

AT WAR WITH VIETNAM

The war in Vietnam continues. Our government tells us it is seeking peace--it withdraws troops, makes peace proposals--but those North Vietnamese and NLF communists won't be reasonable. They insist on forcing their will upon the people of South Vietnam. We are told that the U.S. cannot leave Vietnam until Communist aggression from the North ceases.

By now, enough is clear about the history of the war in Vietnam for all of us to see just how false these claims are. In our last leaflet--*VIETNAM SPECIAL*--we analyzed at length, the newest Nixon Peace Proposal and demonstrated that it was not the reasonable offer he claimed it was, but rather a call for the surrender of the NLF. In this leaflet, we will not go through that analysis again; instead we will move on to show that the Peace Proposal is part of a government plan to continue the war while attempting to give the American people the impression that the war is ending.

Many of us who oppose the war have often failed to see through such maneuverings on the part of our government and have relaxed our opposition to the war in the secure feeling that it was, indeed, finally ending. The root of this failure lies in our misunderstanding of the real nature of the struggle in Vietnam. In order to give what we feel is an accurate picture of the situation in Vietnam and of U.S. policy, we will deal with the following areas in this leaflet:

1) how we have been lied to about the reason for our government's intervention in South Vietnam--the myth of aggression from the North;

2) how the NLF has the support of the South Vietnamese people;

3) how the war in Vietnam is genocidal and the U.S. government has known this all along;

4) why the U.S. government is willing to commit genocide in Vietnam.

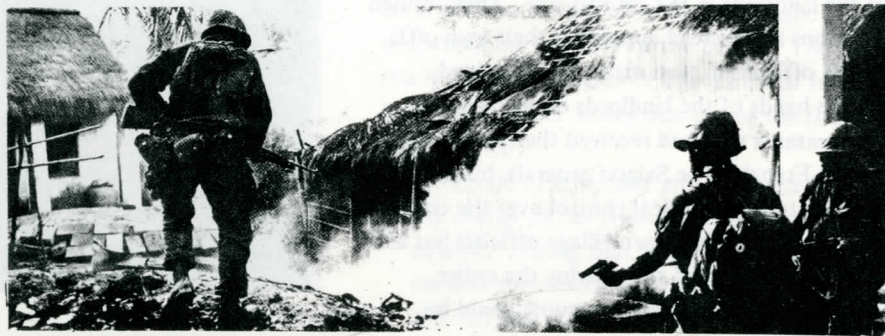
AGGRESSION FROM THE NORTH

One of the major ideas that our government has used from the beginning to justify its intervention in Vietnam has been

the myth of aggression from the North. In its White Paper of 1965, the State Department argued that "South Vietnam is fighting for its life against a brutal campaign of terror and armed attack inspired, directed, supplied and controlled by the Communist regime in Hanoi...In Vietnam a Communist government has set out deliberately to conquer a sovereign people in a neighboring state." This argument stands the truth on its head.

Before 1964, virtually all sources agree that the opponents of the Saigon regime were overwhelmingly southerners, and even as late as January 28, 1966, after the initiation of the bombing of the North and the massive increase in U.S. troop levels ordered by President Johnson, no less an architect of U.S. Vietnam policy than Secretary of State Dean Rusk was willing to concede to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "80 percent of those who are called Vietcong are or have been Southerners." Not only were the fighters in the South largely southern before the huge U.S. escalation of 1965, but their support came mainly from the South, not the North or other Communist nations. The State Department's director of intelligence, Thomas L. Hughes, declared in Panama on June 8, 1964, that "by far the greater part of the Vietcong forces in South Vietnam are South Vietnamese, the preponderance of Vietcong weapons come not from Communist countries but from capture, purchase, and local manufacture."

On April 27, 1965, almost exactly two months after Lyndon Johnson ordered the continuous bombing of the North, Secre-



tary of Defense Robert S. McNamara "confirmed" the presence in South Vietnam of only one North Vietnamese battalion numbering 400 to 500 men, a figure that was repeated by Senator Mansfield on June 16, 1966, and again confirmed by the Pentagon. At this same time, just after the bombing began, there were 23,000 U.S. "advisers" in the South. It should be clear, then, where the aggression was coming from.

THE NLF

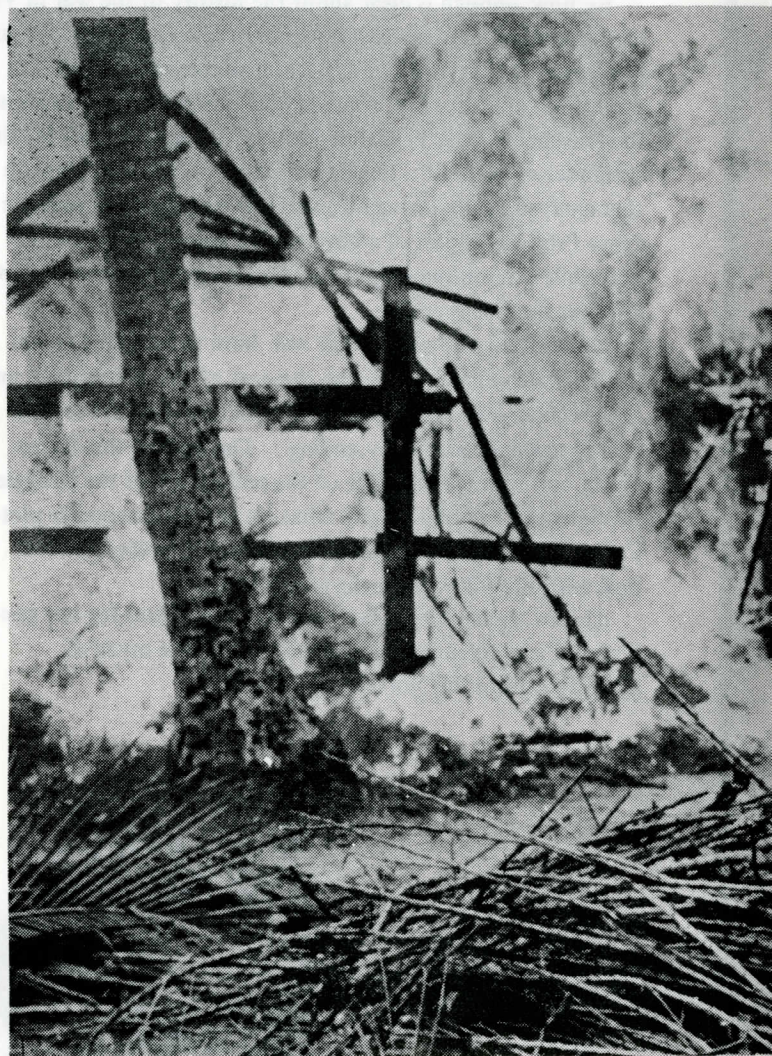
U.S. government officials have always known not only that the NLF was composed of South Vietnamese, but that the organization and its fighting forces have the support of the South Vietnamese people. Our government has, for a long time, understood that the NLF's popularity derived from its concern to serve the people's needs through democratic organizations. This truth, however, has been kept from the American people by their government. Policy advisers view the NLF's popularity as an obstacle to U.S. domination to be overcome, rather than as a reason why the U.S. had no right to be in Vietnam in the first place. Douglas Pike, the American Foreign Service officer who is the main spokesman for the American government on affairs having to do with the Viet Cong freely admits that, "Aside from the NLF there has never been a truly mass-based political party in South Vietnam." It organized "the rural population through the instrument of self-control," setting up a variety of self-help associations based on "the right of freedom of discussion and secret vote at association meetings," and generating "a sense of community, first by developing a pattern of political behavior appropriate to the social problems of the rural Vietnamese village in the midst of sharp social change and, second, by providing a basis for group action that allowed the individual villager to see that his own efforts could have meaning and effect."

The NLF has taken land from the large landowners and given it to the peasants, reduced rents on other lands, set up health facilities like surgical hospitals, free clinics and medical training programs, and established schools. All of this was in contrast to the policies of the succession of U.S. government supported regimes in Saigon, composed of generals and landlords. The U.S.-supported Saigon governments tried to maintain the power of the landlords in the countryside. They refused to allow village elections and instead appointed their own officials. These appointed officials in turn made sure that land either remained in the hands of the landlords or was returned to the landlords by peasants who had received their own land after the defeat of the French. The Saigon generals, businessmen and landlords also tried to gain political control over the countryside not only by appointing their own village officials but also by bulldozing villages to the ground and moving the entire population at gunpoint to new areas where people could be more effectively kept under control.

GENOCIDE

In waging a war against a popular revolution, the U.S. government has had to adopt the appropriate policy, for as Professor Samuel P. Huntington, former Chairman of the Council on Vietnamese Studies of the government's Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group explains, the NLF is "a powerful force which cannot be dislodged from its constituency so long as the constituency continues to exist." That constituency,

the people of South Vietnam, can be destroyed by "direct application of mechanical and conventional power...on such a massive scale as to produce a massive migration from countryside to city" where the rural populations can be more easily controlled in refugee camps and urban slums through the programs commonly known as "urbanization," "modernization," and "pacification". In other words, to crush the people's war, the U.S. military must eliminate the people. Defense Department consultant on Pacification in South Vietnam, Daniel Ellsberg, stated after extensive personal observation that



"we have, of course, demolished the society of Vietnam," that "the bombing of the South has gone on long enough to disrupt the society of South Vietnam enormously and probably permanently," and that "by now the sheer weight of years of firepower, massive sweeps, and grand forced population shifts have reduced the population base of the NLF". As Marine Lieutenant Colonel William R. Corson has written, "This is not war-it is genocide."

Advanced technological weaponry will enable the U.S. to continue mass slaughter of the Vietnamese regardless of troop

reductions. As stated in 1969 by General Westmoreland, "In Vietnam where artillery and tactical air forces inflict over two-thirds of the enemy casualties, firepower is responsive as never before. It can rain destruction anywhere on the battlefield within minutes...enemy forces will be located, tracked and targeted almost instantaneously through the use of data links, computer assisted intelligence evaluation, and automated fire control.... The need for large forces to fix the opposition physically will be less important."



What becomes clear is that troop withdrawals, which our government tells us are proof of its desire to end the war, are really only an attempt to make the U.S. war effort in Vietnam more effective, while undercutting opposition to the war at home. In order to win, the U.S. government must commit genocide, and too many troops only get in the way of our new improved technological warfare.

IMPERIALISM

What stake does the government have in continuing to wage a genocidal war that is so universally hated and opposed by those the government claims to represent both here and in Vietnam? President Eisenhower provided an answer way back in August, 1953, when he told a conference of U.S. governors why the U.S. might enter the war in Vietnam on the side of the French.

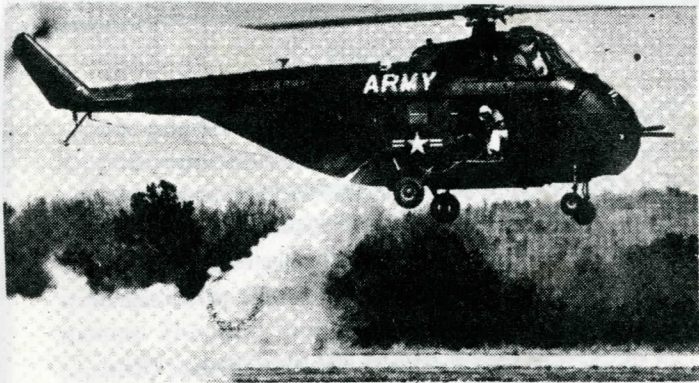
"Now let us assume that we lost Indochina.... The tin and tungsten that we so greatly value from that area would cease coming.... So when the U.S. votes \$400 million to help that war, we are not voting a give-away program. We are voting for the cheapest way that we can to prevent the occurrence of something that would be of a most terrible significance to the United States of America, our security, our power and ability to get certain things we need from the riches of the Indochinese territory and from Southeast Asia."

The extraction of riches from Vietnam which Eisenhower knew to be necessary to the "maintenance of American power and security" is not an isolated phenomenon. In an economic report published in Sweden by the Stockholm University Institute for National Economic Studies in 1970, an economist noted that "United States corporations and their multinational subsidiaries currently control between 70-90% of the raw material resources of Latin America, and more than 60% of its industrial plant. Its public utilities, its banking, commerce and foreign trade relationships are in the hands of U.S. corporations or their subsidiaries."

In Latin America, the U.S. government has protected corporate interests by initiating programs which claim to benefit the people of Latin America, but which in fact extend U.S. economic domination and produce misery and poverty for the overwhelming majority of the people. The Alliance for Progress is one such program. The editor of *Inter-American Economic Affairs* notes that during the first five years of The Alliance,

...the rate of economic growth dropped sharply...and the change in the growth rate per capita was even more adverse. During that period the distribution of income became even more unsatisfactory as the gap between the rich and poor widened appreciably. During most of the period a very heavy proportion of the disbursements went to military regimes which had overthrown constitutional governments and at the end of the period with almost half of the population under military rule, a significant portion of the aid was going not to assist 'free men and free governments' but rather to hold in power regimes to which the people had lost their freedom.

U.S. businesses have a great deal at stake in the underdeveloped world--and they are willing to go to great lengths to protect



and extend it. The U.S. government does its best to make sure that policies favorable to U.S. business exist in all of the countries it can control. Policies like low taxes, concessions to extract minerals; permission to send profits back to the U.S., anti-labor, anti-union, anti-strike policies, roads, ports, etc., built specifically for American companies.

The first thing the U.S. government does to protect the interests of business abroad is to cultivate powerful local allies who will support the U.S. when conflicts of interest arise. The local military--dependent on the U.S. for arms, training, and strategic advice--can generally be expected to think the American way. Local businessmen--who often share ownership with U.S. businessmen or depend on them for supplies, parts, know-how, and trade names--can be expected to stand up for the rights of U.S. business. And in case such support inside the country isn't enough, the U.S. government can always blackmail its client government with possible loss of aid, restricted trade, or increased tariffs. In the last resort--as with Guatemala, Brazil, Iran--the U.S. organizes the military and others to overthrow the existing government and to set up something more friendly to U.S. businessmen. In Greece, where the military (trained and supplied by the U.S.) toppled the elected government in 1967 with the approval of the U.S. Embassy, the seizure of power "is generally recognized as having brought improvement in the investment climate"; according to the International Industrial Conference in San Francisco.

For some businesses--especially those dependent on control of sources of raw materials like oil or copper or tin--their stake in the underdeveloped world is essential to their very survival.

Other businesses make significant and rising proportions their profits from investments in the underdeveloped countries. Some industries like textiles, electronics and other light industry are able to produce more cheaply abroad with the aid of cheap foreign labor than in the U.S. Other kinds of industry, by investing in plants in the underdeveloped countries, create markets at home for raw materials, supplies, parts, brand names, and technologies--all of which can be sold at a high price. This is the case, for example, with the auto industry--the parts are constructed in the U.S. and then sent to the country where they are to be sold, where they are assembled and marketed. Any business investing in an underdeveloped country considers not only the profits that they can make right now from their invest-

ment and trade, but also the possibility for expanded profits in the future and the opportunity to get an edge on a competitor. This is especially true in areas that are relatively unexploited--like Asia.

Not only do many U.S. businesses have a significant interest in the poor countries of the world, but these are also the very largest businesses in America, and they dominate the American economy as well. They have ties to many other businesses without interests in the underdeveloped world. When we add to all of these, those businesses that make profits by making uniforms, guns, missiles and other products of war for the military--then you've got a pretty powerful bunch of businesses with a big interest in an aggressive foreign policy to keep much of the world under their thumbs.

What this means is that our government will make war to help U.S. businessmen even when it is against the interest of the people who have to fight it and pay for it. We can see this in Vietnam, where the U.S. government has been willing to commit genocide in its attempt to crush the Vietnamese Revolution, not for the sake of the people of Vietnam, but rather in the interests of its business empire. Even more important than the opportunities for trade and investment in Vietnam itself is the entire Asian area--one that is largely unexploited by American business and which holds out the possibility of great profits in the future. As Henry Cabot Lodge, two time Ambassador to South Vietnam and former chief negotiator for the U.S. in Paris, put it,

He who holds or has influence in Vietnam can affect the future of the Philippines and Formosa to the east, Thailand and Burma with their huge rich surpluses to the west, and Malaysia and Indonesia with their rubber, ore and tin to the south. Vietnam thus does not exist in a geographical vacuum--from it large storehouses of wealth and population can be influenced and undermined.

By seeking to crush the NLF in Vietnam, the U.S. seeks to set an example for other movements for national liberation in Asia. By defeating the NLF, liberation movements in Thailand, the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, as well as other movements would be weakened. They would begin to believe that they could not succeed against the might of the U.S. But instead, they are learning another lesson--that it is possible to throw off the landlords, the generals and the businessmen--even if that means fighting the U.S. military as well.

