

VETERANS DAY - Fayetteville, North Carolina
November 12, 1969

WHY ARE WE THERE?

"We are there first because a friendly nation asked us for help against Communist aggression." So said President Johnson in his State of the Union message in 1965. Five Presidents have supported that pledge. I do not believe we should break it.

Secondly, we are there for our own security. Asia's fate could ultimately mirror our own. Twice in one generation - Japan and Korea - we have had to fight aggression in the Far East. The Southeast Asia Security Treaty plainly warns that an armed attack against one of the nations would endanger our own peace and safety and we should act accordingly. This has been our commitment.

I believe to ignore this aggression would be to ignore a country's right to independence. I believe to ignore this aggression would be to ignore the danger of a larger war. Vietnam is clearly one of the wars of National liberation which Peking hopefully backs for Southeast Asia.

True, our country carries a terrible burden today but no other country in the world has the resources to stop the Communist march. I believe that if we don't

make a stand in Vietnam, we risk a bigger war in years to come.

Throughout our history, the United States has supported the freedom movement around the world and countless Americans gave and are giving their lives to this cause. Many critics say that the United States is fighting someone else's war and that the Vietnam war does not directly concern us. To these people I say that we are fighting a preventive war - a war to prevent the desecration of the natural law of mankind set forth and upheld in our own Constitution.

I say that the Vietnam war directly concerns us because I think many Americans have the foresight to see what U. S. isolationism, at this time, could ultimately bring. This surely is not the time to abdicate our leadership in halting the forces of oppression. In essence, our own Declaration of Independence promises not only liberty to the people of our own land, but hope to the world.

So, as you can see the United States does have a moral obligation to those countries which seek to overthrow or prevent the political bondage of man's body, mind, and spirit.

Critics of the war in Vietnam ask why can there not be a peaceful settlement of the war. Perhaps there can be and we would certainly hope that the efforts being made in Paris will be successful, but the schism between the doctrines of North and South Vietnam is wide and a compromise of "peaceful coexistence" or a coalition would be difficult to maintain in permanence.

The following was stated in a Hanoi newspaper by a leading member of the Communist regime, "The liberation of South Vietnam can be settled only by force . . . it cannot be settled by treaties and agreements." Lest we forget, prior to the Paris peace talks, the United States had been trying for months to get Hanoi to the conference table. And, the news as recent as this morning lends credence to the fact that Hanoi is still following the doctrine of fighting and negotiating at the same time - thus taking advantage of the opportunity offered by negotiations to step up further military attacks and political struggle.

Realistically speaking, because of the interests, personalities and traditions of the government of North Vietnam that statement made in the Hanoi newspaper -

that the liberation of South Vietnam can be settled only by force - would seem to be true. How can supporters of complete withdrawal ignore such statements. How can they not see that if the Viet Cong lose this struggle, a significant round will have been won against the challenge of Communist revolutionary warfare.

Opposition in the United States encourages Hanoi. The battles won by the Viet Minh against the French were less important than the political and psychological defeats and lack of support of the French at home.

The media in North Vietnam have given a great deal of attention to dissent in the Free World, carefully reporting and analyzing reports and demonstrations in the United States. An example of this was a recent Hanoi broadcast. "What causes us to be moved and enthusiastic is that in recent months, in the United States, a movement has been developing widely opposing the United States imperialists. This movement includes a great number of American people from all walks of life--workers, youth, women, students, intellectuals, religious people, congressmen, and journalists. The

struggle forms have gradually become stronger and more abundant." This proves that the Communist are watching carefully this anti-war movement that is giving such solace and hope to our enemy.

I know we are tired - tired of losing our boys, tired of the drain war makes on our economy, but you can rest assured that the Communists are not tired. Recent stepped up guerilla warfare in neutral Laos and Cambodia bears this out. If we should pull out, it is extremely doubtful that these countries can remain free and neutral. Pacificists are attacking the "domino theory" - that is, if South Vietnam goes Communist, so will many other nations in Southeast Asia. I happen to believe this theory, and where do the pacificists get the facts to substantiate such a conclusion that the "domino theory" would not hold true? If South Vietnam goes, China looms large just beyond the frontiers. This gives the Communist revolutionaries a tremendously improved geographic position for a guerilla assault upon Southeast Asia, and could put Communist China well on the way to achieving their master plan of world domination.

The Vietnam war has come to represent for the Communists, and particularly for Peking, the great test of revolutionary war. And revolutionary war is destruction not construction.

After the Geneva Accord, Ho Chi Minh's construction in the north was not going well, so he decided to go south to resume his more familiar arts of destruction. The South Vietnamese were beginning to prosper. I wish many of the admirers of Ho could realize that he was no military genius. His military success was not mysterious - destruction is simply vastly easier than construction. It takes six years of college education and about a year more of work to build a bridge. It takes a half-hour of explanation and ten minutes of work to set the fuses to blow it up. Ho Chi Minh struck because the people of South Vietnamese were beginning to rebuild and establish a stable government. The comparison between his regime and that of South Vietnam was beginning to become apparent.

Let us on this day not forget that at a terrible price to its suffering people, South Vietnam has provided a stage for the battle against Communism. The South

Vietnamese people realize something that some Americans apparently do not - that peace will not come under North Vietnam only enslavement. For years the Viet Cong fought a protracted war against the south. By all the usual indicators, the Communists should have won before the mass intervention of the United States, but grimly the small nation held on. A conservative estimate of those deliberately murdered by the Viet Cong is 50,000. The South Vietnamese have reason to hate and reason to fear their northern brothers.

If the American people show determination to last out the struggle in Vietnam, I think that then and only then will the Communists believe that they have no hope of gaining their objectives. While the danger of a greater conflagration is always present, there is at least a possibility that the Communists will have been brought to a greater sense of realism through the opportunity provided by Vietnam to measure American determination.

I realize that the people of the United States are dissatisfied, and I do not deny that to be involved in war is horrent, but whether we pull out or not, the war between independence and human oppression will continue until one defeats the other.

Vietnam is just a battle in this war. To lose in Vietnam would surely weaken those forces that give the United States its strength as a world power and defender. All free nations would be in much greater peril than they are now.

Vietnam is no longer just a minute country in Southeast Asia fighting for its independence; it is a principle, a tool by which we can meet head on that wave of Communist devastation.

We cannot make the world over, but we can influence the world.