

Vietnam

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outside support it received could be justified. Rather than supporting or urging reform, however, our government continued to sponsor the main cause of the problem, which was the cruel regimes of Bao Dai and Diem. Between 1955 and 1960 only 1.4 per cent of the total American aid to Saigon was spent on much needed agricultural reform.

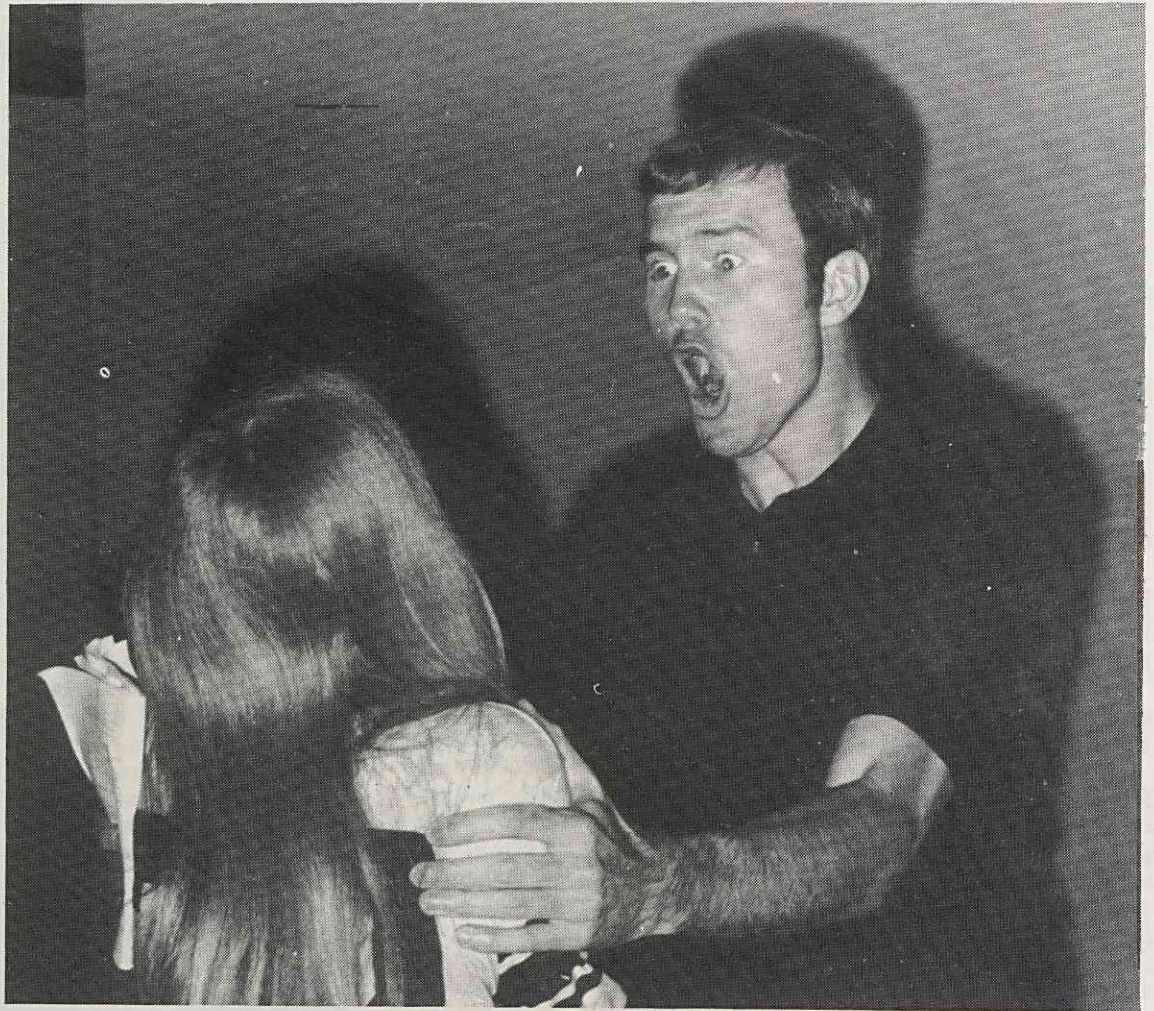
The strategy of the Vietcong is to gain popular support; as a counter strategy the United States should try to recruit grassroots support in order to deny it to the Communists. Our continued emphasis on military force is alienating the very support that is so vital to the United States and Saigon. Indiscriminate bombing of villages and search-and-destroy operations that drive the peasants from their homes have made two million homeless people regard the United States as their enemy. We are more likely to make enemies than friends if two civilian casualties are the price for one Vietcong casualty.

The American Military tactics have made the United States lose popular support at home and among its allies, as well as in rural Vietnam. Pictures of terrified refugees make such good Communist propaganda because their claims cannot be disputed. Government officials maintain that American criticism of the war only makes the Communists more determined. Even if this is true, the crux of the problem is that the opposition on moral grounds is in my opinion still justifiable.

If the South is ever to survive in its own right, then a high degree of social and political organization is essential. Yet American aerial bombardment has created an ever growing no man's land where even life itself is impossible. Certainly the Vietcong cannot organize in these areas, but it is a shallow victory indeed when Saigon is also denied the same opportunity.

The failure of relying too heavily on military power alone was amply demonstrated by our bombing raids on North Vietnam. As pure military strategy it was futile; infiltration of troops and supplies into the South quadrupled during the bombing raids of January 1966.

This accent on military power ignored the nature of the war as a limited one. Bombing raids on the North put the war on a global context by forcing North Vietnam into closer ties with China and Russia. By putting the war on solely a military level,



the United States seemed to be defeating its own purpose of fighting a limited war.

American stress on a military solution made the war more difficult to end because it created an atmosphere unsuitable for a negotiated settlement. Continuing Americanization of the war convinced the North that our proposals were insincere and that we held no intentions of ever leaving Vietnam. To begin negotiations, we were only willing to make a military concession of the bombing of the North. On the other hand, we demanded that North Vietnam make a political concession of withdrawing troops, thus acknowledging the Vietcong to be Hanoi puppets.

Supposedly this administration and the past one resigned themselves to the fact that the military victory is impossible. Yet we continue to believe that we are winning the war by killing increasing numbers of Vietcong and North Vietnamese. Headcounts can mean little if a recent newscast was correct in reporting that the Communists consider the ratio in their favor when, on the average, five Vietcong are sacrificed to kill one American soldier. The Sunday paper indicated that the United States may still be bogged down in search of a military solution;

rather than technical or economic assistance, the United States presented South Vietnam with a squadron of twenty jet bombers.

The first casualties to fall to American military power were the best interests of South Vietnam.

Now related primarily to a global and American audience, the U.S. commitment to South Vietnam has become less and less directly related to the conditions in that country or to the wishes of its people. Washington's commitment to South Vietnam has in fact become progressively overshadowed by the Administration's concern for the global credibility of American military power.

Nor are pacification programs allowed to obstruct implementation of military strategy.

In summary, American intervention in Vietnam has been marred by our efforts to impose a military solution on a non-military problem and by our failure to differentiate between communism and nationalism. Only by giving precedence to social, economic, and political considerations above military force will the United States be able to find a workable solution acceptable to the South Vietnamese and Americans alike.

-Gail McNeil

The Crucible

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tion and as close as possible physically. No one will be seated more than fifteen feet from center stage.

Rehearsals have been conducted in such a way as to make the message of the play most obvious and most immediate. There will be a number of strange things present not ordinarily included in a production; as symbolic elements of witchcraft and Black Magic. These elements are used to symbolize, for the characters, their belief in the omnipresence of the Devil.

The play will be presented on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, May 21-23 at the VFW home nightly at 8.

Dean's List Additions

WILKES COUNTY,
Jenny Clay Eller

ASHE COUNTY,
Henry Wayne Phillips

The feeling that you've done a job well is rewarding; the feeling that you've done it perfectly is fatal.

-Bulidozer, San Bruno, Cal.