

Bertrand Russell
Russell D Stetler Jr

war and atrocities in Vietnam

Bertrand Russell has played a prominent part in informing the public of the truth about the war in Vietnam. For the past year he has devoted nearly all his time to the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

Russell Dearnley Stetler, Jr, is an undergraduate at Haverford College, Pennsylvania, and the founder of the May 2nd Committee which has vigorously opposed the war in Vietnam. He wrote to Bertrand Russell asking for information about the war, and upon receiving it began a campaign which took him to over fifty universities. He has organized both the collection of money for the despatch of medical supplies to the National Liberation Front, as a token of American protest against the war, and the publishing of advertisements in American newspapers signed by a large number of students which stated their refusal to fight in Vietnam.

As a result of his individual opposition to the war in Vietnam Mr Stetler has faced continued harassment. This has included hearings before the Philadelphia School Board for the withdrawal of his scholarship, visits from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, seizure of his letters, and the serious possibility of a charge of sedition which is, at the time of writing, under consideration by the US Attorney General.

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Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation

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The war in Vietnam is eighteen years old. It began as a broad movement of resistance to the French under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, a Communist. It was fought with ferocity against an unarmed peasantry, using guerilla tactics. The French were driven out of the North of Vietnam and the conflict was halted during negotiations at Geneva, leading to the establishment of an international Commission, intended to stabilize peace and watch over any attempt at foreign intervention.

Before developing what I wish to say about this subject, I should like to make clear that the facts in this pamphlet are taken from the daily papers. Many are taken from bulletins of committees concerned with Vietnam. Some are from reports of the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross and others from a very interesting book by Wilfrid G. Burchett called *The Futrive War*. Many of the facts have passed unscathed through the crucible of American denial. Many of them have been accepted even by the American authorities. All of them, I have good reason to believe, are incontrovertible.

It is important to realize that, since the French were defeated finally at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the war had been conducted surreptitiously under American direction. A substantial number of American forces began to be committed there after the French withdrawal and the Geneva talks. One of the most important aspects of this war has been that the United States pretended for many years that no such war was taking place and that the war which was not taking place was not being conducted by Americans. I have experienced some frustration in attempting to bring to light the fact that the war has been taking place and that Americans have been deeply involved in its conduct. At first, Western newspapers and even persons connected with the peace

movement in the West held that there was no evidence of American direction of this war. The *New York Times* stated this several times. Finally, in the course of controversy, it was allowed that American participation was solely in an advisory capacity. When it was alleged that chemicals were being employed by the United States forces in Vietnam, it was first denied and then alleged that the chemicals employed were used against American advice and wishes. It was admitted that they were used under the direction of the United States, but it was said that chemicals were harmless to human beings and were intended solely for the purpose of clearing vegetation and foliage. I brought to public attention im-pressive and particularized evidence concerning the use of additional chemicals and asked for international investigation of these allegations and the evidence adduced to support them. I was informed by various Western newspapers that no observers had found harmful results through the use of these chemicals and that no condemnatory comment had been made by the International Control Commission.

It is odd that this is advanced on behalf of that Commission. The function of the Commission was to regulate and prevent intervention from the outside. The failure of this International Commission to place on record its observation of American participation was in violation of its mandate and does not inspire confidence in its ability to detect chemicals where it failed to detect armed forces, aircraft, military supplies and a full-scale war. I shall wish to return to these more contemporary aspects of the war in Vietnam. It is sufficient here to note that the extraordinary war which has been raging in Vietnam managed to elude the juridical commitments of the Geneva agreements. It encompassed repression and extermination without any hindrance on the part of the Control Commissions set up at Geneva, escaped for some time the notice of the Western Press and enjoyed restrained consideration by those nominally committed to opposition to Cold War, small wars and wars of annihilation.

The US and Diem

The history of French and Vietnamese relations, particularly in the North, is much the same as that of the United States and South Vietnam. At the time of the conclusion of the Second World War, a movement of rebellion began, acquired new strength and culminated in the Geneva decisions. Vietnam was to be partitioned for an interim period, with the North under the control of the forces of Ho Chi Minh, and the South under the control of pro-Western groups. It was agreed that there would be a general election throughout Vietnam, out of which unification and neutralization were expected to come. The Geneva Conferences of 1955 were

designed to bring neutralization to all of Indo-China. The United States, though not a signatory to this Convention, accepted it in name and professed it to be the basis of American policy in Indo-China.

In fact, the United States quickly decided that it was impossible to permit a general election, in view of what it considered to be 'the disturbed state of the country'. The United States began to intervene actively with arms, money and men and established in power a ruling oligarchy subservient to American interests. This direct foreign intervention destroyed the purpose of the Geneva agreements and was a test for the International Control Commission. Its failure to instance this violation prepared the way for violence, the intrusion of the Cold War and the present threat to the peace of the world in Southeast Asia.

John Foster Dulles had urged the use of nuclear weapons at Dien Bien Phu. His desire to encompass the area in the Cold War led to the formation of the South East Asia Treaty Organization. The purpose of this body was to forestall neutrality and to forge a military alliance of anti-communists. The United States favoured Ngo Dinh Diem, a rich refugee from North Vietnam. He and his family, together with the Nhu family, represented a group of land-owners and the Catholic hierarchy in Vietnam — a small, closely-knit circle. The Diem family installed officers and relatives in various provinces, who administered them virtually as private estates. Various religious sects and cults in Vietnam were subdued because they failed to prove sufficiently loyal to the Diem régime. The Diem and Nhu families were dependent upon American backing for their power. American policy aimed at keeping South Vietnam in the anti-Communist camp and at opposing all groups not subservient to that purpose. The Vietcong were to be eradicated, despite the fact that the Vietcong was neutralist. Diem's régime was one of terror and persecution. Ghastly tortures were inflicted upon the peasants. It is instructive that it has been possible for 350,000 people to be placed in camps as political prisoners and for the greater part of the rural population to be uprooted and put in camps without vigorous protest taking place. Part of the responsibility for this default lies with the suppression of facts which, until the last two years, characterized Western reports about Vietnam. Part of the fault lies with the silence of peace groups, frightened to appear to be seen supporting 'the Communist side' of things.

One case is related in *The Furtive War*. It is that of a young girl:

'One day', she says, 'I came home and there were two security agents waiting for me. I was taken to the town of Fafu and for months on end I was tortured very badly. . . . Once I recovered consciousness and found I was stark naked,

blood oozing from wounds all over my body. There were others in the cell, I heard a woman moaning, and in the half dark saw a woman in a pool of blood. She had been beaten into having a miscarriage. Then I made out an old man. An eye had been gouged out and he was dying. Alongside him was a thirteen or fourteen year old boy, also dead; a little further away, another dead youth with his head split open. They had thrown me there, hoping the sight of this would break me down.

Finally, she was covertly conveyed to North Vietnam. This story was subsequently confirmed by neutral enquirers. It is typical of many among the 350,000 political prisoners.

'Strategic Hamlets'

The vast majority of peasants support the Vietcong. It is estimated that 160,000 have died and as many as 700,000 have been maimed. In order to combat the support of the population, Diem and the Americans instituted what were called 'strategic hamlets', into which the inhabitants of rural areas and existing villages were, in cruel circumstances, moved at a moment's notice. 'Strategic hamlets' were, in reality, prisons. Those who had been forcibly brought into them were unable to get out. These 'hamlets' were surrounded by spikes, moats and barbed wire and were patrolled by guards with dogs. They have all the character of concentration camps. The London *Observer* estimated that 65 per cent of the rural population, or over seven million people, were inside these 'hamlets' by mid-1963. Their establishment was the result of a decision on the part of the United States, publicly set out by W. W. Rostow, an advisor of the State Department. He suggested that Vietnam should be used as an experimental area for the development of anti-guerrilla techniques and weapons by American forces.

The rural population was stuffed into the 'strategic hamlets' so that they would be shut off from the guerrilla forces, who depended for their food and manpower upon them. I wrote letters to the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* in 1963 in which I sought to set out the full nature of this war, which I designated as a war of annihilation and atrocity. The *New York Times* vigorously denounced me for making such a charge.

The 'Advisory Capacity'

The State Department denied that chemicals were used in Vietnam and the *New York Times* admitted editorially that weedkillers were used, but stated that napalm was not used by Americans but only by Vietnamese governmental forces. Madame Nhu stated: 'If they don't like our chemicals why don't they get out of our jungles?' The *New York Times* failed to remember its own reports of June 19, 1962, which refer to the destruction of nearly 1,400 villages by governmental forces. Napalm and chemicals were used in the

The evidence

course of this devastation. My charge of atrocity was based upon the ruthless use of chemicals and jelly-gasoline, the devastation of civilian populations and the use of concentration camps. In addition to uprooting the population and establishing the hamlets, the United States sent special helicopters which could fire small rockets and ammunition in excess of that used by any aircraft during the Second World War. The Americans, as mentioned earlier, professed that their soldiers and airmen in Vietnam were only there in an advisory capacity and were not responsible for Diem's doings. At the same time, they took great pains to conceal from the world the sort of things that were being done. The *New York Times*, in its editorial comments, illustrates this attempt.

In the course of controversy in the pages of the *Observer*, I sought to bring to the attention of people facts which I had before me in the form of photographs and documents which particularized villages, dates, individuals and specific chemicals, and the use of toxic chemicals in Vietnam by American forces. I have evidence that over 1,000 people were caused severe illness, characterized by vomiting, bleeding, paralysis and loss of sight and consciousness. The evidence includes the destruction of fruit trees, vegetables, cattle and domestic animals. Further evidence specified the use of toxic gas on densely populated areas. This evidence was provided in part by the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross and in part by the Foreign Minister of North Vietnam. It has been offered to any international agency for impartial consideration. The replies to my setting out of this evidence were indicative of Western attitudes towards this war. Dennis Bloodworth, the Far Eastern Correspondent of the *Observer*, blandly stated that I was 'apparently referring to the defoliation campaign known as "Operation Ranchland"', and said that the weedkillers were popularly known in America and had been used widely without causing harm to animals or to humans. He contended that a propaganda campaign was being employed in which it was falsely said that these chemicals had ill effects and suggested that I was now assisting in a Communist propaganda campaign.

Let us now consider some of the statements which have appeared in the American and British Press over the past two years. These statements will help to indicate the nature of the war and the validity of the editorial protests which have peppered my appeals about the situation in Vietnam. With respect to the contention that Americans served only as advisors, it is worth looking at the *New York Times* of March 17, 1962. It was stated that, after two Vietnamese pilots pulled out of formation and launched a full attack on Diem's palace, Americans were designated to accompany

every Vietnamese pilot on a mission. The *Saturday Evening Post* of March 23, 1963, published a long report in which it contradicted the *New York Times's* statement that uniformed Americans were 'solely advisors and trainers'. The *Saturday Evening Post* said:

Virtually all the fighting is done by US troops.

Richard Hughes in the *Sunday Times* of January 13, 1963, speaks of the 'Washington fiction that no United States troops are involved in combat and that United States officers and trainers are on the scene merely to "advise, support and assist". The Americans are now operating more than 200 helicopters and scores of reconnaissance and troop transport planes in the combat areas. Probably half of all bombing and strafing missions of the South Vietnam Air Force are undertaken by Americans serving as pilots and co-pilots.' It is illustrative, as well, of the nature of this war to quote the *New York Times* and other American papers for the period 1962 to 1963. On July 7, 1962, the *New York Times* stated:

Tactical air support is used extensively. It is difficult to ascertain whether the people who are being killed by napalm and fragmentation bombs are guerrillas or merely farmers.

On June 16, 1962, the *New York Times* had stated:

Though the Government makes some attempt to re-educate the captured guerrillas, many are shot.

The *New York Times* had stated on June 5, 1962:

Seven leprosy clinics were wiped out by mistake in bombing raids last autumn.

The *New York Times* of July 25, 1962, stated:

Many of the 'enemy' dead reported by the Government to have been shot were ordinary peasants shot down because they fled from villages as troops entered. It is possible that some were Vietcong sympathizers, but others were running away because they did not want to be rounded up for military conscription or forced labour.

The *Chicago Daily News* is more direct in its statement of January 18, 1963:

The Government regards Vietcong hospitals as fair targets for ground or air attack. If Vietnamese commanders order an airstrike on a medical centre, the planes bomb and strafe it, even when Americans are along as advisors or instructors. When asked if Americans officially condone these attacks, a US military spokesman said: 'There has not been a definite policy ruling for Vietnam.' Planes of the Vietnamese Air Force are frequently piloted by Americans.

The *New York Times* which, editorially, overlooks its news reports (as when it reported the razing of 60 per cent of the villages of the country) might have been advised to listen to the Voice of America

'A Dirty, Cruel War'

on January 6, 1963. It was stated that during the year 1962 the American Air Force carried out 50,000 attacks on villages and upon virtually all of the peasant population outside of the strategic hamlets. This report was confirmed by the United States Defence Department. Senator Michael Mansfield of Montana, stated that there were American troops in every fighting action in Vietnam. Senator Mansfield referred to the action as 'America's secret war'. Areas in which heavy guerrilla activity was reported were denuded of population and then virtually obliterated.

The *New York Times* managed to say on October 21, 1962:

Americans and Vietnamese march together, fight together and die together, and it is hard to get much more involved than that.

The *New York Herald Tribune* of November 23, 1962, stated:

The United States is deeply involved in the biggest secret war in its history. Never have so many US military men been involved in a combat area without any formal programme to inform the public about what is happening. It is a war fought without official public reports or reports on the number of troops involved or the amount of money and equipment being poured in.

This war in which seven million people have been placed in internment camps, 160,000 killed, 700,000 tortured, 350,000 imprisoned — requiring 16,000 camps — was described by *The Nation* of January 19, 1963:

It is a dirty, cruel war. As dirty and as cruel as the war waged by the French forces in Algeria, which so shocked the American conscience.

The Nation continued:

The truth is that the United States Army, some 10,000 miles from home, is fighting to bolster up an open and brutal dictatorship in an undeclared war that has never received the constitutional sanction of the United States Congress.

A supporter of the Vietcong, Ma Thi Chu, stated:

From January to March, chemicals were used against forty-six villages. Twenty thousand people were affected, many of them women, children and old people. I have been on the spot. I have seen children with swollen faces and bodies covered with burns. I have met women blinded or suffering from sanguinolent diarrhoea. Many of them died afterwards. I have seen the luxuriant vegetation of the Mekong Delta devastated by chemicals. Our enemies have thus attacked all life, human, animal and vegetable.

'Weedkillers'

The concealment to which I have referred has included the effects of what were euphemistically called 'weedkillers'. Dennis Bloodworth described how in April, 1963, South Vietnamese officials 'rubbed defoliant on their hands and arms in the presence of foreign correspondents who had selected the canisters from which it should be drawn — and in one case drank some of it' (*Observer*, February 9, 1964). It is interesting to examine these weedkillers and their effects. *The Times* of May 16, 1963, disclosed the death by pesticide of birds of fifty-eight species and described fifty

pesticides in widespread use as responsible for 'acute poisoning' of animals and human beings. President Kennedy found it necessary to halt their use and to begin a formal investigation. It was stated in the United States that chemicals used there for purposes of defoliation and the killing of weeds resulted in California in 1,100 cases of serious illness and 150 deaths (*Reuter*, May 16, 1963). Dr Jerome Weisner, the Chief Science Advisor to President Kennedy, designated unregulated use of these weedkillers as potentially 'more dangerous than radioactive fallout'. The actual use of these weedkillers has killed. They caused serious illness in Britain, the United States and Scandinavia.

In a paragraph of a letter I wrote to the *New York Times*, which the *Times* did not see fit to publish, I said:

In your fifth paragraph (of an editorial attack upon a former letter from me on the subject of South Vietnam) you also endeavour to minimize the effect of 'defoliation chemicals' by calling them 'common weedkillers'. If spread, as they must be to achieve the end for which you say they are intended, certain common weedkillers would destroy many crops and animals, but, in fact, chemicals other than 'common weedkillers' have been used.

Among these other chemicals are included some which were previously used as 'weedkillers' in other countries before being found too dangerous.

The United States Government has been charged by the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross, after a year's study by them of the chemicals spread in South Vietnam, with using chemicals which, in the large doses used, are harmful: with using white arsenic, various kinds of arsenite sodium and arsenite calcium, lead manganese arsenates, DNP and DNC (which inflame and eat into human flesh) and calcic cyanamide (which has caused leaves, flowers and fruit to fall, killed big cattle like buffaloes and cows, and seriously affected thousands of the inhabitants of South Vietnam); with having spread these poisonous chemicals on large and densely populated areas of South Vietnam. Admittedly, the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross is, as its name suggests, allied with those opposing the US-supported Diem régime, but its published findings cannot be ignored, since it has urged international investigation of the situation. The use of these weapons, napalm bombs and chemicals, constitutes and results in atrocities and points to the fact that this is a 'war of annihilation'.

Napalm is a chemical which burns unremittingly and cannot be extinguished. The victims suppurate before terrified observers. The object of this weapon is to create hysteria and panic, as well as to annihilate. This weapon has been used on over 1,400 villages. The United States has spent one million dollars daily on the war. The *Observer* of September 8, 1963, estimates that there has been an average number of 4,000 casualties monthly. The Central Intelligence Agency has spent an estimated sum monthly of 250,000 dollars on private armies, espionage and intrigue, according to *The Times* of September 10, 1963.

This war was largely conducted under the nominal rule of Diem. Diem grew more and more reckless and was at last murdered in a coup which most agreed was engineered by the United States,

Wish for neutrality

after a number of eminent Buddhist priests had burned themselves to death. It is noteworthy that Diem was said by the head of military operations for the United States in the Mekong Delta to have been unwilling to win the war. Diem feared that if he won the war, American forces would be reduced and he would fall. His aim was simply indefinite war. The second junta to succeed him complained that its predecessor was secretly negotiating with the North along Gaullist lines, but not, noticeably, that tyranny was unpalatable to the population. The death of Diem brought no amelioration. He had been, in fact, only the tool of the Americans and the sole change brought by his death was that the Americans had open responsibility for whatever they had formerly blamed on Diem and for what was done under his régime.

The Vietcong was formed on December 20, 1960, unifying the various elements of revolt against American domination. By 1961, 10,000 Diem troops had deserted and joined the Vietcong with their arms. Let us consider again the treatment accorded this popular revolt. Homer Bigart described in the *New York Times* of January 30, March 27, March 29, April 1, April 4, April 20, May 10, June 24 and July 25, all in 1962, the following programme:

The rounding up of the entire rural population in strategic hamlets, the burning of all abandoned villages with the grain and possessions of the inhabitants and the 'locking' of strategic villages behind barbed wire.

It is clear that the majority of the inhabitants wish their country to be neutral. This the American Government cannot tolerate. The euphemisms used for the military operations which have belatedly been acknowledged to be the full responsibility of the United States are instructive. 'Operation Sunrise', 'Pacification of the West' and 'Morning Star' resulted, in the area attacked, in the destruction of all villages, fields and crops. In 1962 alone, according to General Paul D. Harkins, 30,000 peasants were killed. The *Christian Science Monitor* described this process on March 8, 1963:

Since the army finds sullen villagers and does not know which are pro-Communist and which are merely dissatisfied with Saigon, and since the army must do its job, it shoots anyone seen running or looking dangerous. It often shoots the wrong peasants. They are in the records of battle listed as Communists. Anyone killed is automatically a Vietcong.

On January 25, 1963, *Life* had photos of napalm bombings with the following caption:

Swooping low across enemy infested land, US pilot instructors watch Vietnamese napalm strike. The object of the fire bombing is to sear all foliage and to flush the enemy into the open.

The *New York Times* also reported that US advisors made a tally of guerrilla corpses after each battle to make sure that Diem's troops were using American

equipment to maximum advantage, so that they could display a good 'bag' (*Militant*, April 15, 1963.)

In the light of all this evidence, it is strange to find the *New York Times* saying on April 8, 1963:

Napalm has been used by the South Vietnam Air Force and has certainly killed innocent people, as other weapons have done in all wars. *American* (my emphasis) advisors have opposed its employment on both moral and practical grounds against all except clearly defined military targets.

This definition appears to include 60 per cent of the villages, hospitals and clinics and all peasants who run or look dangerous. This editorial reply contradicts the *New York Times's* own news reports about American use and insistence upon the use of napalm and other weapons on non-military areas.

Many people in the Pentagon are urging that the war should be extended to an invasion of North Vietnam. President Johnson has announced that those countries which are directing and supplying the (so-called) Communist guerrillas in South Vietnam are playing a deeply dangerous game. A map in the *New York Times* of April 1, 1962, shows the forces of the Liberation Front in the far south around Saigon, and nowhere near the borders of Laos or North Vietnam. Both British and American reporters have stated that primitive guerrilla weapons have been used by the Vietcong, in addition to those plentiful supplies captured from the forces of South Vietnam. The *London Times* of February 24 has stated that it is now considered doubtful whether the Government of South Vietnam has any will to win the war. The *Observer* of March 1, 1964, quoted an American official as stating that the trouble lay in the fact that, while the United States wished to extend the war, the Vietnamese only wanted to end the war.

To retire or conquer?

The situation which faces those who have conducted this war is grave. Should the United States retire and allow victory to the Vietcong? Should America engage in a naked war of conquest, which will be clearly seen as such, and attempt to establish again a Government dependent entirely upon alien armed force? This 'enemy' controls nearly 70 per cent of South Vietnam. The majority of the Vietcong was described as non-Communist by former Premier Tran Van Huu in Paris, as reported in the *Observer*. The Vietcong official policy asks for a neutral and disengaged South Vietnam. Despite all the attempts on the part of the Western Press to describe this war as one in which a helpless democratic people is under ruthless attack from an aggressive Communist neighbour, it is evident that the Vietcong is a popular front which has fought an appalling tyranny in South Vietnam and has been opposed by the United States at an incalculable cost to the population. Why is this

non-Communist, neutralist, popular front so ruthlessly opposed? Even the Communist North has declared, through Ho Chi Minh, that it wishes to be unified with the South on terms of neutrality in the Cold War and independence of Russia, China and the West (*The Times*, November 5, 1963).

The policy of the United States which has led to the prospect of an American invasion of North Vietnam will likely bring on Chinese involvement, with war with China as the result. The Soviet Union would then be drawn in. There are few parallels with the war in Vietnam. It has lasted nearly two decades; two Western industrial powers of overwhelming might have fought peasant guerrillas in a manner reminiscent of the Japanese during the Second World War. Everything short of nuclear weapons has been employed. Atrocity has characterized the conduct of the war throughout its history. The Western Press has hesitatingly discovered some of the facts about this war during the last two years. The Western peace movement has been conspicuously silent or restrained in its setting out of the truth about the war. The war has had no purpose. Its extension will bring direct conflict between the Cold War powers, with the possible destruction of mankind as the culmination of this folly. The tragedy in Vietnam indicates the extent to which it is possible to hide or disguise terrible crimes and it is time that people in the West raised their voices for an end to the bloodshed.

Acknowledgments

I owe much to many people for the help they have offered me in accumulating the facts and revising the many manuscripts which have reached final form in this draft. Special thanks should go to Bertrand Russell; it was he who acquainted me with many of the very first sources I used in studying Vietnam. His help and encouragement have been of inestimable value. If Pulitzer prizes were offered in plagiarism, I might win one for all the quotations I lifted from an article by my good friend Richard M. Rhoads; it is his research that uncovered much of the documentation I offer. Another of my good friends, Roger Eaton, contributed a vast amount of time in doing the 'busy work' which is necessary to an article of this sort. Mr Eaton did a great amount of (boring) research and (more boring) typing for me at various stages of the growth of this pamphlet. The most boring work of all — the typing of the complete manuscript — was done speedily and thanklessly by Miss Cath Lawrence, to whom I am deeply indebted. I must thank, too, my close friends and associates David Yaffe and Joseph Eyer for reading my manuscripts at all stages of progress. Their careful criticism and needed encouragement kept me at my task. I owe further thanks to my many friends and unknown comrades who have sent me enlightening clippings and notes of support.

That there is a war in Vietnam is now common knowledge; that American troops are presently involved in that war has penetrated the most unreceptive minds. The American public has long suffered from lack of information and, still worse, from misinformation in regard to this war in which hundreds of Americans have lost their lives and billions of American dollars have been wasted. The Republican Party's charge that the Democratic Administration has 'managed' news about the war is appallingly true. But the policy which has provoked the current crisis in Southeast Asia is a bipartisan blunder. Independent observers and impartial historians discover a grave sequence of events behind the now raging war.

Official US observers have begun to divulge the full nature of our secret war in Vietnam. In a Press conference on April 21, 1964, Representative Charles A. Halleck (R-Ind.) and Senator Everett M. Dirksen (R-Ill.), minority leaders of their respective Houses, read letters written by an American Air-Force Captain, Edwin G. Shank, to his wife (from January 7 to January 20, 1964). Shank is one of the more than 210 Americans who have died in Vietnam. In the letters just made public by his wife, he states,

How our government can lie to its own people — it's something you wouldn't think a democratic government could do. (January 7, 1964.)
I don't know what the US is doing. They tell you people we're just in a training situation and they try to run us as a training base. But we're at war, we are doing the fighting. We are losing. Morale is very bad. (January 8, 1964.)
I'll bet you that anyone you talk to does not know that American pilots fight this war. . . . The Vietnamese 'students' we have on board are airman basics (recruits). . . . The only reason they are on board is, in case we crash, there is one American 'adviser' and one Vietnamese 'student'. . . . They are . . . sacrificial lambs . . . and they are a menace to have on board. (January 20, 1964.)

But the *sacrificial lambs* Captain Shank found beside him are

otherwise portrayed by the US Defence Department. Its *Pocket Guide to Vietnam* represents the US soldier's role quite differently, informing him that he goes to Vietnam 'for the deeply serious business of helping a brave nation repel Communist invasion'. Dirksen and Halleck called for a disclosure of 'the whole brutal business' about the US in Vietnam. They are not the first Congressmen to point out the lies, concealments, and contradictions in the official Administration picture of Vietnam. Their outrage does not surprise many who have followed with great care the Press disclosures of our involvement in Vietnam.

A *New York Times* article (October 21, 1962), which reported:

Americans and Vietnamese march together, fight together, and die together, and it is hard to get much more involved than that.

The foreign Press began to state more and more explicitly how much the war in Vietnam was exclusively an American enterprise. Richard Hughes in the London *Sunday Times* (January 13, 1963) discussed 'the Washington fiction that no United States troops are involved in combat and that United States officers and trainers are on the scene merely to "advise, support, and assist". The Americans are now operating more than 200 helicopters and scores of reconnaissance and troop transport planes in the combat areas. Probably half of all bombing and strafing missions of the South Vietnam Air Force are undertaken by Americans serving as pilots and co-pilots.'

The truth about Vietnam cannot be suppressed much longer. Two Pulitzer prize-winning journalists, Homer Bigart and David Halberstam, have been removed from Vietnam. But the current *New York Times* correspondent continues in their tradition, with articles flatly contradicting the 'facts' stated in that newspaper's editorials and the US government's policy explanations. This correspondent, Peter Grose, wrote on May 2, 1964,

The United States has established what amounts to an expeditionary force in South Vietnam with all the command links, support units and facilities associated with an army overseas.

It is unlike any other expeditionary force the United States has mounted. It is a force without fighting men, American troops pull triggers but do not engage in combat. For two years it has been a force with six major commands, which command nothing of the war to save South Vietnam from a Communist insurgency. It is a force marked by anomalies, ambiguities, and frustrations. It is the proving ground for the next generation of leaders of the American defence establishment.

Not only are Americans dying, they are killing the Vietcong. It was the hypocrisy of policy for many months never to admit in official statements that napalm was being used against Vietcong concentrations, though the fact was plain to see and was freely discussed here. Secretary of Defence McNamara admitted recently that napalm was 'occasionally' used, which is the beginning of the truth. Furthermore, it cannot be denied, though it is not emphasized, that American pilots are flying the strafing planes that account for the bulk of Vietcong casualties in an increasing number of pitched infantry battles.

But even as the current situation is revealed, the enlighteners generally fail to mention the history of our involvement in South Vietnam. Since our reporters are not historians as well, they often leave us wondering how such a mess as the current conditions in Vietnam originated. Senator Wayne L. Morse (D-Ore.), as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has seen the full development of our policy in Southeast Asia and viewed it critically. In a speech in Philadelphia on April 26, 1964 (reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* the following morning), Morse said provisions of the United Nations Charter and the 1954 Geneva Agreement 'make the American war in Vietnam illegal and a menace to the American nation.... This war is outside the legal framework of international law and American treaty obligations'. Morse's contention so blatantly contradicts the official US justifications for its intervention in South Vietnam that it demands further investigation of the historical events which have led us to our current involvement.

We are told by the Administration that our commitment in South Vietnam arises from the South East Asia Treaty Organization's declared *protection* of that zone. But we are not told that the government of South Vietnam was established by the US expressly to invite our protection. The truth of the matter was ominously admitted by C. L. Sulzberger in the *New York Times* (June 3, 1964), when he stated, 'When Foster Dulles fathered SEATO a decade ago he admitted that its principle purpose was to provide our President legal authority to intervene in Indochina....'

It surprises no one that John Foster Dulles engineered this. Much of today's trouble stems from our inability to extricate ourselves from the entanglements he created. He set up SEATO and then 'interpreted' its function: not to protect the nations of Southeast Asia from *any* invasion, but only from 'Communist aggression'. His phraseology remains with us today in the allegation that what is actually a civil war in South Vietnam is an invasion by Communist troops from the North. On-the-spot observers demand proof for this crucial contention. In the analysis 'US Policy in Vietnam' (*New York Times*, March 6, 1964) David Halberstam stated quite plainly, 'The war is largely a conflict of southerners fought on southern land. No capture of North Vietnamese in the south has come to light, and it is generally believed that most Vietcong weapons have been seized from the South Vietnamese forces.... The regular guerrillas are southerners who have rarely left the south.' Clichés of Dulles, even when modernized slightly by McNamara, do not refute these observations or answer these challenges. Halberstam's removal from South Vietnam at official request is only further indictment against

the policy-makers who fear the truth.

The kind of struggle now waged in South Vietnam has been going on for over twenty-five years. From the dissent expressed in the 'thirties came the wars for independence which have raged since the 'forties. The scene of recent fighting, the Mekong Delta regions south of Saigon, has a long record of struggle; it was here that the first major revolt against the French colonial government began on November 23, 1940. The peasants fought then to oppose forced conscription and the tax system of the foreign rulers. When the French suffered at home during the Second World War, Japan sent troops to occupy Indochina, France's most lucrative colony. Underdefended by the French, the Vietnamese organized the 'Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh' (Vietminh) in self-defence against the 'Fascists'. These native forces, led by Ho Chi Minh, a Communist, successfully challenged the invaders.¹ Having defeated the Japanese, Ho proclaimed a fuller victory. He declared the complete independence of Vietnam on September 2, 1945. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was constituted and announced; its Declaration of Independence, read by Ho, opened with a quote from the corresponding American document and stated that French rule had ended in Vietnam.

At the time the US was satisfied with the independence of Vietnam, American generals admired Ho Chi Minh for his army's brilliant campaign against the Japanese. That Ho was Vietnam's heroic leader was boldly proclaimed in a *New York Times* editorial on September 21, 1946:

Ho Chi Minh . . . is Viet Nam. That strange little figure, meek in appearance yet so determined in purpose, embodied the spirit, the aspirations and probably the future of the new state. He moulded it, he put it through the fire, and he will guide it.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had said about Vietnam in 1944 (as reported in Cordell Hull, *Memiors*, NY, 1948, p. 1597),

France has had the country . . . for nearly one hundred years, and the people are worse off than at the beginning. . . . France has milked it for one hundred years. . . . The people of Indochina are entitled to something better than this.

But Roosevelt did not live to enforce his words. France reasserted her claim to Indochina without opposition from the other Allies.

A new war for independence soon erupted. Again, the first fighting broke out in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam in 1945; the war spread northwards the following year. The Vietnamese chose to fight a protracted war, granting the irregular army unlimited time to wear down the modern, professional French army

¹ See chapter 85 of Edgar Snow's *The Other Side of the River* for specific discussion of the Vietminh's action against the Japanese.

to a point where they might engage them successfully in mobile combat. The same men who evaded forced conscription under the French were the volunteers who fought this war. The unity of the army and the population was evident. The people fed, sheltered, and concealed the guerrillas. When a guerrilla left with the army, he was assured that his neighbours would care for his family and tend his crops and animals in his absence.

The strategy of the guerrilla war is simply and clearly stated by its leading general, Vo-Nguyen Giap, who writes in his book *People's War, People's Army*, 'When the enemy is strong, avoid him; when he is weak, attack him'. The guerrillas took their time and executed this strategy to perfection. The French had sent more than 400,000 men to Vietnam, with tanks, airplanes, and other modern weaponry. According to Jules Moch, French delegate to the UN (quoted in the *New York Times*, July 22, 1954) there were 92,000 fatalities and 114,000 wounded in the French army. The cost of the war was some seven billion dollars. French generals did not see that the exorbitant quantities of money and men would not be enough to defeat the Vietnamese people. They repeatedly predicted victory. But when the time came for mobile combat, the army was too worn down and weakened to defeat the Vietnamese. At the fifty-five day siege of Dienbienphu, the Vietminh routed the French, wiping out thousands of crack French troops. The final days of the battle (May 7 and 8, 1954) brought a bitter and tragic awareness to the French military experts. Their schemes had ultimately failed, and France had lost her colony. Outside observers had achieved the awareness of imminent defeat much sooner. The US watched carefully, because it had invested heavily in this war. President Harry S. Truman had announced US aid to the French in late 1952; his policy of support was amplified under Eisenhower-Dulles agreements. (The *New York Times* reported on July 4, 1954, 'in the current year the United States is paying 78 per cent of the French Union costs in the Indochinese war'.) Considerable debate generated in Washington during the battle of Dienbienphu. Hanson Baldwin, military editor of the *New York Times*, wrote on April 1, 1954,

Washington is faced with some hard decision if Indochina is to be retained as a bastion against Communism. Aid on a far more massive scale than ever before . . . may well be necessary.

Roscoe Drummond and Gaston Coblentz report in *Duel at the Brink* (pp. 116-23) that Dulles even advocated and offered to Bidault the use of nuclear weapons at Dienbienphu. Of course, many Americans hoped the US would commit itself no further in Vietnam, that it would concur with the French judgment when

defeat became undeniable. Senator John F. Kennedy, for example, stated on April 6, 1954,

To pour money, material, and men into the jungles of Indochina without at least a remote prospect of victory would be dangerously futile and destructive. . . . I am frankly of the belief that no amount of American assistance in Indochina can conquer an enemy which is everywhere, and at the same time nowhere; an 'enemy of the people' which has the sympathy and support of the people. . . . For the United States to intervene unilaterally and to send troops into the most difficult terrain of the world . . . would mean that we would face a situation which would be more difficult than even that which we encountered in Korea.²

When the French accepted defeat at Dienbienphu on May 8, 1954, a conference had already been set up at Geneva to arrange the settlement. An accord was reached on July 21, 1954. According to the stipulations of this Geneva Conference on Indochina (see *New York Times*, July 22, 1954, for complete text), Vietnam was divided into two military regrouping zones. The demarcation line was designated at the Ben Dai River, along the seventeenth parallel. Military disengagement was to be achieved by keeping the Vietminh forces above this line (since they were already concentrated in the North) and withdrawing the French troops below this line. The partition was designed only to facilitate separation of combatants; once the troops had been duly disengaged, the French were to leave Vietnam. When all the French troops had departed, there was to be a countrywide election to reunify the partitioned nation under common leadership. The deadline for both the withdrawal of all French troops and the holding of nationwide elections was, according to the Geneva agreements, July 20, 1956. The intent and plan of the agreements are unambiguous. Its Article Six states that 'the military demarcation line should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary'. Article Seven specified,

General elections shall be held in July 1956 under the supervision of an international committee. . . . Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from July 20, 1955, onwards.

Further provisions of the Geneva agreements imposed regulations on foreign military bases and personnel and on increased armaments in Indochina, and set up an International Controls Commission (consisting of representatives from Canada, India, and Poland) to supervise the implementation of the agreements.

The conference was chaired by the USSR and Great Britain; dele-

gates came from People's China, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, the Vietminh régime, France, and the United States. The US chose not to sign the agreements and instead issued a unilateral declaration. The Associated Press, July 21, 1954, carried this statement from President Eisenhower explaining why we were not signatories:

The US has not been a belligerent in this war. The primary responsibility for the settlement in Indochina rested with those nations which participated in the fighting.

The US, while financing the French and offering them atomic bombs at Dienbienphu, had not 'participated' and felt 'no responsibility'. In its own statement, the US pledged to 'refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb' the Geneva agreements, to 'view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security', and to 'continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections'. (The text of the declaration and its appended 'Stand on Free Elections' can be found in the *New York Times* of July 22, 1956.)

At precisely the same time that these official proclamations were issued, Secretary of Defence Charles Wilson already seemed to regard the seventeenth parallel as a permanent national border. On July 20, 1954, he stated: 'The US is prepared to defend the military demarcation line in Vietnam as well as the military demarcation line in Korea.' The US 'defended' the military demarcation line against *free elections*, and nothing else! When Wilson made that statement, it was already clear in the mind of many policy-makers that the US would stop the free elections scheduled for 1956. The 'traditional position that people are entitled to determine their own future' (quoted from the 'Stand on Free Elections') was meaningless in so far as the US would not allow the people of Vietnam to choose a Communist as their leader. Had not Dulles made clear his fanatical refusal to recognize the popularity of Communists among the Vietnamese and the nationalist spirit of their group when he called on March 29, 1954, for internationalization of the French-Vietminh war to prevent 'the imposition on Southeast Asia of the political system of Communist Russia and its Chinese ally?' It is no secret who would have won the election had it been held. President Eisenhower, in his book, *Mandate for Change*, admits, 'I have never talked with a correspondent, with a person knowledgeable in Indochinese affairs, who did not agree that had elections been held at the time of the fighting possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for Ho Chi Minh'. (Senator Frank Church, D-Idaho, has more recently referred to Ho as the 'George Washington of Vietnam'.) To prevent Ho's election in 1956, the

US took immediate action in 1954 to keep the country partitioned and to thwart the Geneva agreements.

During the Geneva Conference there was a change in puppet-dictators. Bao Dai, titular Emperor under the French, appointed Ngo Dinh Diem Premier on July 7, 1954. Bao Dai was not a man known to act according to his own will; but this time it was not the French who dictated the act. As the *New York Times* reported on December 18, 1954, in a dispatch from Paris, Guy La Chambre, Minister for the Indochina States, 'told the Assembly that France supported the Government of Ngo Dinh Diem at the instance of the United States'. (Nine years later the *New York Times* discussed the matter more explicitly; Homer Bigart wrote on August 22, 1963, 'Relations have seemed inextricable since 1954 when Ngo Dinh Diem rose to power in South Vietnam with an important assist from the Central Intelligence Agency'. The Senior Editor of *Look*, Sam Castan, put it more bluntly in his January 28, 1964, issue: 'Secretary of State John Foster Dulles picked him, Senator Mike Mansfield endorsed him, Francis Cardinal Spellman praised him, Vice-President Richard Nixon liked him, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower OK'd him.')
Diem was described thus in the *New York Times*, June 15, 1954:

Ngo Dinh Diem, a bachelor, has lived in the United States and France for the last four years. He has never taken an active part in Vietnamese politics and has no political organization of any particular importance behind him.

A rich landlord from Central Vietnam, Diem had fled the country during the war for independence. He escaped first to Hong Kong and then fled to the United States. He came here to attend a Catholic seminary and was picked up by Cardinal Spellman of New York, who became Diem's personal tutor. While he had no following in Vietnam, Diem soon developed one in the US State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency. The Dulles brothers, heads of both groups, were the most prominent personalities behind Diem. He was flown into Vietnam to be installed as Premier in the summer of 1954, having spent the past four years in Washington, and sought immediately to justify the trust that had been placed in him. Described in the *New York Times* (July 17, 1955) as 'a dedicated democrat of scrupulous honesty', Diem set up a referendum to legitimize his rule. This was not a referendum of the sort demanded by the Geneva agreements; in fact, no plans for such a genuine election were laid in July 1955 (as the agreements required). Diem's referendum offered the South Vietnamese half-nation a choice between him and Bao Dai; the latter did his campaigning in the Riviera at that time, living on an income from 'gambling, prostitution and narcotics' (according to a Vietnamese delegate to the United Nations, quoted in the *New York*

Times, December 24, 1954). *Time* magazine used the bland adjective 'rigged' to describe this referendum (November 23, 1960) Diem revealed nothing more than that he had received 98.2 per cent of the votes cast. Unfortunately, this election seems to be the sole measure of self-determination which the US has accorded the people of South Vietnam. Lincoln White, State Department Press Officer, announced (in the *New York Times*, October 25, 1955), 'The people of Vietnam have spoken and we, of course, recognize their decision.'

The people of Vietnam never spoke and never had the chance to speak. Diem was imposed on them. His clique based its rule on nepotism, oligarchy, and repression. He never intended to fulfill the Geneva agreements; and he concurred in this judgment with important US policy-makers. Some pretended at first that Diem would oppose Ho in a 1956 election. But it is doubtful that anyone honestly believed that he would attempt it. Consider the careful remarks of US Special Ambassador to Saigon, General Collins (reported in the *New York Times*, November 18, 1954):

General Collins was cautious in speaking of the proposed elections in Vietnam, which are scheduled in 1956 under the Geneva accords. He said he hoped that total United States aid would be sufficient to win those elections, but he did not reply when asked whether he thought they would ever be held.

At best the US position was unclear. The *New York Times* registered its confusion thus on July 23, 1955 (after Diem had refused to consult with the North to plan the elections):

The position of the United States is obscure. It did not sign the Geneva agreement and some of its officials have opposed the elections for which the agreement provided.

Nothing more vigorous than a note of 'displeasure' characterized the US government's attitude toward Diem's refusal to abide by the Geneva agreements. The *New York Times* reported August 9, 1955,

While approving the over-all position taken by Premier Diem, the United States has been displeased by his refusal to go through the motions of trying to organize free elections in co-operation with the Communist North.

The denial of free elections in 1956 constitutes only one of Diem's many blatant violations of the Geneva agreements. Until very recently the character of his régime was largely unpublicized in this country. He stood behind a façade of reform and freedom, shielded from the American people who would have been shocked and outraged if they knew the brutality of his rule. Diem's family was Roman Catholic; his policy was to reward those who espoused his

religious beliefs and to persecute those who did not. Persecution of Buddhists and members of ethnic minorities was particularly severe. Political repressions went far beyond the refusal to hold free elections. Thousands of men were arrested and detained for political non-conformity of the most harmless character. The International Controls Commission, while negligent in demanding the full enactment of the Geneva agreements and shamefully blind to the illegal actions of the United States in setting up Diem, did make some attempt to investigate repressions and reprisals. Despite Diem's unco-operativeness, the ICC investigated and verified numerous cases of persecution and reprisals of which Diem was guilty. (The great difficulty of investigation must not be underestimated; on April 11, 1957, Lucien Cannon, chief of the Canadian delegation to the ICC, was murdered for his snooping.) The findings of the ICC throughout the 'fifties are enlightening, even if inadequate.

Diem's very laws read as though they were invented to indict him. He passed statutes requiring all military personnel to attend Roman Catholic religious services, offered rewards for conversion to Catholicism, and spread (via leaflets printed in the US) propaganda among Catholics in North Vietnam declaring that God and the Virgin Mary had abandoned North Vietnam and that loyal Catholics should follow them to the South. (Many Catholics did go South. The British publication, 'Survey of International Affairs, 1954', issued at Oxford in 1957, states, 'A number of English observers were critical of the methods used in this campaign and doubted whether the peasants concerned fully understood the realities of the situation or had indeed wished to move.') Another legislated oppression is the 10/59 (November 1959) law against dissidents. This law punishes by death or life imprisonment any act or *intent to commit* an act 'endangering public security'. It provides for travelling guillottes (old, renovated French models) to implement the punitive measures with speedy authority. Diem set up a secret police force (run by his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu), which Allen Dulles's CIA financed at a cost of \$3,000,000 per year (as reported in the London Times, September 10, 1963). That US dollars sponsor such a gestapo is an insult and an outrage, even if not a shock, to the American public.

We should note that in the police-state of South Vietnam treatment of the accused is never anything but brutal and atrocious. On June 16, 1962, the *New York Times* stated simply and bluntly, 'Though the Government makes some attempt to re-educate the captured guerrillas, many are shot'. On July 22, 1962, it reported that Representative Robert Kastenmeier (D-Wis.) 'wrote Mr Kennedy that American "complicity in these inhuman practices"'

should be hated'. Consider this report in the *New York Times*, November 9, 1963:

'They stripped me, tied me over a bench, choked me with water and a towel, and beat me until I was unconscious,' the young typist said with an embarrassed smile.

It happened last Friday . . . while . . . Ngo Dinh Nhu's secret police terrorists were still in operation. She was one of thousands of 'political' detainees who felt the power of the secret police.

The article goes on to describe other tortures: men forced to drink soapy water until they bleed from it, electric probes applied to women's breasts, the chopping off of fingers of 'political' detainees. I suppose there can never be a secret police without police dogs; Vietnam is no exception to this rule. Some one thousand American dogs were imported, but they proved impractically expensive. As the *New York Times* revealed on July 25, 1962, US canines ate \$1.20 worth of frozen horsemeat a day; a Vietnamese soldier gets by on 19 c worth of rice.

A people who have fought for independence once will not be subjugated easily. Tortures, repressions, and injustices will not be tolerated by a populace which has already expelled one set of foreign rulers and exploiters. Mock elections and bogus reforms will not fool a people conscious enough of their condition to wage a war of independence. It is no surprise that the people rose up against Diem. This story is perhaps best recounted by Philippe Devillers, a French historian and a Roman Catholic, who spent a good deal of his life in Indochina. He was originally sympathetic to the Diem government, but his own observation of the totalitarianism, corruption, and repressions of this régime changed his mind. In an article included in P. J. Honey's book, *North Vietnam Today*, Devillers writes:

The Diem government launched out in 1957 into what amounted to a series of man hunts. . . . A considerable number of people were arrested in this way and sent to concentration camps. . . . This repression was in theory aimed at the Communists. In fact, it affected all those, and they were many - democrats, socialists, liberals, adherents of the sects - who were bold enough to express their disagreement with the line of policy adopted by the ruling oligarchy. In 1958 the situation grew worse. Roundups of 'dissidents' became more frequent and more brutal. The enemy (those suspected of Communist activities or of being affiliated to the sects) were difficult to apprehend. The areas where they took refuge . . . with their marshes and forests, were not favourable for operations by government forces. Moreover, the way in which many of the operations were carried out very soon set the villagers against the régime. The Communists, finding themselves hunted down, began to fight back. Informers were sought out and shot in increasing numbers, and village chiefs who had presided over the denunciations, village notables, and members of the militia who took part, were frequently treated in the same way. The people

3 Ugly, damning photographs of such tortures appeared in *Life* magazine in early June, 1964.

of the villages, thus intimidated, fell silent. Diem's police and army saw their sources of information drying up one after another. . . . To make good the lack, they resorted to worse barbarity, hoping to inspire an even greater terror among the villagers. . . .

In December 1958 the death of some twenty Viet Cong detainees in the Phu Loi concentration camp served to fan the flames of anger of the guerrillas. . . . In the course of that December and the following January armed bands sprang into being almost everywhere. . . .

What did the authorities of the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam do in the face of these sad circumstances? They protested in diplomatic notes. The members of the Viet Minh cadre in the south, who had been promised by Hanoi that unification would be rapidly achieved, had to listen to the bitter remarks that were made to them about the inability of the North to do anything about the Diem dictatorship. The over-riding needs of the world-wide strategy of the Socialist camp meant little or nothing to guerrilla fighters being hunted down in Nam-Bo.

It was in such a climate of feeling that, in 1959, responsible elements of the Communist Resistance in Indochina came to the conclusion that they had to act, whether Hanoi wanted them to or no. They could no longer continue to stand by while their supporters were arrested, thrown into prison and tortured. . . .

The point of view of most foreign governments, especially in the West, is that the fighting going on in South Vietnam is simply a subversive campaign directed from Hanoi. . . . It leaves out of account the fact that the insurrection existed before the Communists decided to take part, and that they were simply forced to join in. And even among the Communists, the initiative did not originate in Hanoi, but from the grass roots, where the people were literally driven by Diem to take up arms in self-defence.

The uprising which opposed Diem also opposed the United States. Diem was clearly a placeman, set in the midst of a blatant US military build-up. From 1954 to 1961 the US poured nearly two billion dollars into South Vietnam. Less than 1.5 per cent of this went for agriculture; most of the rest went for military expenditure. (Of course, when President Eisenhower announced the transfer of American assistance from the French to Diem, on October 24, 1954, he assured the world that the US Government 'expects this aid will be met by. . . undertaking needed reforms'. Military build-up - a flat violation of the Geneva agreements - was never projected.) To the people of South Vietnam, US aid means not improved living conditions and economic progress, but the six big naval bases, the 106 airfields, and the network of strategic highways built for military use. Jeeps and transport trucks, warships, airplanes, and helicopters are no convenience for the Vietnamese people, who continue to transport their burdens on human legs. The native population observes foreign intervention indistinguishable from that of the hated French and Japanese. While it is often contended (as by Wayne Morse in his speech to the Temple University Downtown Club, in Philadelphia, on April 20, 1964) that US involvement in South Vietnam serves to protect private interests (such as those of American oil investment in the Indian Ocean and beyond) indirectly, few recognize the importance

of genuine colonial interests in Vietnam. On February 12, 1950, the *New York Times* summed up such interests thus:

Indochina is a prize worth a large gamble. In the north are exportable tin, tungsten, zinc, manganese, coal, lumber and rice; and in the south are rice, rubber, tea, pepper, cattle and hides. . . . Before the war (World War II) Indochina yielded dividends estimated from \$250,000,000 to \$300,000,000 a year to French interests.

South Vietnam today exports rubber and other agricultural commodities; France and the US share these products. A more recent account (A. Doak Barnett in *Communist China and Asia*, p. 302) notes that:

Although these resources have been only partially exploited, Southeast Asia nevertheless supplies approximately 90 per cent of the world's crude rubber, 60 per cent of its tin, and 80 per cent of its copra and coconut oil. It is the world's largest exporter of rice, quinine, kapok, teak, pepper, and tapioca flour, and it also exports sizeable quantities of sugar, tea, coffee, tobacco, sisal, fruits, spices, natural resins and gums, petroleum, iron ore and bauxite. Yet, in terms of its economic potential, Southeast Asia is still very underdeveloped.

The US has long perceived the wealth of Indochina. We must not forget the frank remarks of President Eisenhower at a Governors' Conference on August 4, 1953:

Now let us assume that we lost Indo-China. If Indo-China goes, several things happen right away. The peninsula, the last bit of land hanging on down there, would be scarcely defensible. The tin and tungsten that we so greatly value from that area would cease coming. . . . So when the United States votes \$400,000,000 to help that war, we are not voting a giveaway programme. 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 Indo-Chinese territory and from Southeast Asia.

Our aid to Indochina is certainly no 'giveaway'. Additionally, the US has a market for a number of its own products in South Vietnam. While the nation is too poor to import from the US in fact, it manages to buy the goods with US dollars. Economic aid to South Vietnam has a 'buy-US' proviso, so that the gigantic US enterprises which annually produce large surpluses, can sell these goods at the expense of the American taxpayer, through the so-called 'foreign' aid programme.

Even if the Vietnamese peasant lacks the understanding of economics to tell him whether American aid goes to a rich man in Vietnam or back to a rich man in the US, he needs no sophistication to tell himself that he is starving and that US aid is not contributing to his welfare. Robert Trumbull, Saigon correspondent of the *New York Times*, described the world-view of such a peasant in the Magazine Section, July 2, 1961:

When one speaks of Nguyen Thanh, one is speaking in general of 80 to 90 per

cent of South Vietnam's population of approximately 13,000,000 people. They exist in a grim world of poverty, disease, and ignorance.

With the help of a United States contribution of more than \$1,000,000,000 in economic aid since 1955, the villages have acquired an outward appearance of prosperity. But this does not extend to the hamlets.

In relation to all this economic progress, Nguyen Thanh is in the position of a hungry wail with his nose pressed to the window of a rich restaurant. As he sees it, he is worse off today than he was two or three years ago.

The people just don't see progress resulting from American 'aid'.

A South Vietnamese government official was quoted thus in the *Reporter* on September 19, 1957 :

The American attitude is medieval and retrograde. They give us buffaloes, when what we need are tractors with which to modernize our agriculture. They supply our army. But what is the use. Unless they help us to develop our country, our army will not fight.

The United States has failed too long to heed the advice of that official. Professor Frank C. Child, an economist from the Michigan State University Advisory Group which spent two years in South Vietnam recommending various reform plans to the Diem régime, lamented the situation with this analysis, in the December 4, 1961, number of the *New Republic*,

American aid is administered in a fashion which guarantees the economic and political position of the rich mercantile class which is most vigorously opposed to economic progress. A 3 per cent annual population growth and a grossly unequal distribution of income together with modest increases in national output portend falling living standards and further popular discontents.

The simple fact is that reforms have not come and are not coming. The US continues to talk about reform programmes. McNamara today meekly demands of Khanh what Eisenhower asked of Diem ten years ago. The words are the same and conditions are the same. (We might project here one remark about indigenous feeling toward the Khanh régime. The people of Vietnam were in no way endeared to General Nguyen Khanh, who, in his declaration of true patriotism at the time of his takeover, reported he was 'now in a position to flee the country with \$10,000,000' in an interview described in the *New York Herald Tribune*, February 3, 1964. They understood the source of his wealth and power.)

Newspapers whose editorials defend the US position in South Vietnam print the facts which assail it unrelentingly. Myriad reports have come out of Saigon with concise statements of the cause of the war. There are no alternative facts to print. Some stories never are printed, but some must be revealed. Consider the following dispatch by *New York Times* correspondent Tillman Durdin dated May 19, 1960 :

Discontent is evident among both intellectuals and peasantry. The intellectuals direct most of their criticism against the dictatorial nature of the Ngo régime, as evidenced by the strict control of the Press, a secret police system, arbitrary

arrests and the denial of free political activity to non-Communist opponents of the Government.

Because they get favoured treatment, the National Revolutionary Movement and other minor political groups that support the Government are often attacked by critics of the Government.

Through the rigging of the last elections Government supporters won almost all the seats in the National Assembly.

Peasant discontent with the Government has been stirred recently by a requirement that peasants give free labour to various rural construction projects.

No matter where the US officially lays the blame for the current war, it is recognized elsewhere in the world and in many circles in this country that it is the US policy which precipitated the conflict. The grave mistake 'cannot be justified, and will not be justified in American history', to use the words of Wayne Morse in his March 4, 1964, speech in the Senate. The Vietnamese articulate their grievance; Tran Van Tung, exiled leader of the (anti-Communist) Vietnamese Democratic Party, wrote to the *New York Times*, October 10, 1962.

When will America learn that it is always fatal to the cause of freedom and democracy to support a cynical tyrant as the 'only alternative' to Communism? In eight years in office, Diem has not effected one reform requested by the United States and desperately needed by the Vietnamese. Instead, he has purged himself of all capable anti-Communist leaders, imprisoned 50,000 anti-Communist Vietnamese nationalists, stripped the populace of all rights and freedoms, forced the people into cruelly administered concentration camps, murdered many score innocent families in the name of 'anti-Communism', and let the . . . Vietcong control . . . the country right up to the city limits of Saigon'. Now Diem requests additional United States financial 'guarantees' to prolong his jungle war—so that he can stay in power twenty years and continue amassing family wealth. Hated and feared by 80 per cent of his people, continuing domestic policies that would shame Hitler, Diem stays in power only because of United States support.

Historical investigation clearly indicates that the origin of the war in South Vietnam is internal, or external only in so far as it is US intervention which prevented the implementation of the Geneva provisions for the independence and territorial integrity of Vietnam and which maintained an unpopular dictator whose crimes against the people are the direct cause of the war. We have seen that the SEATO 'commitment' is itself in opposition to the truce of Geneva since it seeks to make the military partition permanent. We have seen further that the charge which, in the mind of the US decision-makers, allows SEATO action (not unilateral US action) is a farce. There is no evidence to claim Communist invasion and every reason to believe in the justice of the popular uprising against Diem and his US sponsors.

If the guerrillas who fight the US are not Communist invaders, what are they? The answer is contained in any understanding of the cause of the war. The guerrillas are those southerners who would not tolerate oppression. Certainly, southern Communists have

joined in the war: but the war originated from and is maintained by the broadest base of the population, all those who have suffered since Geneva. *New York Times* correspondent Robert Trumbull described the guerrilla uprising thus, on May 28, 1961:

The Vietcong movement... is thought... to be capable of developing into the same kind of broadly based popular uprising that the French were unable to defeat in nine years of bitter fighting.

... the underlying factors in the conflict here boil down to a question whether most of the people are for the Government or for those who would tear it down. The answer to this question is ominously unclear.

In many distressing aspects the Vietcong rebellion appears to be really a continuation of the colonial war against the French. The people fighting President Ngo are the same who fought the French, and in their own view they are in arms for essentially similar reasons.

Country dwellers find themselves under the authority, in many cases, of officials who in the past were known as French collaborators. The army, it has been conceded often finds it necessary to use the same unpleasant methods that the French employed against members of the populace here and in Algeria. And the image of the vile foreigner... has been transferred successfully from the French to the Americans.

The principal appeal of the Vietcong to the peasants lies in the guerrilla organization's identification with the resistance against the French. For ten years the 'resistance' stood for democracy and social justice. The label has not worn off in the five years under Ngo.

Current US tactics only reinforce the natives' judgment in favour of the guerrilla movement. This simple truth is lucidly argued in the July 18, 1964, editorial 'How To Lose a War' in the *Washington Post*:

It is now reported that 2,000 Vietnamese women conducted sit-ins at two outposts in the Mekong Delta to protest the government's nighttime bombardment of their villages by mortar and artillery fire. According to news reports, 'the marchers said that government soldiers had repeatedly shelled their villages, killing or injuring many of their relatives and causing extensive damage'.

What fantastic manner of warfare is this? The bombardments apparently were laid down, so the government says, on villages suspected of harbouring Communist insurgents. But whether the purpose of this blind fire into the dark distance is to pick off some hiding Viet Cong, or to convince the local populations by means of terror not to give the guerrillas refuge, it seems to us to epitomize all that is wrong and self-defeating in the conduct of this particular war.

The issue is quite the same as that raised by scorched-earth sweeps and by aerial bombing with napalm. It is whether the civilians in Vietnam, the vast majority of whom can only wish to be left to themselves, are to be treated as an unfortunate nuisance, as an obstacle in the military's way, or whether the civilians are to be treated as human beings for whose benefit and protection — and only for whose benefit and protection — the war is being waged and without whose ardent participation in the government campaign the war will be lost.

Certainly the Communists will leap to avail themselves of any opportunity to set the people of South Vietnam against the government, by, for instance, instigating sit-ins if they can. Even more certainly, there will be no need for Communists to organize such demonstrations as long as nighttime artillery fire kills simple people in their homes, as long as government forces burn off whole villages where poor peasants live, as long as American airplanes drop

hunks of flaming jelly in places where innocent villagers may inadvertently be struck. The very notion of using artillery, a set-piece weapon against guerrilla wisps is incomprehensible at face. Since there can be no realistic prospect that an artillery shell, lobbed into a village from a safely bunkered soldier miles away, will actually hit a Communist guerrilla, this tactic amounts to nothing more than raw, random terror. Is there a swifter or more effective way to lose the war in Vietnam?⁴

The US has sought to slur the guerrilla movement by naming it the 'Viet Cong'. 'Viet Cong' means 'Vietnamese Communists'. No group in South Vietnam refers to itself by that abbreviated name. Those who chose that name for the guerrillas ignored something very important. They relied on the fact that in the USA the term 'Communist' is enough to alarm the public and to smear any movement and never realized until too late what favorable connotations 'Communist' has in that part of the world. The US has, by its own intended slander, reinforced any good image Communists have had in Southeast Asia through associating Communism with a movement for national liberation, a movement of the people for independence and social justice. It is ironic that when the US realized its grave blunder, it sought to rectify the situation by renaming the liberators. As reported in the *New York Times* on June 5, 1962, the United States Information Agency sponsored a contest 'for a new name for the Viet Cong guerrillas', admitting that it didn't think 'Communist' is the type of name to inspire hatred among the country's illiterate masses'. It offered a prize of \$47 for a 'colloquial peasant term implying disgust or ridicule'. In South Vietnam, the only names which meet that test are 'French' and 'American'.

The opposition to the dictatorial cliques solidified as the Liberation National Front of South Vietnam, formed on December 20, 1960. In this common front, all those forces combined who had suffered and decided on armed self-defence. Thus, it constitutes an organization of many segments of the population. Communists and non-Communists alike were victims of Diem's régime; they united in self-defence. Former Premier Tran Van Huu (writing in the London *Observer*) describes the majority of the popular opposition as non-Communist. Much of the leadership comes from the intellectuals, who felt the lack of freedom most severely; doctors,

4 One might suspect these editors of exaggeration were it not for the officially reported facts. Under the headline 'Saigon Is Losing Propaganda War', the *New York Times* reported on August 9, 1964, how the wanton terror described above is used as propaganda to win support for the US-sponsored régimes.

The article notes: 'For these people, a United States specialist said, we can use only one basic propaganda theme — surrender or die. We drop photographs of mangled Vietcong bodies and captured Vietcong equipment.'

'We tell Vietcong villages that in the last year 20 per cent of their men have been killed, and that next year 20 per cent more will die. That's about all we can do.'

lawyers, and university professors play prominent rôles in the committees of the Liberation National Front. Many religious leaders were instrumental in the organizing of the Front. They represent the majority (Buddhists) and the minorities (some Roman Catholics and many ethnic minorities whose unique ways of life were intolerable non-conformity to the bigot, Ngo Dinh Diem) of South Vietnam's worshippers. Small businessmen and even progressive landlords joined peasant farmers, fishermen, and workers to help form the Front against the common enemy and oppressor.

The policies of the Liberation National Front were decided at a national congress, held from February 16 to March 2, 1962. This congress was reported by Malcolm Browne, Saigon correspondent of the Associated Press and recipient of the latest Pulitzer Prize in Journalism for his coverage of events in Vietnam. Browne's coverage of the Front and its congress is enlightening; it describes the kind of representation which the Front has, and what was decided at the congress, and gives remarkably full details on location and personnel. This AP dispatch came over all the wires in this country. But no newspaper would carry it, except the York (Pennsylvania) *Gazette and Daily*.

Such suppression of information is unfortunately typical of the attention given to the Vietnam war. We would do well to question why this vital information on the Liberation National Front, reported by such a reliable and courageous journalist as Browne, was not 'fit to print' in the *New York Times* and other major papers with imposing mottoes. For when the *New York Times* finally mentioned the existence of a group calling itself the Liberation Front (March 29, 1964), it described it as simply the 'political wing' of the Viet Cong. The undisclosed identity of the real constituency of the guerrillas of South Vietnam and the omission of reported information on the Front's democratic congress loom as two of the most disturbing features of a Press which will not divulge the truth as long as the government is perpetrating lies about our secret war.

The number of delegates at the Liberation National Front's Congress exceeded one hundred men. They came from all over the countryside of South Vietnam and represented all walks of life and many different political opinions. The people and policy of the Front are discussed extensively in the April 1964 number of *War/Peace Report* in an article titled: 'Can Vietnam Be Neutralized?' Three experts on South Vietnam answer in this article a number of germane questions. One of the experts, Stanley Millet, taught political science at the University of Saigon in 1961-62. Professor Millet outlines the platform of the Front thus:

The first point of its platform was to oust the Diem régime and to replace it with

a democratic coalition government, composed of the representatives of every section of the population — nationalities, political parties, religious communities, and patriotic personalities. The second is to build a broad democratic régime, which would include freedom of expression, Press, association, religious belief and worship, and other democratic liberties. The third is to build an independent economy. The furthest the platform goes in this area is to urge abolition of the economic monopoly of the Diem régime. It calls for government aid to industrialists and handicraftsmen, improvement of technology, agriculture and fishing, development of trade, an equitable tax system, better labour relations, increased social assistance, prohibition of the forcible removal and burning of people's dwellings. The platform does not even demand a serious land reform.

He also comments on the politics of the Front in general and of its leaders in particular. When asked about the percentage of Communists in the Front, he answered that they are 'only a very, very, small number of the intellectuals'. He adds that these Communists are experienced men, who provide much of the direction of the Front and whose ideas are necessary to maintaining a structured movement. He states,

Communist leadership provided the organizational structure for them to enter into. Without an organizational structure, it's very difficult for a mass, particularly a peasant mass, to exercise political power.

Discussing personalities, Millet declares about the Front's Chairman, Nguyen Huu Tho,

He has never, to my knowledge, been said to be a Communist. He's said always to be a leftist intellectual, and a lawyer who was thrown into prison by Diem. By 1962, he went to Moscow and supposedly made a tentative move towards presenting the Liberation National Front as an organization to be recognized in world politics, but nothing ever came of it. The Front is said to have a directing committee of some thirty men of which only fifteen or twenty names have been published. Outside of the published literature of the Front, it's very difficult to say anything about the political beliefs of the men who make up its leadership.

When asked bluntly whether the Liberation National Front would accept as premier a neutralist like Souvanna Phouma in Laos, Millet replies,

This is their position.

The Liberation National Front has sent emissaries to many Socialist bloc and revolutionary nations, in an effort to gain recognition. It has so far received no actual diplomatic recognition, but it has set up permanent missions in Prague, Cairo, Algiers, and Havana. All releases of the Front are available from these missions, which serve as monuments to the legitimacy of the Liberation Front as a provisional government of South Vietnam. These releases emphasize the steps taken by the Front to bring it closer to actual recognition. The affiliation of the Front to the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and the World Peace Council represents such a step.

According to their releases, the Liberation National Front's Secretary General, Prof. Nguyen Van Hieu, visited North Vietnam

in October 1962. At this time North Vietnam President Ho Chi Minh is said to have stated his 'sympathy and support' for the Front. Ho couches his speeches in careful language. He always reminds us that the unity of Vietnam is not something he should have to fight for since it is guaranteed by the much violated Geneva agreements. He makes it very clear that his sending military forces to fight the war in the south would only do further pointless violence to the agreements. It is equally clear that the organizers of the Liberation National Front are independent of North Vietnam, and sometimes even cool toward the north for its lack of prior help in countering Diem's crimes. That the Front's embassies dissociate themselves quite obviously from those of North Vietnam in the outside world is evidence to this claim.

The Liberation National Front sets up local governments in the areas its forces win. (Just how much area the guerrillas now control is debated: Senator Bartlett (D-Alas.) asserted in the February 19, 1964, entry in the Congressional Record that they now retain control of about 75 per cent of the land area of the south; cabinet officials give the guerrillas less credit, while admitting always that they hold a very large portion of the land area at night even where the Government forces patrol during the day.) The Front establishes programmes which will minister to the legitimate needs of the people, giving them grass-roots democracy and economic reform. The network of local units constitutes a provisional government which should be recognized as such. The most rapid and humane settlement of the war would come through the US recognizing the Front and negotiating with it to end the fighting. The Front has issued its own postage stamps, not because this largely illiterate population is clamouring for a Liberation Post Office, but in order to show other governments in other parts of the world a token of its legitimacy. The stamps are status symbols.

Manifestations of the Liberation National Front's local units and administrative structure have been revealed in many Western sources. In late 1962, for example, Jerry A. Rose discussed the primitive land reform of the guerrillas in an article in the *New York Times Magazine* Section. He wrote:

A man in the Mekong delta, when asked why some of his friends went over to the Viet Cong, replied: 'They seize the rice fields from the absent owners and divide the land among the working farmers.'

On April 7, 1963, the *New York Times* carried a discussion of some length of the schools and tax system set up by the guerrillas in the province of Kien Hoa. The tax system in the liberated zones of the Mekong delta was similarly reported in the October 9, 1962, issue of the *New York Times*. A recent article in the *Washington*

Post (March 30, 1964) reported the bombing of what it termed a 'Viet Cong hospital'. Taxes, schools, and hospitals stand as testimony that the Liberation National Front offers an effective provisional government. The US Press admits this fact more and more frankly, and occasionally divulges as well the amount of control exercised by the Liberation Front. A most recent admission came in the April 27, 1964, issue of the *New York Times*:

In the vital Mekong delta, where most of South Vietnam's population and economic resources are concentrated, roughly 80 per cent of the peasantry now live in one form or another under a Communist shadow Government. This Government maintains its own schools and dispensaries and collects taxes, like a legitimate administration organization.

The military effectiveness of the guerrillas has been known to the US experts for some time. The immediate successes of the Liberation Front in its campaign against the US sponsored regime of Ngo Dinh Diem caused concern among top officials here. Once the Front got going, drastic changes were demanded in the South Vietnam policy of the US Government: the guerrillas were a real threat to Diem. Moreover, there were many in the US State Department and the armed forces who saw the opportunity to experiment in South Vietnam. Here was a chance for on-the-spot training in anti-guerrilla warfare. One official, Roger Hillman, in his introduction to the Praeger edition of Vo-Nguyen Giap's (leader of the Vietminh army and now commander-in-chief of the North Vietnam army) book *People's War, People's Army*, speaks of the need for a training ground for US generals - so that we can some day have military leaders of Giap's calibre! Several experiments in new tactics were combined in the Staley-Taylor plan, which Lyndon B. Johnson, then Vice-President, announced in a joint Press conference with Diem in the summer of 1961.

Dr Eugene Staley and General Maxwell Taylor scrutinized the conditions of war and poverty in South Vietnam and drew up a plan for the 'pacification of South Vietnam in eighteen months' (from the summer of 1961). Its basic strategy is to separate the people from the guerrillas. Specific measures demand forcing the farm population into concentration camps - to prevent their sheltering and feeding the guerrillas - and poisoning the crops which the guerrillas might live off. To assist in these operations, US advisers were provided immediately. Five thousand Americans arrived in South Vietnam. The US Military Assistance Command was set up in South Vietnam, by early 1962, under four-star General Paul D. Harkins. The number of Americans in this command soon swelled to 15,000. (Recent war propaganda posters admitted that 18,000 Americans were serving in South Vietnam.) US expenditures were greatly increased under the Staley-Taylor

plan; they now run from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 per day. But the plan is already a failure. Pacification has not come in eighteen months. As the protracted war continues, US cabinet officials and generals seem to mimic their French counterparts as they continually predict how soon the war will be won. State Department adviser, Walt Whitman Rostow, suggested the use of Vietnam as an experimental area in advanced tactics of anti-guerrilla warfare. This suggestion has been carried out, and the result is eerie. An American GI still in South Vietnam (who wishes to remain anonymous while he is in Vietnam) described it thus in a letter home:

Why is the US here? Let me give my opinions. This is a test! Our presence in South Vietnam is a realistic test of new American ideas - new concepts of mobility, of ground forces, and conventional weapons. Look around you. Manoeuvres recently completed in the States by the Air Assault Division are said to have been 'exact replicas' of conditions in the Republic of Vietnam; many men from that Air Division come here and vice versa. We are testing new military ideas forecast many years ago by the author of 1984. In fact, it was in that book that Orwell forecast the extensive use of helicopters in the new 'continuous' wars. Our presence here, perpetuating this conflict, provides an excuse to the American public for the continuation of insane military appropriations. Our presence here helps keep American public opinion diverted from internal issues.

Moreover, *This Week* magazine declared on January 5, 1964:

Some of the new army theories are being tested in combat against the guerrillas in South Vietnam. Air Force experts maintain that the Army is in no hurry to win the war in South Vietnam. 'Out in Saigon, our army officers secretly refer to South Vietnam as *the laboratory*,' one Air Force officer told me. The Army is answering in kind.

Furthermore, the *New York Times* reported on June 5, 1962, that US troops in Thailand are being trained in 'combat zones in South Vietnam'.

It was Rostow, too, who devised the plan for concentration of the population of South Vietnam into 'strategic hamlets'. It is instructive to compare the official US description of the 'strategic hamlet' with those of observers in South Vietnam. The Armed Forces Information and Education branch of the Defence Department offers the following portrait in its *Pocket Guide to Vietnam*:

The foundation for future social, economic, and civic strength is being laid in the 'strategic hamlets' set up by the Vietnamese Government. Instead of living in isolated villages where they were prey to the Viet Cong guerrillas, the people are being gathered into fortified and well-guarded hamlets. There is work for everyone and improved health and education facilities. With the help of US technicians, the people are being trained in use of farm tools, medicines, modern health practice and, most important of all, in defence.

The contrast between that picture and what is actually described by observers in South Vietnam is sharp. 'Operation Sunrise', the name given to the campaign to concentrate 9,000,000 people in

strategic hamlets, is described at its inception in Ben Cat province in late March, 1962, by *New York Times* correspondent Homer Bigart. He reported thus on March 29, 1962:

The operation is subsidized directly with United States money, military planning, and technical aid.

In this region, 1,200 families are to be moved voluntarily or forcefully. . . . The abandoned villages will be burned to deprive the Vietcong of shelter and food. The first step in Operation Sunrise involved encirclement of a half-dozen settlements. Government forces failed to make the manoeuvre a complete surprise, a hundred men were able to flee to the forest before the ring closed. The Government was able to persuade only seventy families to volunteer for resettlement. The 135 other families in the half-dozen settlements were herded forcibly from their homes.

A young woman stood expressionless as she recounted how the troops had burned the families' two tons of rice. Only a few old men were visible among the uprooted families. The Vietnamese officers were asked what was being done to get the husbands to emerge from the forest and rejoin their families. They replied that planes had dropped 24,000 leaflets promising amnesty.

The physical description of the hamlets is no less cruel than the herding operation. Bigart reported in the *New York Times*, June 24, 1962:

The hamlets are sheltered behind rude defensive walls spiked with watch-towers and firing points. But the aim is not only to keep the enemy out but to control the population within, to isolate it from. . . . guerrillas and to make it obedient to the Government of President Ngo Dinh Diem.

Life inside the hamlets appalled Bigart: he wrote in the *New York Times*, April 1, 1962:

The village shows disheartening signs of over regimentation. Almost everyone who greeted Ngo Dinh Nhu was in uniform. Most of his audience consisted of blue-uniformed young troops. There was little spontaneous enthusiasm. Security measures were tight and grim soldiers with submachine guns were seen almost everywhere along the route of inspection.

Bigart gives many accounts of the brutal herding plan and the ugliness of life in the Diem concentration camps.

The war in South Vietnam is a war against the people. Giap says that in guerrilla warfare the guerrillas and the people are one, and the US sponsored forces have strengthened that premise ironically. Bigart describes in horrifying detail the war against the people. On July 25, 1962, he wrote of:

. . . a struggle that has shocked American military observers with senseless brutality. American advisers have seen Viet Cong prisoners summarily shot. They have encountered charred bodies of women and children in villages destroyed by napalm bombs.

Moreover, one rarely sees a uniformed Viet Cong guerrilla: generally, the Communist rebels are indistinguishable from peasants. Thus, many of the 'enemy' dead reported by the South Vietnam government were ordinary peasants shot down, because they fled from villages as the troops entered. Some may have been Viet Cong sympathizers, but others were running away because they did not want to be rounded up for military conscription and forced labour.

In the same article, he describes the unity of guerrillas and peasants in the more traditional sense (i.e. of the guerrillas' reliance on the peasants as the fish on the sea) :

Observers of sweeps by the Vietnamese Army through the Mekong delta provinces are often struck by the phenomenon of deserted villages. As troops approach, all flee, except a few old men and children. No one offers information, no one hurries to put out flags.

Homer Bigart concluded that revealing July 25, 1962, article with the assertion, 'South Vietnam is a proving ground for other interesting theories'. He mentions 'poisonous shrubs' to be planted around the hamlets 'to keep the Viet Cong out'. This campaign to keep the Viet Cong out is perhaps more aptly termed a campaign to exterminate all those who refuse to enter Diem's concentration camps and wish to remain at their farms. The poisonous shrubs Bigart describes above are the least of the farmer's worry. Consider this announcement from the January 1, 1962, *New York Times*:

Numerous techniques . . . are being inaugurated or are about to be used. . . . One of these techniques is 'defoliation' from the air, a chemical means of stripping leaves from the foliage that hides Viet Cong movements in thickly wooded areas.

The US officially denied that chemicals were being used in South Vietnam when that report prompted some people around the world to request international investigation. Eventually the US admitted to the fact that 'weedkillers' were being employed in Vietnam; somewhat later, President Kennedy's chief science adviser, Dr Jerome Weisner, designated unrestricted use of these chemicals as potentially 'more dangerous than radioactive fallout'.

Chemical warfare was banned at the Hague fifty-seven years ago. The US did not want to be accused of breaking that treaty in the course of its overwhelmingly illegal war in South Vietnam. But outspoken elements of the US sponsored régime in Saigon were not concerned about blatantly violating one more international agreement. Diem's sister-in-law, Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, stated in an interview in the *Times of Vietnam*, April 12, 1963:

Even if the chemicals were toxic, so what? If the communists do not like it, why do they stay in our jungles breathing it? Have we not the right to defoliate our own leaves whenever we like, and the more so in wartime?

Radio Saigon had announced on January 10, 1962, 'Today the Government of the Republic is announcing a new experiment for suppression in the thickly wooded regions - chemical products to be provided by the USA'. The US sought to avoid the implications of the accusation of chemical warfare as long as possible. The *New York Times* reported on January 26, 1962,

The United States has shied away from plans to starve out Communist guerrillas by spraying chemicals on rebel-controlled manioc and rice fields. The reluctance to join the crop-killing programme . . . is believed based on American sensitivity to the possibility that accusations would be made that Americans took part in chemical warfare.

The question might be posed quite simply: who flew the planes which sprayed the chemicals? At the time when chemical warfare was first mentioned the extent of US participation was still relatively secret. But just a few months later, Robert Trumbull was reporting in the *New York Times* 'News of the Week in Review' (July 22, 1962), 'United States Air Force units participate in tactical operations to an extent that has been the most closely kept secret of the Vietnamese war'. Who but our pilots could have sprayed the chemicals which Homer Bigart described in his dispatch of January 26, 1962? He made explicit the meaning of defoliation chemicals thus:

Communist units are told that the 'powder' (actually it is a spray) has an effect on people. It is difficult to breathe for two days. Use wet handkerchiefs to breathe through. Cover your skin - the more covering the better. Get out of the area as soon as possible, going into the wind . . .

Chemical warfare and napalm breed hatred for the Government forces among the peasant victims. These instruments of torture have no eyes; they perceive no distinction between Communist and non-Communist, between guerrilla and child. As an Associated Press dispatch stated in the *New York Times*, July 8, 1962:

Tactical air support is used extensively, but it is often difficult to ascertain whether the people killed by napalm or fragmentation bombs were guerrillas or merely farmers.

To bring us up to date on tactics, we should look at the January 5, 1964, article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* by Richard Dudman. 'Serious thought,' he writes, 'is being given (by American militarists) to a plan to put a cash bounty on the heads of the enemy and basing army promotion on the number of heads that an officer can produce.' He adds the now familiar admonition, 'An obvious problem here is the difficulty of distinguishing a Viet Cong fighter from a loyal villager or by-stander.'

The US has demonstrated a willingness to try anything in order to beat the guerrillas. But no increase of brutality and terrorism will persuade the people of Vietnam that US sponsored military dictators will offer them the good life. In the article cited, Dudman reports that the guerrillas 'now command the allegiance of 70 to 80 per cent of the Vietnamese people'. Dudman goes on to describe how the US military advisers hope to 'reverse the tide of allegiance'. They advocate more crop destruction, curtailment of more freedoms (with regard to life in the strategic hamlets and

travel), and more tactical air support. It is by these means that General Paul Harkins hopes to achieve the primary aim of 1964, which is, in his words, to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Vietnamese people.

The US does not seem to awaken to the absurdity of maintaining its present policy in Vietnam. It continues to wage war on the peasant population, even while admitting that it needs their support. It still holds to the old myths about the war, continuing to deny that the war is fought by Southern people against an enemy with no popular support. When addressing the closed session of the House Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defence, Robert Strange McNamara, stated on February 18, 1964, that the war in South Vietnam 'is a counter-guerrilla war, it is a war that can only be won by the Vietnamese themselves'. But McNamara never relates this admission to his policy-making. It is frightening to know that many policy-makers, including Walt Whitman Rostow, and potential policy-makers, such as Richard Nixon, carry the old myth about the war to its logical military conclusion: they urge harassment of North Vietnam, as though bombings in the North would end the fighting below Saigon. (These suggestions are more in keeping with McNamara's more public position, stated at the open sessions of the Armed Services Committee, January 27, 1964, that he 'can conceive of no alternative other than to take all necessary measures within our capability to prevent a Communist victory'.)

The United States is at least dangerously close to extending the war into North Vietnam. Wayne Morse has recently called attention to an article in the April 6, 1964, issue of *Aviation Week*, entitled 'South Vietnamese Raiders Extending War'. This article, a Saigon dispatch states:

War against the Communists already has erupted over the borders of South Vietnam in hit-and-run guerrilla raids and infiltration moves as far north as China. . . . With US backing in aircraft, weapons and money, an estimated 50,000 elite South Vietnamese troops are being trained to take the offensive in over-the-border strikes at Communist supply centres and communication routes. Despite Defence Secretary McNamara's implication in Washington on March 26 that the decision has not yet been made to extend the war, it is known here that guerrilla strikes against the Communists have been increasing since last summer. . . .

Last autumn when US officials decided that it was impossible to win the war by confining it inside South Vietnamese borders, they began an expanded programme of training special guerrilla forces at secret bases. Courses emphasized techniques of operating beyond national borders.

Although the daily press largely ignored these disturbing reports when Senator Morse disclosed them, it has since been unable to conceal the ugly truth. Two days after the tenth anniversary of the Geneva Agreements, the AP carried the following dispatch:

The South Vietnamese air force is dropping sabotage teams into Communist North Vietnam and is training to extend their combat operations, the air force commander said today.

Air Commodore Nguyen Cao Ky told reporters at Bien Hoa Airfield that . . . he has personally piloted a plane over North Vietnam and that the raids continue. The remarks were the first official statement that military operations are being conducted by the Saigon government directed against North Vietnam.

Ky called for an attack that would destroy the Communist capital of Hanoi and extend even into Red China. His air force recently received from the United States an infusion of single-engine, propeller-driven A-1E fighter-bombers, whose range is appropriate to bombing North Vietnamese targets. . . .

Senator Morse warned of this escalation long ago; he stated in the Senate on April 14,

Mr. President, we cannot answer charges that will be made against us if we escalate the war into North Vietnam. If we escalate it into North Vietnam, I warn the Senate that the plan is to use nuclear weapons. I have been heard to say before that if we drop nuclear weapons on North Vietnam, we had better start looking around the world for friends.

Do our policy-makers forget the area where the war rages most fiercely today — the Mekong Delta region, hundreds of miles away from North Vietnam — has the longest history of struggle of any area in Vietnam? As has been pointed out earlier, the people of this prosperous farm region were the first to rise up against the French, both prior to and after the Second World War. In the State Department's document 'A Threat to the Peace: North Vietnam's Effort to conquer South Vietnam' several maps are printed, to indicate alleged penetration of North Vietnamese invaders into South Vietnam. None of these even alleges any penetration as far south as the Mekong Delta! In fact, none of these maps even includes the Mekong Delta region; all stop at Saigon, as though it were the southernmost point in Vietnam and the war was being waged far north of it. (We may be reminded of Halberstam's declaration, quoted earlier, that 'no capture of North Vietnamese in the south has come to light'.⁵)

Do our policy-makers forget that southern men who fought in the Vietnam regroupped to the North, according to the Geneva agreement? The few cases of 'invaders' (involving less than fifty men in all the State Department documents) leave out of account

⁵ Halberstam's challenge has been put to officials by Wayne Morse, who reported his results on May 21, 1964, as follows:

I have cross-examined witnesses for some time on South Vietnam from the Pentagon Building and from the State Department. When I put the question to them, 'What military personnel have you found in South Vietnam from North Vietnam, Red China, Cambodia, or elsewhere?' the answer is, 'Practically none.'

. . . What a paradox. The United States is talking about invasions from North Vietnam and Laos, and yet, when we put our Government witnesses under examination, they have to admit that they have not been able to discover very many of them.

the fact that small groups of men might conceivably have slipped southwards to return to their wives and children when they suspected that they had been deceived about the Geneva accord's promise of reunification.

Do our policy-makers who encourage invading the North forget that *in keeping with the Geneva agreements* North Vietnam has no military alliances? US action against the North will force them from military neutrality into an alliance with China which North Vietnam does not desire. In the article quoted earlier ('Can Vietnam Be Neutralized?'), Professor Stanley Millet states:

I think the relation of Peking to events in South Vietnam is distant. The most recent piece of evidence relates to the statements of the North Vietnamese about their expectations of Chinese support should the Vietnamese war escalate. Peking's response to these strong statements from Hanoi was rather hesitant.

Later in the article, Millet points out that many current observers 'think the Vietnamese Communists themselves can be counted on as an anti-Chinese force'. Such a position will be impossible for the Vietnamese if American policy proceeds in the direction outlined by Rostow, Nixon, et al.

There are some in the USA who admit that the North did not invade South Vietnam, but who unfortunately lend support to the military argument for an invasion of the North by claiming that North Vietnam is the chief supplier of the South Vietnam guerrillas. They disregard two important facts. First, it is an established practice for guerrilla fighters not to rely on outside support. Giap and Mao Tse Tung state time and again the crucial necessity of relying chiefly on the people; if a guerrilla army is to be an army of the people, it *cannot* be supplied from outside. Token support from without may be used to encourage the people, but it is extraneous to the general strategy. The relation of the army to the people must be (to use Giap's metaphor) as the fish to the sea. Secondly, official United States Government sources refute the contention that the guerrillas are armed largely with weapons from outside. None other than General Harkins himself refuted the whole lie about the war in Vietnam as early as March 6, 1963, when he was quoted thus in the *Washington Post*:

Harkins said the guerrillas obviously are not being reinforced or supplied systematically from North Vietnam, China, or any place. He said they apparently depend for weapons primarily upon whatever they capture. Many of their weapons, he said, are home-made.

Consider the statistics reported by Louis R. Rukyeser in the *Baltimore Sun*, October 14, 1963. He reports that:

An official American breakdown of a cross-section of arms taken from the Viet Cong in recent weeks shows that nearly one out of three was marked

'made in the US'. And only one in fifty came from the Communist bloc. These were mostly Chinese but included some dated Czech and Soviet models. About half the total weaponry . . . is what the military lumped together as 'French and old' - all were made before the French evacuated Indo-China in 1954 and some tracing to the World War I era. . . .

In the same article, commenting on the exchange of weapons, Rukyeser cites the preponderance of weapons seized by the guerrillas over those captured by the US. He adds,

But statistics are deceiving in view of the quality of the arms exchanged. The Viet Cong yields largely outmoded weapons and home-made pipe guns and obtains factory-fresh American pistols. As one foreign observer put it, 'The weapons exchange figures would be encouraging only if we were in the plumbing business.'

American military personnel do not deceive themselves about the sources of the guerrillas' weapons. Master Sergeant James A. George, writing in the official organ of the United States Air Force, *Airman*, May 1963, states, 'What the Viet Cong can't buy or steal, he makes with his own hands; and his weapons, though crude, can hurt, maim, and kill'. George makes an honest appraisal of the sources: purchase, theft, and manufacture in jungle arms-workshops. (Professor Millet, in the article quoted earlier, concurs in this judgment. He adds, 'There are so many weapons from so many sources in South Vietnam that it is likely that one from everybody's manufacture has turned up at one time or another'.) George's article also enumerates the types of so-called primitive weapons made by the guerrillas in the jungles: barbed spikes, foot traps, single-shot bolt action weapons with barrels made of water pipes, slugs of wax and metal, cross-bows, arrows generally dipped in poison or human excreta, grenades, mines, mortars of heavy pipes or tubing, and other bombs. All these articles are exhibited at Hickman Air Force Base in Hawaii.

6 Professor Bernard Fall, writing in *War/Peace Report*, May 1964, stated:

True, there has been a great deal of exaggerated propaganda in Washington and elsewhere about Chinese and Russian help to the insurgents in view of the presence in South Vietnam of some Soviet- or Chinese-made anti-tank weapons and automatic rifles. As Arthur Dornen correctly assumes, the bulk of this ordnance comes from Laos. And the fact, for example, that some excellent Madsden submachineguns - produced in Denmark, a NATO ally - have been found among the Viet Cong does not *ipso facto* prove that Denmark backs the Communists in Vietnam; it simply means that arms merchants have no national loyalties. Soviet-made guns (captured by the Israelis in Egypt and resold by them on the world's arms market) can be bought within a mile of the Pentagon on the Alexandria, Virginia, docks - and quite legally, too. The unfortunate fact is that nine-tenths of all modern weapons in Viet Cong hands are standard American weapons captured from the South Vietnamese military and paramilitary forces. Officially, the loss of over 12,000 such weapons in 1963 is acknowledged. What the South Vietnamese may have lost but not reported to their own higher commanders or the US military advisor command, may run much higher.

Most recent evidence confirms the absurdity of US allegations of outside supply of arms. On February 16, 1964, Hanson Baldwin wrote in the *New York Times*:

By far the greatest part of their armoury is 'indigenous'; it has been captured from South Vietnamese troops or manufactured, in crude but effective form, in South Vietnam itself.

The bombing of North Vietnam could not halt the flow of supplies to the Vietcong, particularly since most of their weapons are captured from the American-supplied South Vietnamese Army.

Before closing, we should look briefly at some of the past year's events in South Vietnam, with which most of us are generally familiar. We may recall that May 8 has significance to most of the people of Vietnam (beyond the fact that it marks the anniversary of the fall of Dien Bien Phu); it is a religious holiday for all the Buddhists who comprise the bulk of Vietnam's populace. On that day in 1963, Buddhists assembled in Hue for the religious festival, demonstrated in the streets to protest Diem's edict prohibiting the flying of their flag. Always watchful and ready for action, Diem's troops under General Do Cao Tri were present to end the demonstration. Government armoured cars fired into the crowd and killed eleven Buddhists. Persecution of Buddhists continued unrelentingly; Diem was immune to his bad publicity. The US continued unequivocal endorsement of Diem. According to the *New York Times*, June 3, 1963:

The United States mission in Saigon is under instructions from Washington to get along with President Ngo Dinh Diem's régime come hell or high water and forget about political reforms.

Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, joined in the flagrant persecution of Buddhists. Conditions for reporters were at their worst. Malcolm Browne is reported to have smuggled his Associated Press dispatches out of the country wrapped in old newspaper. It is only much later that worse cases, of torture, were revealed. The AP carried this story on November 8, 1963, as an example of the atrocities committed by Nhu and his secret police,

One young girl, found praying with the crowd at a Saigon Buddhist pagoda, said electrodes from the generator of a field radio were attached to her breasts. Many United States military advisers and foreign newsmen have seen variations of this torture. . . .

But it was not just for religious freedom that the Buddhists protested. When monks publicly burned themselves to death and when Buddhist groups organized street demonstrations, they demanded political freedom. Like the political scientist at Saigon University who was removed by the secret police on charges of being a 'nebulous intellectual' (*New York Times*, June 5, 1962), those who suffered under religious persecutions quickly realized

their need to play political roles. The force which will end oppression in Vietnam is a common front, demanding free choice in worship, free speech and association, and the other democratic rights which the Khanh power daily denies to every segment of the population.

The US seems to recognize a distinction between bad policy and bad publicity. When Diem was deposed by General Duong Van Minh, November 1, 1963, the *New York Times* recorded the following official reaction the next day:

The administration welcomes the *coup d'état* in South Vietnam, assumes that its policies helped bring it about and is confident of greater progress now in the war against the Communist guerrillas.

The policies referred to are unclear. But there is good reason to believe that something other than a concern for the well-being of Buddhists stood behind that remark. Consider, for example, that Buddhists are still complaining. In Peter Grose's article on the execution of Ngo Dinh Can (*New York Times*, May 10, 1964), he reports:

Observers believed that any hesitation in carrying out the death sentences would have inflamed opinion in Central Vietnam, where Buddhist leaders are already growing restive under General Khanh. Their complaints are against local officials, the same men they charge with having persecuted Buddhists under Diem. The Ngo family is Roman Catholic.

A letter of protest was published today from Thech Tri Quang, a Buddhist priest who sought refuge in the United States Embassy during anti-Diem agitation last year. He charged that most of the Buddhists' demands for religious freedom had still not been satisfied. These demands concern legal status for religious activity and punishment of officials charged with oppressive acts against Buddhists.

Thech Tri Quang said that Buddhists were being arrested on false charges and that extensive Government propaganda characterizing Buddhists as pro-Communist and pro-neutralist was being distributed.

The names of Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu are gone; but oppressive policies remain. The ruling régimes are still military dictatorships and puppet governments. 'Big' Minh lasted a short while Nguyen Khanh a little longer. But neither could have lasted a single day without American support. There will be no stable government in South Vietnam until it is a government of the people, meeting their needs and granting them liberties. Instability has been well described in an article in the *New York Herald Tribune*, April 19, 1964. In it political observers stated:

The next coup will solve nothing. Anyone can seize power, but no one has enough support to stay in. General Khanh is concerned enough to sleep in a different house each night, to admit to foreign correspondents that his wife is worried and to house her and their children 350 miles from Saigon.

The people of South Vietnam will fight until they have established their own government, the Liberation National Front. McNamara

says we will fight forever. It is the people of the US who must demand an end to US participation in this brutal war. We cannot wait for Robert Strange McNamara and his generals to give up. We must not expect US generals to relinquish their interest in Vietnam. While Diem's old officers are nominal heads of state, US commanders enjoy regal pleasures. This type of US military interest in Vietnam is manifested in a letter written by the wife of an American serviceman in South Vietnam to Senator Young, published in the Congressional Record, March 3, 1964. It states plainly, yet eloquently, what is really the current situation in South Vietnam and asks between the lines why her husband should risk his life to preserve this status quo:

Most of the Vietnamese do not really care about the war. Most of them do not want to fight. Under the circumstances, this is understandable. There are numerous families without homes and without jobs. Even in Saigon, there are people sleeping on sidewalks and in doorways and begging for food. In combat, when the Vietnamese do have to fire on the Viet Cong, quite often they refuse. There are some people who are profiting from this war. I have never seen so many colonels and generals in one place in all my life. They are living here at government expense in beautiful villas with two or three servants per household. I have talked to so many who do not even want to go home, because they could not afford such luxuries at home.

I close with some remarks made by Senator Ernest Gruening (D-Alas.) in the Senate on March 10, 1964. It is he who must prescribe the course for American policy in South-east Asia. Let us follow him and the other Senators — Morse, Bartlett, Mansfield, Ellender, Young, and Church — who voice their demand that the United States withdraw from Vietnam. Let us express public outrage for the crimes committed in Vietnam in the name of the American government.

Let us do a little hard rethinking. Must the United States be expected to jump into every fracas all over the world, to go it all alone, at the cost of our youngsters' lives, and stay in blindly and stubbornly when a decade of bitter experience has shown us that the expenditure of blood and treasure has resulted in failure. Shall we not, if taugth anything by this tragic experience, consider that of the three alternatives: first, to continue this bloody and wanton stalemate; second, to go in all out for a full-scale invasion and the certain sacrifice of far more lives and a scarcely less doubtful outcome; or third, to pull out with the knowledge that the game was not worth the candle.

The following figures are conservative as they were compiled before mid-1963: Number dead in 1962 alone: 40,000. Source: General Paul D. Harkins, Chief of US military operations in Vietnam. Quoted in publication *Sword of Free Vietnam*.
Note: *The Sword of Free Vietnam* is the official organ of the Democratic Party of Vietnam. The Democratic Party of Vietnam is a virulent anti-Communist Party composed of former officials and sympathizers of Governments prior to that of Diem. The motto of this party is: *'For the Defeat of Communism in the Interests of Free Men EVERYWHERE'* (capitals in original).

Numbers killed by late 1962:—100,000. Source: 1963 White Paper of Democratic Party of Vietnam. From here on this party will be abbreviated DPV.

Numbers held in camps designated 'concentration camps': Over 500,000 by mid-1962. Source: White Paper of DPV. Quoted in *Los Angeles Times* for October 19, 1962.

Numbers of 'anti-Communist nationalists' held in camps designated 'concentration camps' estimated at 100,000. Source: White Paper of DPV.

Number of students only held in 'concentration camps' by late 1962: 45,000. Source: Student Peace Union of the United States Bulletin, April 1963.

Number of Secret Police: 300,000 by mid-1963. Source: DPV White Paper.

Number of estimated held in Strategic Hamlets: Over half rural population by mid 1962. Source: DPV White Paper.

Use of aid: UK Ambassador from Vietnam spent 40,000,000 francs on house furnishings. Source: DPV White Paper.

Number of people in Strategic Hamlets by mid-1963: Over six million. Described as concentration camps with spikes, moats, machine-gun turrets, for forced labour and patrols. Source: DPV report for June 1963.

Forty per cent of 'enemy' casualties claimed estimated to be guerrillas: 60 per cent of enemy casualties claimed estimated to be uninvolved peasants. Source: DPV report for September 1963.

General Wheeler quoted in *New York Times* of January 26, 1963: *'Dirty, nasty little war'*.

Number of people interned by 1963 on Paulo-Condore Island alone: 300,000.
Source: DPV report for September 1963.

Review of Strategic Hamlet programme by Democratic Party of Vietnam through on the spot investigation:

'Strategic hamlets mean forced labour under 300,000 secret police. The programme is planned for 15 million people. It is the only conflict on record in which every means used to destroy own people. . . . More severe and brutal than entire French colonial period. . . . Series of barbaric attacks on unarmed peasant villages with American arms and assistance. . . . 300,000 secret police committed numerous atrocities. Farm land and food sources destroyed. . . . ' DPV report, September 1963.

Note: Vietcong is a slang term which means Vietnamese Communist. It is comparable to 'Commie'. No organization calls itself by this name.

The National Liberation Front was formed on February 16, 1962. It has a 31 member Central Committee. Three anti-Governmental Parties existing in Vietnam are represented on it. It is headed by a non-Communist lawyer. Leading Buddhist priests, Catholic priests, Protestant clergy are represented on it. (Source: *The Tragedy of Vietnam*: Helen B. Lamb.) Source: Report of NLF.

Leader of Buddhists in NLF: Thich (Venerable) Thien Hao. Thich Thien Hao estimates:

160,000 dead by mid 1963; 700,000 tortured and maimed; 480,000 imprisoned; 31,000 raped; 3,000 disembowelled with livers cut out while alive; 4,000 burned alive, 1,000 temples destroyed; 46 villages attacked with poison chemicals between January and March 1964 affecting 20,000 people; 16,000 camps employed or under construction in accordance with Staley-Taylor Plan.

The above figures conform to the report of the South Vietnamese Liberation Red Cross, South Vietnamese Women's Union and the reports of the Democratic Party of Vietnam.

The Observer of September 8, 1963, estimated the monthly average of casualties in the war to be 4,000.

The NLF figures are attested to by Catholic Priest, Reverend Father Petrus Vu Xuan Ky.

The Federation of American Scientists quotes Defence Department sources on the subject of chemical warfare and concludes: Chemical poisons are used by the United States in South Vietnam. The US is using Vietnam as a battlefield and proving ground for chemical and biological warfare. Source: *I. F. Stone's Weekly*.

North Vietnamese Control of the War in South Vietnam:

(1) 'No capture of North Vietnamese in the South has come to light.' Source: *New York Times*, March 6, 1964, report from Vietnam by David Halberstam.

(2) 'The guerrillas obviously are not being reinforced or supplied systematically from North Vietnam, China, or any place else. They depend for weapons primarily on whatever they can capture.' - General Paul D. Harkins. Head of US operations. Source: *Washington Post*, March 6, 1963.

(3) 'All the Communists (in South Vietnam) have is their dedication. If I was in their shoes, I'd be pretty sore at Hanoi for letting me down. American Captain in charge of operations in a sector in Vietnam as quoted in *Newsweek*, December 10, 1962.

Strategic Hamlets:

'Already 8,000,000 villagers - 59 per cent of South Vietnam's population - are

living in the 6,000 hamlets so far completed. The basic element of the government's battle plan is to resettle almost the entire rural population in 12,000 "strategic hamlets" with bamboo fences, barbed wire and armed militiamen.' Source: *Time Magazine*, May 17, 1963, as quoted in *Sword of Vietnam* for July 1963.

Sixty-five per cent of the rural population are in strategic hamlets. *Observer*, March 11, 1963.

Air Attacks:

US Air Force carried out 50,000 attacks on villages in 1962 and on virtually all of the rural population outside of strategic hamlets. Source: *Voice of America*, January 6, 1963. US Defence Department report quoted on *Voice of America* broadcast.

Popular Character of Guerrilla war:

'Seventy-five per cent of the people, in varying degrees, support the rebels, who dominate 90 per cent of the land.' Source: DPV report, July 1963.

Nature of Strategic Hamlets:

'It is certainly an ironic way to protect the peasant masses from Communism - to herd them behind barbed wire walls under police control, to subject them to intensive indoctrination, to burn their villages. Poor as the Vietnamese are, they are not domestic animals.' Source: Interview on CBS with Tran-Van-Tung, leader of DPV as reported in DPV report for September 1963.

True Nature of war in Vietnam:

'The people cannot follow the strange logic which decrees that they should be shot or imprisoned in the name of freedom. Offered the very finest facilities for forced labour, they rebel; installed in the newest of concentration camps, they protest. Showered with napalm bombs, they are so ungrateful as to think in terms of a new government.'

'The charred bodies of innocent women, children and peasants, lying in their fields, the bullet-riddled corpses of Buddhist demonstrators . . . this is the South Vietnam of today.'

Sources: Nguyen-Thai-Binh of DPV, an anti-communist opposed to the NLF.

Press reportage from Vietnam:

Washington, May 5, (Associated Press):

A potentially explosive document in the hands of a House subcommittee is reported to lay down Administration guidance for restricting movement of correspondents covering the warfare in South Vietnam:

(1) Keep reporters from areas where fighting is being done entirely or almost entirely by US troops.

(2) Keep reporters away from any area which will show the failure to attract full allegiance of South Vietnamese people.

Source: As quoted in DPV report for June 1963.

South Vietnam as 'Experimental Battlefield':

'The army tested small-calibre ammunition as long ago as the 1920s but it was not until the recent combat experience in Vietnam that it really set up and took notice. About 1,000 AR-15s were sent out by the hush-hush Advanced Research Projects Agency in the Defence Department. A report has been issued marked Secret because of the gory pictures in it. The story of what happens to Vietcong guerrillas who get hit with the AR-15 is being kept under heavy wraps. But, aware that the enemy already knows what the AR-15 does, you can find an occasional returnee who will tell you what he saw.

'When I left out there it was the rifle. The effect is fantastic. I saw one guy hit in the arm. It spun him around and blew the arm right off. One got hit in the back and it blew his heart literally out of his body.'

"A man hit in the buttocks lived for five minutes. All the others died instantly. His wound would have been superficial with other bullets."

"The fellow had his head blown clean off - only the stump of the neck left." (Photo of five year old child with arm shattered and in tatters.)
Source: *True Magazine*, December 1963, *Look Magazine*, December 23, 1963.

Utterior purposes for continuing war:

'A tremendous dope smuggling racket has seen the light of day. One of the key figures is Mme Tran Can, wife of a prominent general.' (DPV report, September 1963.)

'General Khanh boasted he had ten million dollars and could flee to lead a life of ease if he wanted to.' (*NY Herald-Tribune*, February 3, 1964.)

'*Aviation Week* let the cat out of the bag (April 6, 1964). An air cargo company, Air America, incorporated in Delaware, is currently the principal instrument for the extension of the war in Laos, Cambodia and *North Vietnam*. This company has some 200 aircraft... used under charter... It is airlifting South Vietnamese special troops to various places... the return trip [carries] a load of opium for further transport to markets in the US in big Boeing aircraft. These aircraft are under the command of the US Army General Paul D. Harkins and the pilots are former US military pilots.'
Source: Edgar P. Young, Commander RN retired in *Eastern World*, June 1964.

US Plans to Extend War to North Vietnam. (Note that the US air attacks on ports in North Vietnam did not occur until early August.)

(1) W. W. Rostow, head of State Department planning staff, has advanced the Rostow plan No. 6, providing for a naval blockade and air raids against North Vietnam. Senator Melvin Laird stated in the Defence Appropriations Committee of the US House of Representatives: 'The US administration is preparing plans for a strike into North Vietnam.' Associated Press reported a combat force of 50 jet bombers training in the Philippines in preparation for US decision to bomb targets in North Vietnam. The bombers were said to be furnished with intelligence data on North Vietnam obtained by U2 reconnaissance planes. I understand that the Honolulu Conference of June 1964 under Rusk and McNamara, planned air raids and sabotage against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.'

(Extract from letter to Lord Russell from Foreign Minister of North Vietnam.)

(2) 'War against the Communists has already erupted over the borders of South Vietnam with raids and infiltration moves as far north as China... With US backing in aircraft, weapons and money, an estimated 50,000 elite South Vietnamese troops are being trained to take the offensive in over-the-border strikes at Communist supply centres and communications routes.'

'Despite Defence Secretary McNamara's implication in Washington (March 26) that the decision has not yet been made to extend the war, it is known here that guerrilla strikes against the Communists have been increasing since last summer...'

'Key factor in the current raids is airlift provided by Air America, a US Cargo company [which] camouflages its US Governmental sponsorship. US military advisors here are optimistic that extending the war beyond the borders, plus a stable Government in Saigon will force the Communist insurgency to collapse in a year.'

'Special forces - now one tenth of the half-million South Vietnamese under arms - are not connected with formal military organization. They rely on Air America using numerous secret airstrips in South Vietnam and Thailand.'

'Last Fall, when US officials decided it was impossible to win the war by confining it inside South Vietnamese borders, they began an expanded programme of training special forces at secret bases emphasizing techniques of operating beyond national borders.'

(Taken from *Aviation Week*, April 6, 1964: NB date.)

(3) 'We have already aided and abetted the extension of the war beyond the borders of South Vietnam. I am fearful that as the proof of that becomes clearly

established - as I believe it can be - we may wake up some morning to find

charges being levelled against us in the United Nations because I do not believe we have any international law basis for being in South Vietnam as a combatant.' (Senator Wayne Morse in US Senate on April 14, 1964: NB date.)

(4) 'W. W. Rostow's Plan Six provides initially for a naval blockade of Haiphong, the port of Hanoi. If Hanoi still refuses to call off support, the northern ports should be bombarded from the sea, and finally US strategic bombers should attack Hanoi itself, if necessary flying the *South Vietnam flag*. Source: James Cameron in *Daily Herald* for March 4, 1964: PLEASE NOTE DATE.'

(5) Secretary of State Dean Rusk told SEATO Nations, 'US absolutely committed to remain in South Vietnam and reiterated that the war may be brought to North Vietnam soon.' (*NY Times*, April 10, 1964.)

(6) 'US planned South Vietnamese bombing attacks on the North may commence as soon as late May or early June.' (*Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 1964.)

(7) 'An expanded war in Asia could only be won if we used nuclear arms.' Wayne Morse after secret briefing by Dean Rusk. (*I. F. Stone's Weekly*, March 16, 1964.)

(8) 'The grim thing about Plan Six is that it has no end. If Hanoi must be bombed... Shanghai must be bombed to stop Chinese help to North Vietnam... (James Cameron in *Daily Herald* - March 4, 1964.)

(9) 'On July 30, US warships intruded into the Northern territorial waters of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and shelled Hon Me and Hon Ngu islands. On August 1 and 2, US planes bombed a border post and village of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The bombing of coastal towns of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on August 5 was a pre-meditated move by US imperialism to extend the war step by step.' (Office of the Charge d'Affaires of China in London - August 6, 1964.)

Further data on Experimental Warfare conducted by US:

(1) 'We supply a phosphorous explosive fired from artillery and from fighter bombers which erupts in a white cloud, burning everything it touches.' (Associated Press from Saigon, March 21, 1964, in *Baltimore Sun*.)

(2) 'The spectacle of children half alive with napalm bombs across their bodies was revolting to both Vietnamese and Americans... (Associated Press in *Washington Star*, March 22, 1964.)

DPV report on Atrocities:

(1) 'Supposedly the purpose of the fortified villages is to keep the Viet-Cong out. But barbed wire denies entrance and exit. Vietnamese farmers are forced at gunpoint into these virtual concentration camps. Their homes, possessions and crops are burned... In the province of Kien-Tuong, seven villagers were led to the town square. Their stomachs were slashed, their livers extracted and put on display. These victims were women and children. In another village, a dozen expectant mothers were invited to the square by government forces to be honoured. Their stomachs were ripped and their unborn babies removed... (Published in *Dallas Morning News*, January 1, 1963.)

(2) 'Decapitations, eviscerations and the public display of murdered women and children are common... 685,000 have been maimed by firearms or torture... From report by Democratic Party of Vietnam to International Commission on October 18, 1962.'

(3) 'In the cells of more than one thousand prisons in South Vietnam, some 100,000 women and 6,000 children are at present condemned to a slow death. Many children have been there six years now. Others were born in prison and died there.' Ma Thi Chu of National Liberation Front.

(Note coincidence of reports from National Liberation Front and Democratic Party of Vietnam although the two organizations are politically opposed and the latter has offices in the US and publishes there.)

Programme of Liberation National Front:

... To carry out without delay, real and broad democracy in which freedom of thought, expression, the press, organization, assembly, demonstrations, trade unions and freedom to set up parties, political, social and professional organizations, freedom of movement, trade religion, worship, corporal liberties to be guaranteed by law for the entire people without any discrimination.

To stop persecution, arrest, detention of patriots and opposition, individuals and parties; to cancel the barbarous prison regime, especially torture, penitence, brain washing and ill-treatment of prisoners. *To refrain from setting up in South Vietnam any form of dictatorial régime, either nepotie and militarist or set up by a group or party, and from carrying out a mono-party or mono-religious policy, a policy of dictatorship in ideology, politics, religions and economy.*

Free general elections to elect organs and to form a national coalition Government composed of representatives of all forces, parties, tendencies and strata of the South Vietnamese people... a policy of neutrality, will not adhere to any military bloc, not let any foreign country station troops or establish bases in South Vietnam. Will accept aid from all countries, regardless of political regimes and establish friendly relations on an equal footing with all countries. Respect the sovereignty of all countries and form together with Cambodia and Laos a neutral zone on the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Reunification to be realized step by step on a voluntary basis with due consideration for the characteristics of each zone, with equality and without annexion of one zone by the other ...

Ho Chi Minh on neutrality:

... Neutrality for both North and South Vietnam and independence of Russia, China and America ... (November 5, 1963, *The Times*.)

W. Bedell Smith at Conclusion of Geneva Conference, July 21, 1954:
'We take note of the agreements and of paragraphs 1 to 12 inclusive of the Final Declaration ... The US will refrain from threat or use of force to disturb them ... and would view any renewal of aggression with grave concern (in violation of agreements) and threatening international peace and security.'
Thus US went on record in support of the Geneva Conference Report of 1954. US troops are the only foreign troops in Vietnam.

The *Guardian* editorial of August 11, 1964, confirms rumours that the movement of the Seventh Fleet into the Gulf of Tonkin was calculated and directly related to naval attacks by the 'South Vietnamese' navy:

'A new account is now emerging in Washington. . . . The North Vietnamese islands of Hon Me and Hon Ngu had indeed been attacked from the sea, as Hanoi had alleged, before the crisis blew up; this is now admitted in Washington. The attackers were South Vietnamese ships, not the Seventh Fleet; but that distinction may not seem so significant in Hanoi as in Saigon and when at that point the US destroyer *Maddox* sailed into the Gulf of Tonkin ...

Plan Six should be kept in mind.

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