that it is far from being monolithic.

2. The N.L.F. is wholly indigenous to Vietnam and is composed mainly of South Vietnamese. Until the U.S. intervention in Vietnam was accelerated in 1963 the support it received from other communist countries was entirely moral and ideological—not military.

3. Many leading members of the N.L.F. are not communist. The President of the N.L.F. was formerly a non-Communist Saigon lawyer. The General Secretary is a Communist former Professor of History. The Central Committee includes representatives of the Buddhists, the Catholics, the tribes people, professional people and other non-Communists.

4. Commenting on General Westmoreland's speech to Congress on April 24th, 1967, Senator Fulbright, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, said: ". . . to say that the war is simply aggression by communists is incorrect . . . to say that it is not a civil war is quite inaccurate."

On April 24th, 1967, U Thant stated: "The Vietnam war cannot be ended until everyone concerned realises the cause of the conflict is nationalism and not communism."

5. In *Life* of April 17th, 1967, there is a report of an interview between U.S. freelance photographer Lee Lockwood and Nguyen Van Tien, Hanoi representative for the N.L.F. The latter's comments to Lockwood in Hanoi are in strong conflict with the statements which the U.S. and Australian Governments have issued on this subject:

"South Vietnam will not, in the foreseeable future, be Communist. . . . After independence South Vietnam will be



Liberal Party advertisement, Federal elections, November, 1966.

neutral. It will be non-aligned. . . . Eventually we will have a kind of light federation. But each part (of Vietnam) will administer its own internal and foreign affairs. Our position is completely different from that of North Vietnam as regards reunification. . . . The north must be willing to accept an overall government that is non-Communist. Communism is impossible for South Vietnam which has a much different tradition and situation than the north. . . ."

6. Thich Nhat Hanh, speaking in Sydney on October 27th, 1966, said: "By backing the Ky regime the U.S. is destroying the main non-communist elements in the country. The longer the war goes on the more peasants are listening to the N.L.F. . . . The Vietnamese are now feeling hate towards the Americans and their allies. . . ."

7. Writing in *Vietnam: The Lotus in the Sea of Fire*, Thich Nhat Hanh says: "The peasants are not concerned about ideology: no one can frighten them with stories about the evils of communism. With their property already destroyed, they do not fear that the Communists will take their property; and if one speaks to them of freedom and democracy, they say, 'Of

what use is freedom and democracy if one is not alive?"

8. Apparently it is not communism as such which America wishes to fight. President Johnson recently stated that the U.S. had nothing to fear from the Soviet Union and that the concept of "peaceful co-existence" should be changed to "peaceful engagement".

9. In any case should the U.S., Australia and other nations restrict other peoples' freedom to determine their own form of society?

If we are not fighting to contain communism, what, then, are we fighting for?

Myth E: We are fighting to ensure a better life for the people of Asia.

The Reality

1. U.S. official figures show that the weekly average of killings of combatants in 1966 was approximately 1,000. U.S. statistics for 1967 show a sharp increase on this figure. In addition, according to a U.S. Congressional report published in 1966, there is an estimated *at least* two civilian deaths for each combatant death. This is primarily as a result of the destruction of villages both in ground and air attacks by allied forces. This does not include deaths from the bombing of North Vietnam.

The U.S. liberal monthly *Ramparts* in its January issue, 1967, commented: "Nearly two years ago, before the major U.S. escalation began in early 1965, Hugh Campbell, former Canadian member of the International Control Commission in Vietnam, said that from 1961 through 1963, 160,000 Vietnamese civilians died in the war. This figure was borne out by officials in Saigon. According to conservative estimates another 55,000 died during 1964 and 100,000 in each of the two escalated years since; that is at least 415,000 civilians have been killed since 1961." *Ramparts* goes on to explain that since 70% of residents of villages are under 16 (all able-bodied men over 16 are in the Viet Cong or the South Vietnamese army), "at least 250,000 of the children of South Vietnam have been killed". The bitter fighting throughout 1967 is certain to have added far more casualties than in 1966.

2. *Ramparts* estimates, based on I.C.C. and other authoritative reports, that the number of *civilian* injuries is at least three times the number killed: that would amount to more than 1,500,000 at September, 1967. And very many of these



One of the many thousands of Vietnamese children burned by napalm bomb attacks. Very few have received plastic surgery. Few get to hospital; of those who do many are too badly burned to receive treatment. The South Vietnamese Government has refused permission to several overseas



Madame Ky, who went to Japan for plastic surgery to her nose before visiting Australia in 1966.

organisations wishing to fly some of the children to Europe, Japan and America for treatment.

(Photos from "Vietnam Action").

injuries are of a hideous nature. *Ramparts* claims that over 80% of injuries result from U.S. fire power.

The director of the Saigon School of Social Studies, Thich Nhat Hanh, claims that for every injury admitted to hospital at least ten are not admitted. The hospitals are crammed with normally three persons to each bed. There is a pitiful shortage of doctors, nurses and all facilities. According to *Ramparts*, hospital conditions are so appalling that a great many serious infections occur in patients after their arrival. Newspapers are often used as sheets, blankets and bandages.

3. To indicate the comparative level of destruction of life from the N.L.F. campaign against the Saigon Government: during 1964 the N.L.F. killed 436 hamlet chiefs and officials—an average of 8 per week. General Westmoreland, the U.S. military commander in South Vietnam, in October, 1966, stated that between September 11th and October 23rd, 1966, "there have been 33 assassinations of Government officials"—an average of 5 per week. In April, 1967, U.S. officials in Saigon claimed

that the Viet Cong had killed 11,967 civilians (including accidents) over the past nine years. This figure is well above that previously issued by U.S. officials.

4. U.S. air raids have burned to the ground hundreds of villages and destroyed with defoliant chemicals scores of thousands of acres of crops and forest. "A few sniper shots from a hut are sometimes enough to subject the entire (village) community to air attack or artillery fire." (Gerald Stone, *War Without Honour*.)

It seems that even the pretext of shots is not required for an attack. *The Sydney Morning Herald's* TV columnist, Harry Robinson, reported on March 3rd, 1967:

"Bob Sanders interviewed a young Australian newsreel cameraman who had been working in Vietnam for the past two years. He explained how co-operative he had found the military. On a flight with an American crew, he asked if he could film a napalm attack. Certainly he could. They were flying over an area in which they were permitted open slather. After a radio check with base, they obliged him by wiping out a small settlement. There was no military purpose to the attack whatsoever. They just wanted to be neighbourly.

"The South Vietnamese forces were even more helpful. At the sight of a camera they would invariably show their enthusiasm for the war by shooting prisoners; so the young man learned to keep his camera out of sight. He repeatedly complained of the way his material was censored in Australia, particularly by the A.B.C. He tried hard to film the war as he found it, and was angered to discover that virtually none of his atrocity footage had made it to air."

5. According to Neil Sheehan, who returned to the U.S. in 1966 after covering the war in Vietnam for three years for *The New York Times*, "The number of refugees has now passed the million mark. . . . They left their homes, they said, because they could no longer bear American and South Vietnamese bombs and shells." The A.B.C. news of April 22nd, 1967, reported that the number of refugees has now grown to 1,750,000. Many of these live in crowded squalour without even the most primitive facilities. They have had to build their new homes from old boxes or galvanised iron.

6. Over North Vietnam normally each day over 100 planes have attacked bridges, roads, railways, barges, ships, trucks, and any other moving object, power stations and industrial plants. In addition, British, French and U.S. observers have confirmed the enormous destruction of houses, schools, churches, hospitals and irrigation facilities.

Harrison Salisbury, Assistant Managing Director of *The New York Times*, stated on December 27th, 1966, in Hanoi after travelling through North Vietnam: "President Johnson's

announced policy that targets in North Vietnam are steel and concrete rather than human lives seems to have little connection with the reality of attacks by U.S. planes. . . . A notable example is the little town of Phuly, 35 miles south of Hanoi. The town had a population of about 10,000. In attacks last October every house and building was destroyed. The community had no industry but had the misfortune to be astride the highway and southward of the Hanoi railroad. . . . Another town . . . Nam Dinh, a textile centre 60 miles south of Hanoi (90,000 population) has been systematically attacked . . . no (military objective) has been claimed . . . block after block of ordinary housing has been smashed to rubble by repeated attacks. . . . (In) One deserted street almost every house was blasted last April 14th . . . 49 people were killed 135 were wounded and 240 houses collapsed . . . U.S. planes are dropping an enormous weight of explosives on civilian targets. . . . A brief tour south of Hanoi shows that Phuly and Nam Dinh are far from exceptional."

Writing in his book *Behind the Lines*, Salisbury says: ". . . almost every rural agricultural community in the area had been hit at one time or another. One of the worst was an attack on the village of Kien Tiony in which 72 people were killed and 46 wounded. But attacks were not confined to villages. Individual peasants working in the fields or threshing in the courtyards had been strafed. . . . There were the thousands of tons of bombs that fell on the countryside, on the fields, on the villages, on the peasant huts, on the peasants in the fields and on the roads."

According to Canadian officials in North Vietnam the city of Vinh with a population of 60,000 was completely destroyed during 1966.

David Schoenbrun, a U.S. correspondent who spent two weeks in North Vietnam in September, 1967, wrote of "widespread devastation all around Hanoi in a 100 square mile area." (*The Australian*, October 2nd, 1967.)

Lee Lockwood, a freelance U.S. photographer who travelled



through North Vietnam for four weeks early in 1967, reported in *Life* of April 17th, 1967: "Although I had read the reports of other journalists . . . I was not prepared for the amount of U.S. bomb damage that I saw." Among his many stories of devastation are the following:

" . . . For perhaps 15 miles (south of Hanoi) nearly every house along the road lies in ruins." . . . "In Thanh Hoa, a large city, several neighbourhoods near the centre of town had been completely razed. . . . 'We consider that our city has ceased to exist,' Thanh Hoa's mayor said to me sadly." . . . "Phat Diem is an agricultural community of 5,500, five miles inland . . . I was told the town had been attacked more than 60 times . . . the city, mostly mud and thatch huts or one-storey concrete dwellings, was in ruins." . . . "I visited the hamlet of Antiem . . . (a bomb) fell in the local secondary school, killing, I was told, 30 children and a teacher."

"Much of the outrage against U.S. bombing is directed at the use of anti-personnel bombs—particularly the cluster bomb units—cannisters which burst in the air each scattering 300 baseball-sized explosives which detonate on impact, each spraying hundreds of pea-sized steel pellets at high velocity over a wide area. The pellets are coated with napalm and stick when they hit."

"They cannot destroy bridges or buildings; so they can only be intended to strike people. When they don't cause death they frequently cripple. Since each plane carries four cannisters, it drops 360,000 pellets."

7. At the Russell War Crimes Tribunal in Stockholm in May, 1967, the French physicist, J. P. Vigier, who had visited North Vietnam, pointed out that at least 50% of the total bomb tonnage dropped by U.S. aircraft in North Vietnam consisted of such anti-personnel bombs and that their use was on the increase.

The French doctor, Francis Kahn, with the aid of slides, described the plight of an extensive Leper colony—consisting of a complex of 160 buildings, surrounded by mountains—which had been bombed 39 times and left in a state of devastation.

An American lawyer, Hugh Manes, who had visited North Vietnam as a member of a Tribunal team, found villages of clay and thatch that had been attacked by high-explosive bombs, followed in rapid succession by fragmentation and pellet-bombs—suggesting a deliberate technique designed to drive the people from their shelters and then killing them.

A Cuban doctor, Roberta Guerra, found the new and extensive public health system of North Vietnam, its hospitals and sanitation centres, completely destroyed. The entire health

system had been dispersed and transferred to remote areas.

A Japanese member of the investigating team, Professor Tsurushima, confirmed the detailed reports of the North Vietnam Water Conservation Commission which revealed a violent series of attacks on the dyke network late in 1966.

8. On April 28th, 1967, the Pentagon announced that the current rate of dropping bombs on Vietnam was 77,000 tons per month (924,000 tons per annum), which compares with 80,000 tons per month dropped on *all targets in Europe* by all allied air forces at the peak of the bombing in World War II.

Losses admitted by the U.S.—well over 2,000 aircraft over North and South Vietnam—also help to indicate the scale of air attacks.

9. On August 23rd, 1967, the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Defence Sub-Committee, Senator Stennis, said U.S. expenditure on the Vietnam war would increase to \$A2,320 million a month during 1967—that is a *rate* of \$A27,800 million per annum. (Australia's national income for 1966-67 was \$18,124 million.) By contrast, in 1966, total U.S. expenditure on economic aid to the poor countries amounted to \$2,000 million—and this was reduced from a proposed \$2,500 million. The extent to which the U.S. could help overcome poverty in Asia if this expenditure could be diverted to economic aid is indicated by the following comparisons: U.S. *annual* expenditure on Vietnam is greater than the outlay on India's present Five Year Plan (India's population is over 500 million); it is equal to the total outlay on capital formation for the whole underdeveloped world in 1966; it is equal to 14 years of current U.S. economic aid to the underdeveloped world.

Is the Vietnam war, then, helping to ensure a better life for the people of Asia?

Myth F: We are prepared to hold unconditional discussions to settle the conflict.

The Reality

1. U.S. television commentator for the C.B.S. network, Eric Sevareid, shocked many of President Johnson's Vietnam supporters in his revelation of November 30th, 1965. The late Adlai Stevenson, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., had told him that during 1964 U Thant "privately obtained agreement from authorities in North Vietnam that they would send an emissary to talk with an American emissary, in Rangoon, Burma. Someone in Washington insisted this attempt be postponed until after the Presidential election. When the election was over,

U Thant again pursued the matter; Hanoi was still willing to send its man. But Defence Secretary McNamara opposed the attempt. . . .” This ended the prospect of negotiations. Yet at a Press conference in July, 1965, President Johnson said . . . “there has not been the slightest indication that the other side is interested in negotiation or in unconditional discussions. . . .” Associate editor of *The New York Times*, James Reston, commented on November 17th, 1965: “The Administration’s first problem is not how to talk to the North Vietnamese, but how to talk candidly to the American people.”

2. Britain’s liberal daily *The Guardian*, explained on April 9th, 1965, that President Johnson’s offer of unconditional discussions in fact contains three conditions: first, the U.S. would not withdraw, to use the President’s words, “either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement”; second, South Vietnam could not be reunited with the North; and third, the U.S. would not negotiate with the N.L.F. As *Vietnam and Australia* points out, the first two of these conditions are incompatible with the Geneva Agreement. The third condition is clearly unacceptable to the N.L.F. which has been waging the campaign against the various Saigon Governments and U.S. military presence since 1960.

3. Gerald Stone comments in *War Without Honour*: “At the end of 1965 it appeared the U.S. was not interested in any peace settlement short of eliminating the N.L.F. in South Vietnam. . . . This was nothing approaching a compromise. It was asking surrender. Even if North Vietnam agreed to back off it was unlikely that the anti-government elements who lived permanently in the South would suddenly give up the territory they had gained at the cost of so much blood and would sign away their existence as a political movement.”

Speaking before the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations on November 5th, 1965, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, William P. Bundy, castigated Hanoi for demanding “Acceptance of the Communists in a coalition government”—a demand, he said, “which we reject. . . .” (Sidney Lens in the U.S. monthly *The Progressive*, January, 1966.) And Marshall Ky on his return from the Manila Conference in November, 1966, declared that “he would never negotiate with the N.L.F.” Yet the N.L.F. controls areas (at night) inhabited by over 50% of the South Vietnamese population; during the day the N.L.F. withdraws from about half of these areas. (U.S. journalist Sidney Lens says in *The Progressive* that terror cannot explain how such large areas can be controlled “nor can it explain how the Viet Cong holds the loyalty of 120,000 irregulars.”)

4. Thich Nhat Hanh in an interview on the A.B.C.’s



—Petty in *The Australian*.

Peace Feelers

Four Corners on October 29th, 1966, claimed that the war in South Vietnam could be stopped immediately if a government were formed which desired peace and which represented the various non-communist groups in South Vietnam. It would have to be prepared to negotiate with the N.L.F. E. J. Hughes in *Newsweek* of May 30th, 1966, quotes a U.S. authority in Vietnam as admitting that “if any (freely) elected assembly sits in Saigon it will be negotiating with Hanoi in one week”.

5. Writing in *The Progressive*, Sidney Lens observes: “A substantial section of the business community wants neither victory nor defeat but a continuation of the status quo which provides lush profits. A representative of the Industrial Development Centre explained with enthusiasm that anyone who wants to invest in industry is sure of a profit of 50 to 100 per cent. minimum. For the rich in the city, as for landlords and petty officials in the village, the war means boom conditions.”

6. The U.S. violation of the U.N. Charter is unequivocal. Article 2 Section 4 says, “All members (of the U.N.) shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political indepen-

dence of any state." Article 33 states that parties to a dispute which is likely to endanger international peace shall first seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration or other peaceful means." Article 37 provides: "Should the parties to such a dispute fail to settle it by the means indicated they shall refer it to the Security Council." The U.S. has not done so.

7. Senator Wayne Morse, a member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee writing in *The Progressive* of August, 1964, said the U.S. Administration's "theory is that the time to negotiate is when we have first dominated the battlefield. If that is to be our policy then we are helping to destroy the United Nations and all the advances in the rule of law in world affairs which it represents. Our moral position will be undermined and our capacity for calling others to account for breaches of the peace will be compromised."

On March 9th, 1967, Arthur Schlesinger, Jun., now a history professor, and who was Special Assistant to President Kennedy from 1961 to 1964, said: "The Administration wanted to delay peace talks for a few months so that North Vietnam could be further weakened by the bombing and more favourable terms could be pressed."

8. *The New York Times* of June 4th, 1967, commented: "When Hanoi last September showed an interest in direct secret talks, the Administration stiffened its terms, extended its bombing to the Hanoi area and disrupted an initial series of contacts conducted personally by Foreign Minister Rapacki of Poland. Later in February, 1967, it ignored an indication from the Soviet Premier that Hanoi would come to the conference table if a bombing pause was extended. At the same time, it rejected an appeal from the British Prime Minister to give Ho Chi Minh more than a 40-hour extension of the bombing pause to reply to the letter he had received from President Johnson only three days before."

9. On several recent occasions the North Vietnamese Government has emphatically stated that it is prepared to enter into negotiations if the U.S. halts the bombing of North Vietnam unconditionally. The U.S. Administration justifies its refusal to halt the bombing of North Vietnam without "reciprocal military moves" by Hanoi by saying that failure to continue the air raids "would imperil the lives of American boys".

Yet the Secretary of Defence, Mr. McNamara, who has all the reports of the Vietnam fighting available to him, recently stated before a joint session of two U.S. Senate Committees: "I don't believe that the bombing up to the present has significantly reduced, nor any bombing that I could contemplate would

significantly reduce the actual flow of men and material to the South."

Furthermore, "while demanding that Hanoi cut off the flow of men and materials to the South, (the U.S.) Government insists on retaining its right to maintain the build-up of manpower and munitions on any level it chooses, despite the fact that we now command better than a 3 to 1 ratio in troops and a staggering advantage in firepower. What we are demanding, as the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* expressed it, is that 'Hanoi accept, as the price of ending the bombing, a position of static inferiority which could only end in surrender or ultimate defeat.'" (*The Progressive*, Wisconsin, April, 1967.)

Theodore Draper, Senior Fellow at Stanford University, in an article in The New York Review of May 4th 1967, How Not to Negotiate, provides a detailed and fully documented history of U.S. peace negotiations.

Myth G: Australia's security depends on our Seato alliance; this alliance will be weakened if we do not support the U.S.

The Reality

1. If the U.S. action is morally indefensible then Australian support for the U.S. is morally indefensible.
2. U.S. foreign policy—as with all nations—is determined according to what it considers to be her own interests; and this assessment will not be affected by sentiment. The U.S. opposed Britain's action over Suez and it lent support to the Sukarno regime in Indonesia despite Indonesia's demands over West Irian.
3. Australia is not even technically bound under Seato to lend support to the U.S. in Vietnam. The Geneva Agreement barred the countries of Indo-China from forming outside military alliances. (The Geneva Agreement did not recognise South Vietnam as a separate state.) Thus neither the U.S. nor Seato could enter into a *formal* defence alliance with the South Vietnamese Government.

Furthermore, the Seato Treaty required the *unanimous* consent of the Seato Council to bring collective action under its protective clauses. However, there is no possibility of unanimity on South Vietnam because of the hostility of two members of the Seato Council—France and Pakistan—to U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Conclusion

Why has North Vietnam consistently refused to stop aiding the N.L.F. in return for an end to the bombing of the North?

With staggering U.S. fire power in the South and U.S. policy of literally destroying all villages which support the N.L.F., once the N.L.F. has been deprived of assistance, the U.S. could kill or starve sufficient of the N.L.F. eventually to remove the threat to the Saigon military junta.

And there is little doubt that the U.S. intends to retain this junta. For a popularly elected government in the Saigon-controlled areas of the South would immediately negotiate with the N.L.F. for an end to the war. This would bring a general election and subsequently a South Vietnamese Government in which the N.L.F. is a participant. Such a Government would ask the U.S. forces to leave South Vietnam. But America's main aim in Vietnam now appears to be the continued occupation of the giant air and naval bases which she has built in the South (see Myth A, 1) and which have major facilities bearing little relevance to the Vietnam conflict.

North Vietnam's central aim of helping the N.L.F. to force the U.S. out of Vietnam would therefore be defeated. (And there would always be the threat to the North, expressed first by Diem and last year by Ky, that it was necessary to "liberate" the North.) Thus, so long as the U.S. refuses to support a popular government in the South—and this will be the case so long as the U.S. insists on a military presence in Vietnam—negotiation to end the conflict seems impossible. If the U.S.S.R. had followed a similar policy to maintain in power a tyrannical puppet government in, say, Mexico, as a buffer against U.S. expansion, it is probable that the world would long ago have been enveloped in a nuclear holocaust.

Arthur Schlesinger, historian and former Special Assistant to President Kennedy, commented on October 8th, 1967: "The best bulwark against Chinese expansion in Asia will be not white intervention from across the sea but local nationalism—even if that nationalism sometimes assumes a Communist form."

Finally, we should remember that President Johnson was elected on a policy of not becoming involved in an Asian war. In his election campaign on August 12th, 1964, he said: "Some others are eager to enlarge the Vietnam conflict. . . . They ask us to take reckless action which might risk the lives of millions and engulf much of Asia and certainly threaten the peace of the entire world. Moreover such action would offer no solution at all to the real problem of Vietnam." Perhaps this is why *not one* of America's Nato allies is providing troops in Vietnam.

The following is the major part of a letter in The New York Times of June 4th, 1967, by James C. Thomson, Assistant Professor of History at Harvard University. He was, until September, 1966, staff assistant to McGeorge Bundy, then the President's adviser for national security.

"As a student of Asian history and, until last autumn, an official of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations in the field of Far Eastern policy, I write to express my alarm at the Administration's course of action in Vietnam. U Thant has warned that we may well be near the threshold of World War III. I reluctantly agree.

". . . My six years in the Federal Government revealed a melancholy truth that seems pertinent today: that at each stage of the Vietnam conflict, from 1961 onward, 'constructive alternatives' have, in fact, been available and proposed, both within the Government and outside it; that at each stage such alternatives have been rejected as unpalatable; but that all such alternatives have become progressively more palatable in retrospect, once the opportunity to choose them has passed us by.

"There are things we could and should have done a year ago, that are infinitely harder to do today. I can attest that they were in fact proposed at the time, and that they were rejected at each stage because the short-term price of doing them seemed infinitely higher than the short-term price of not doing them and continuing, instead, on the same course. But the long-term price of not doing them turns out to be compounded daily and hourly. It is a price that bears no relation to the stakes.

"Can we still learn from the bureaucratic record and, for once, call a halt before we have passed the point of no return? Or will the price of non-escalation—of de-escalation—be once more calculated as unsupportably high, as we plough on toward calamity?

"The Vietnam conflict is a needless war—one that could and should have been avoided. Its resolution today certainly lies with men in Hanoi and elsewhere as well as men in Washington. But the men in Washington bear the paramount obligation.

"For the greatest power on earth has the power denied to others; the power to take unilateral steps, and to keep taking them; the power to be as ingenious and relentless in the pursuit of peace as we are in the infliction of pain; the power to lose face; the power to admit error and to act with magnanimity."—James C. Thomson, Jr.

During the past *hour** while you were reading this booklet 20 Vietnamese were killed and 60 maimed; and U.S. expenditure on the war rose by over \$A3 million. \$A3 million will buy two million bushels of wheat. \$A3 million is more than half the total amount raised in the Australia-wide Freedom from Hunger Campaign over the past *five* years.

(* Assuming this was a typical hour in the war.)

Ideas should lead to Action

When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall out one by one, an unpitied sacrifice, in a contemptible struggle.—*Edmund Burke*.

If this booklet's analysis has convinced you our involvement in the Vietnam war is wrong and should be stopped, please don't shrug your shoulders and say "what can I do?" Every person so convinced has a duty to his conscience to communicate to as many of his fellows as possible. A few thousand voices can soon snowball into hundreds of thousands. This is the only way government policy can be changed. And the Australian Government does have an influence on U.S. policy.

To help communicate the truth about Vietnam will you purchase for sale or gift several copies of this booklet? The prices are listed below. The net proceeds will be used to further publicise the case against U.S.-Australian involvement.

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Dear Sir:

"... Here are a few eyewitness accounts of the war in Vietnam as related to us by several of our veteran friends.

"A Green Beret sergeant arrives in Vietnam. When asked if he has ever killed before, he replies that he has not. He is taken to an American detention camp for N.L.F. prisoners and told to kill a POW with a knife. He does so.

"Hundreds of dead Vietnamese women and children are bulldozed into a pile. A G.I., looking for amusement, empties a clip of ammunition into the pile . . .

"An N.L.F. captive refuses to talk. A Special Forces officer kicks him to death.

"A refugee camp becomes too large; too many mouths to feed. The American guards eject 150 of the refugee inmates. Once outside the camp, they are herded into one large group, surrounded and gunned down by American guards.

"You have full permission to use this letter in your magazine, if you so desire. You may use our full names.

"U.S. Army Artillery and Missile Center, Fort Sill, Okla. Sp/4 Richard Wheaton, Pvt. Andrew Stapp, Sp/5 Paul J. Gaulthe."

(Reprinted from *The Minority of One* (New Jersey, U.S.A.), June, 1967.)

"The director and three key field staff members of a volunteer agency partly financed by the U.S. Government have resigned in protest over the Vietnam war. At the same time, 50 teachers, agricultural specialists and social workers in the agency, International Voluntary Services, have signed a letter to President Johnson calling the war 'an overwhelming atrocity'. 'We have seen enough to say that the only monuments to this war will be the dead, the maimed, the despairing and the forlorn', the letter says.

"The International Voluntary Services, a private group supported by the U.S. aid programme, has 170 volunteers in South Vietnam. It is one of the most highly respected agencies in the country and has sought to help the Vietnamese at village level. Volunteers, who usually serve for two years, teach English, train refugees, work on agricultural projects and aid widows and orphans. Most are university graduates, and a few are conscientious objectors performing alternative service in Vietnam. They would probably return to the United States and speak out on what they had seen in Vietnam."

—*United Press* report in *The Australian*, September 21st, 1967.

"Each day the war goes on the hatred increases in the hearts of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realise that, in the process, they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism."—*A Vietnamese Buddhist leader quoted by Dr Martin Luther King in an address on April 4th, 1967.*

This advertisement appeared
in *The Times* (London) of
June 2nd, 1967.

To

From

(See page 32)

VIETNAM

AN AMERICAN VIEW

● We, citizens of the United States, who are deeply concerned over the war in Vietnam, wish to put it on record that we do not subscribe to the official view of our country and of yours that Hanoi alone blocks the path to negotiations. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence which has been presented to our Government but which has never been answered by them, to show that escalation of the war by the United States has repeatedly destroyed the possibilities for negotiations.

● We assure you that any expression of your horror of this shameful war—a war which is destroying those very values it claims to uphold—ought not to be regarded as anti-American but, rather, as support for that America we love and of which we are proud.

GAR ALPEROVITZ
JAMES BALDWIN
STRINGFELLOW BARR
S. N. BEHRMAN
HARRY BELAFONTE
BETSY BLAIR
KAY BOYLE
MARLON BRANDO
ROBERT McCAFEE BROWN
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
ALEXANDER CALDER
SERGE CHERMAYEFF
NOAM CHOMSKY
RICHARD A. FALK
JULES FEIFFER

JEROME FRANK
ERICH FROMM
NAUM GABO
MAXWELL GEISMAR
JACK GELBER
ALLEN GINSBERG
DICK GREGORY
PEGGY GUGGENHEIM
ELIZABETH HARDWICK
GEORGIA HARKNESS
KYLE HASELDEN
JOSEPH HELLER
IRVING HOWE
H. STUART HUGHES
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

R. B. KITAJ
ALEXANDER LAING
OWEN LATTIMORE
RICHMOND LATTIMORE
TOM LEHRER
VIVECA LINDFORS
ROBERT LOWELL
DWIGHT MACDONALD
MILTON MAYER
THOMAS MERTON
ARTHUR MILLER
JESSICA MITFORD
ASHLEY MONTAGU
PHILIP MORRISON
LEWIS MUMFORD

PAUL NELSON
MIKE NICHOLS
JAY OREAR
J. C. PHILLIPS
ANATOL RAPOPORT
PHILIP ROTH
MEYER SCHAPIRO
MARK SCHORER
PETE SEEGER
ROGER SHINN
WILLIAM L. SHIRER
WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN
SUSAN SONTAG

BENJAMIN SPOCK
JOSEPH STRICK
WILLIAM STYRON
ALBERT SZENT-GYORGI
GEORGE TABORI
HAROLD TAYLOR
LOUIS UENTERMEYER
RICHARD W. VAN ALSTYNE
SAM WANAMAKER
VICTOR F. WEISSKOPF
WILLIAM APPELMAN WILLIAMS
MARY C. WRIGHT
HOWARD ZINN