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HYPOCRISY IN HIGH PLACES:

**Escalation and Peace Offensive
in the
Vietnam War**



by ANDREW MOSS and PHILIP RAIKES

HYPOCRISY IN HIGH PLACES: Escalation and Peace Offensive in the Vietnam War

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"THREE MAIN FACTORS HAVE AFFECTED THE INCREASINGLY CRITICAL COURSE OF THE VIETNAM WAR: THE INDIGENOUS POLITICS OF SOUTH VIETNAM, THE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, AND THE MILITARY ACTIONS OF THE BELLIGERENTS. AN EXAMINATION OF THE INTERACTION OF THESE FACTORS... REVEALS A RECURRENT PATTERN. MOVEMENTS TOWARDS A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT HAVE BEEN RETARDED OR BROKEN OFF BY AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS, MOST OF WHICH HAVE TAKEN THE FORM OF MILITARY ESCALATION." (SCHURMANN ET AL., THE POLITICS OF ESCALATION IN VIETNAM, P15).

The United States government has repeatedly claimed that it leaves no stone unturned in its search for a negotiated solution to the Vietnamese war. A picture is presented to the world of a continuing "peace offensive" in which the repeated efforts of U.S. representatives to bring the matter to the conference table are persistently rejected by the intransigent North Vietnamese, whose refusal to negotiate forces the reluctant U.S. to escalate the war another notch. Yet it is increasingly obvious that there is little relationship between the "peace offensive" and the actual course of the war; witness the fact that during the latest, pre-election, peace moves, the Manila conference and the Goldberg proposals, General Westmorland went right along calling for more and more troops in South Vietnam. While it is hard to believe in the peace proposals of a government that continues to escalate the war, it becomes almost impossible when the myth of North Vietnamese intransigence is removed. When even the State Department admits that North Vietnamese overtures have been made (I. F. Stone's *Weekly*, Jan. 31, 1966), and when even a U.S. Senator expresses doubt about the Administration's peaceful intentions ("Where Are the Peacemakers?", Sen. Vance Hartke, *Progressive*, Sept. 1966) it becomes necessary to look closely at the history of the "peace offensive" and U.S. diplomacy in Vietnam.

1963. THE FALL OF DIEM

On August 21 the U.S. embassy in Saigon announced that U.S. pay for the South Vietnamese Special Forces, Diem's palace guard, would terminate unless these forces were employed in the field. Under this pressure Diem and his brother and advisor, Nhu, reluctantly sent the Special Forces out of the capital. Without their elite bodyguard the regime fell in hours. Why the U.S. demand? At the time of the demand it was revealed that the U.S. had informed Diem that the "war effort might be improved if Nhu left the government." It later became clear that Nhu "had begun some tentative talks with Guerrillas in the South, if not actually with the leadership in the North," (Lacouture, *Vietnam Between Two Truces*, P82) and he was also believed to have received favorably De Gaulle's offer to co-operate in an attempt to construct a unified neutralist Vietnam. The New York *Times* of January 30, 1964 points out the Administra-

tion's probable motivation: "when the regime of President Diem was ousted ... the possibility of South Vietnam voluntarily accepting neutralism appeared to have been eliminated."

JANUARY 1964. THE KHANH COUP

The government of Duong Van Minh, which had succeeded Diem, was believed to be moving towards a pro-French neutralist position in January 1964, (New York *Times*, Jan. 30, 1966). On January 27 France recognized the Chinese People's Republic. On January 30th a coup, organized by 'hard-line' General Nguyen Khanh overthrew the Minh government, on the grounds that the Minh regime was "paving the way to neutralism," (FBIS daily report, U.S. Government Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Feb. 3, 1964). Khanh was known to be in close contact with the U.S. Ambassador, General Harkins, at the time.

"The second program—and in the long run the more important of the two—is our pacification program, which is also known under the terms of 'civic action,' 'revolutionary development' or 'rehabilitation.' This program consists of pulling out of the village structure the Viet Cong who have been living in those areas for years—identifying them, encouraging them to return to the Government side through the open arms defector program, capturing them, killing them."

Q. How in the world do you identify the enemy?

A. ... We call it the 'County Fair' operation. ... We select a hamlet, say of 500 or 600 people. We put a cordon around that hamlet, usually before daylight. Then with South Vietnamese troops we enter the hamlet, assemble all the people, screen each individual, move the people out of the hamlet into an enclosure where we can start giving them medical treatment, feeding them and issuing identity cards. This takes about three days."

—Interview with Gen. Greene, commandant of the Marine Corps in U.S. News & World Report, Sept. 4.

JULY-AUGUST 1964. THE TONKIN GULF INCIDENT

In late July 1964 De Gaulle, U Thant and the USSR were all calling for the reconvention of the Geneva conference as a step towards the solution of the Vietnamese situation. North Vietnam supported the proposal, calling for reconvention "as soon as possible to preserve the peace of Indo-China," (FBIS report Aug. 4, 1964). The NLF was "not opposed" and even Peking approved. None of these parties specified any preconditions.

On July 24 the U.S. rejected the French proposals. On July 26th 5000 more troops were dispatched to Vietnam. On July 29th General Khanh called for a "March to the North" and on the same day Air Marshall Ky revealed that South Vietnamese commandos had been operating in the North.

In the beginning of August North Vietnam made a series of complaints to the ICC about attacks on fishing boats and bombardments by U.S. and South Vietnamese warships. Georges Chaffard of *Le Monde* confirmed on August 7th that such raids had periodically taken place. The New York Times of August 4th reported that South Vietnamese Commandos attacked two North Vietnamese off-shore islands under cover of a naval barrage on July 31 and August 1.

The first "incident" took place on August 2. The U.S. destroyer MADDOX was trailed by three North Vietnamese PT boats at a distance of some four and a half miles. After some time the MADDOX fired "warning shots" and then opened fire on the PT boats, which then loosed two torpedoes, neither of which harmed the MADDOX. Later Admiral Robert Moore revealed that the MADDOX had been inside the claimed North Vietnamese Territorial Limit of 11 miles, though outside the U.S. recognized limit of three miles. This incident was termed an "unprovoked military offensive against U.S. forces" by the State Department.

On August 4 a second so-called incident took place. North Vietnamese PT boats were alleged to have trailed two U.S. destroyers for 3 hours in rough seas, 65 miles from land, and then to have attacked them. As even William Buckley pointed out, in the *National Review*, September 22nd, PT boats, with their high speed and short range are "fit for short distance surprise attacks and hit and run tactics." Buckley concludes, "about the only thing sure concerning this affair is that it enabled the President to stiffen the image of his backbone and to make a dramatic TV appearance at prime time and to get an overwhelming blank check vote from Congress."

Within hours U.S. planes had attacked industrial and military targets all along the Vietnamese coast.

The North Vietnamese deny that the incident even took place.

Whether or not the second incident occurred, the response was suspiciously prompt and aggressive, and certainly avoided any embarrassing calls to negotiate. "Usually, his (Johnson's) timing is precisely his own--as when he presented his Vietnam resolution to Congress the day after the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. He had been carrying it around in his pocket for weeks waiting for the moment," (Tom Wicker, *New York Times*, in *Esquire*, Nov. 1965).

"At a time when the political situation in Saigon was again deteriorating, and thereby threatening the alleged legitimacy of the American presence, Premier Khanh began to call for aggressive action against North Vietnam to reinforce his shaky personal position. At a time when international pressures for bringing the problems of Indo-China to the conference table were intensified, the U.S. not only revealed its disinclination to participate but mounted a large scale bombardment subsequent to an incident, on August 2, which U.S. officials termed minor, and a second incident on August 4, which, if it occurred at all, terminated in an American victory," (Schurmann, P42).

FEBRUARY 1965. THE PLEIKU RAID AND THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM

In early 1965, opinion in South Vietnam was again running strongly against continuation of the war and the pro-neutralist, anti-government and anti-U.S. demonstrations of January persisted after the Khanh coup, (*Le Monde*, Jan-Feb. 1965). A number of foreign journalists were predicting that the war would be ended by negotiations within six months.

On February 7th, while Premier Kosygin, who at the time favored reconvention of the Geneva Conference, was in Hanoi, the U.S. bombed North Vietnam. The bombing was supposedly in retaliation for a guerrilla raid at Pleiku in which eight Americans had been killed. Yet again the

timing was suspicious: the bombing began twelve hours after the beginning of the raid on Pleiku, suggesting that plans had already been laid. Furthermore, the bombing, which is still going on, must be the heaviest "retaliation raid" in history. Senator Vance Hartke wrote in *Progressive*, November 1966:

Was Pleiku the real cause, or was it the pretext?

Two days earlier, on February 5, *The New York Times* had called the furor when it said, "Now again the Asian Communists . . . seem ready to bid for power through a negotiated settlement. The Soviet Union, apparently fearful that a continuation of the war in South Vietnam may lead to United States bombing of North Vietnam, is reappearing in the role of a diplomatic agent." As I said to the Senate in my recent review of lost opportunities for peace, "While the Russians were fearful of our bombing escalation to the North, were we afraid of their peacemaking de-escalation and seeking to forestall it?"

Schurmann, page 44, suggests another cause:

"The events of February 7th in themselves halted neither the agitation in Saigon nor the international diplomatic moves. However, in the course of February, the hardliners in the Saigon government strengthened their position, notably through the final ousting of General Khanh, and the U.S. moved once and for all to continuing a systematic bombing of North Vietnamese targets."

FEBRUARY-APRIL 1965

Efforts to start negotiations continued in spite of the bombing of the North. In March there were signs that North Vietnam, if not the NLF, might agree after all to negotiate on certain conditions, such as an end to escalation and a commitment ultimately to withdraw (Schurmann, P63). These signs were confirmed by the North Vietnamese "four points" of April 8th which, in contrast to the Chinese position, publicly envisaged a Geneva-type conference following recognition of certain rights. *Le Monde* of April 9th reported: "It has been known for more than a month that Mr. Ho and his men envisage a negotiated solution of the conflict," and the *New York Times* of April 1st had carried a similar statement.

A Forecast to Remember Now

"Shortening the war to the order of five years could require anywhere from half a million to 2 million U.S. troops with casualties and treasure of like magnitude.

The Vietnamese could lose more than a million killed. The risk of Chinese entry into the war could increase sharply if the Communists were faced . . . by a truly massive U.S. presence there. . . . If we decided that we must limit our commitment in Vietnam even at the price of our objectives . . . we would have to face the strong possibility that, as happened at the time of Korea, a change in policy in Vietnam would have to be brought about by a change of Administration in the United States."

"The Impossible Choices in Vietnam" declassified version of a study by S. J. Deitchman, Institute for Defense Analysis, a Pentagon "think factory" in the Washington Post May 22. This "computerized" military forecast, the most comprehensive available, estimated that at the then level of operations (225,000 U.S. troops) the war "could last" 30 to 50 years. It did not say which side, if either, would win.

Almost simultaneously with the publication of the "four points" President Johnson's speech of April 7th rejected the North Vietnamese conditions. His counter-offer of "unconditional discussions," which did in fact contain conditions, had no chance of interesting the other side and had in fact already been rejected publicly by them. According to Schurmann: "President Johnson's new statement of policy ... rejected what was in fact a significant and viable feeler from North Vietnam. More specifically the chance of unconditional discussions ever taking place had, as was suggested by international leaders at the time, been virtually eliminated by the escalation which was taking place in North Vietnam," (P63).

Johnson's offer of "unconditional discussions" was accompanied by a decision to double the troops in Vietnam. A similar decision was announced on July 28th. In the four months following Johnson's offer 100,000 more troops were sent to Vietnam. The same pattern of escalation was revealed in the air attacks, the number of sorties over North Vietnam rising from 160 in February to 1500 in each of March and April, (New York Times, May 5, 1965). In the midst of this violent escalation Johnson said, at a press conference on May 27th: "America had not changed her essential purpose, and that purpose is a peaceful settlement. ... That purpose is to avoid a wider war," (New York Times, April 28).

MAY 1965. THE FIRST BOMBING PAUSE

This was the one break in the escalation of mid 1965. It demonstrated that de-escalation could produce the possibility for negotiation, since the day before the resumption of the bombing the government of North Vietnam contacted the French government and asked that Washington be informed that they were prepared to negotiate on the basis of the four points without prior withdrawal of American troops. Although the offer was not transmitted until after the bombing was resumed, it is regrettable that the U.S. did see fit to halt the bombing again when the offer was received.

A State Department spokesman described the Administration as "disappointed at the fact that there was no reaction from North Vietnam during the pause," (New York Times, May 19, 1965). Six months later the State Department confirmed that the North Vietnamese had replied through the French, (New York Times, November 18, 1965). But on January 21st of the next year, Dean Rusk claimed that the bombing had been resumed after a harsh rejection by the other side of any serious move towards peace, (New York Times, Jan. 22, 1966).

In view of these contradictory statements it is well to remember that the bombing pause was used for the next six months as proof of the good intentions of the U.S. and the hard line of the North Vietnamese, (Schurmann P84).

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1965. THE FANFANI AFFAIR

By November, 1965, the revelation of the fact that there had been North Vietnamese peace offers which had been rejected by the U.S. was beginning to stir up criticism of the Johnson administration. Even the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was worried, saying that it had not been informed and that repeated statements by Administration officials including the President, now looked false to the public, (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Nov. 26, 1965).

On December 17th, it was revealed that the Fanfani peace offer had been received by Washington on November 20th, an offer making clear that North Vietnam was no longer demanding prior withdrawal of American troops. Secretary Rusk's reply, substantially rejecting the offer,

reached Hanoi by December 13th. On December 15th the U.S. bombed the Hanoi-Haiphong area for the first time.

It was later made clear that Ambassador Goldberg had been explicitly warned on December 8th "that Ho would not enter into negotiations with the U.S. if the Hanoi-Haiphong area were bombed," (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 29, 1965). The State Department confirmed that it was aware of this fact.

According to Schurmann, Diplomats at the UN considered the bombing the "real answer to the latest peace feeler by Hanoi," (P107).

DECEMBER-JANUARY 1965-66. THE SECOND BOMBING PAUSE

The winter "peace offensive" of 1965-6 was launched under considerable pressure, inside and outside the U.S., for the U.S. to recognize the NLF. It appeared at the time that the U.S. and Hanoi were moving towards compatible positions on this issue. The alleged rejection by Hanoi of the "peace offensive" destroyed these hopes. What actually happened during the pause is less clear; according to Senator Hartke:

It is sometimes overlooked that the ground war continued during the bombing lull, except for the twelve-hour Christmas cease-fire and the New Year ("Tet") cease-fire of January 20-24. If these brief cease-fires could be arranged, why could not a more durable one have been effected while our peace efforts went into high gear? Instead, attention was focused on the thirty-seven day bombing lull—and not on the continuing ground war.

It was said that we had seen no sign of response from Hanoi. Yet, until we launched Operation Masher on January 27, just four days before we renewed bombing, there had been a remarkable absence of clashes with North Vietnamese regulars. A reporter asked Secretary Rusk at his February 1 news conference, the day after resumption of bombing, "Mr. Secretary, how do you interpret the fact that there's been no large-scale direct contact with North Vietnamese troops since the latter part of November?"

In reply, Mr. Rusk spoke of "indications at the present time that there is very active contact with North Vietnamese forces there." It was true. The contact came from Operation Masher, of which *The New York Times* said the plan was "to move three infantry and three artillery battalions repeatedly across a 450 square-mile section of Binh Dinh Province to look for a battle."

So on January 27, four days before the bombing lull ended, our forces went out "to look for a battle," and on the next day they found it near Anzai, on a sandy beach. The day after the two-day battle, the order went to Pearl Harbor that resulted in the bombing raids. Was Hanoi the only aggressor? Incidentally, when we were justifying the new air strikes because there was a "high level" of North Vietnamese infiltration estimated at 1,700 to 4,500 men a month, our own buildup during the thirty-seven days of lull was more than 14,000 with 6,000 of our men arriving in the ten days January 18-28. Mr. Rusk said that the Vietcong and North Vietnamese

had "made clear their negative view by deeds as well as words throughout the period of the suspension of bombing." How positive for peace were our actions? Again, at a possible fork in the road, we chose escalation.

It should be noted that during the pause Senator Fulbright and other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee "Openly challenged the legality of the American involvement in the war and demanded an explanation of administration policy," (New York Times, Jan. 29, 1966). Fulbright had previously requested, in vain, that the Committee be consulted before resumption of the bombing. (New York Times, Jan. 26th). One day after the Senate revolt the bombing was resumed.

JUNE 1966. PEACE ATTEMPTS AND MORE BOMBING. THE RONNING MISSION.

In June, 1966, Agence France Presse reported a softening in the North Vietnamese attitude, which had been against negotiations since the resumption of the bombings on January 31. Outside the U.S. hopes again increased for an end to the war. Chester Ronning, Canada's most experienced East Asian diplomat was sent to Hanoi during the next week, his visit unfortunately coinciding with a hard line speech by President Johnson, widely seen as a precursor to further escalation.

Ronning, on his return, was reported to be guardedly optimistic about the attitude of Hanoi, though William Bundy stated, on June 23rd, that no change had taken place in Hanoi's position. Most observers agreed that this would depend on there being no further escalation. According to David Kraslow, in the Washington Post of June 26th:

"The question of further American escalation of the war, it is felt here, is closely related to the Ronning mission. The Canadians are extremely sensitive on this point. Major military escalation by the United States, informed sources here suggest, could torpedo the Ronning operation and deeply embarrass the Canadian government.

"It is believed that Ottawa has discussed the matter of escalation with Washington in connection with the Ronning problem."

On June 25th, the New York Times and Wall Street Journal reported that the U.S. was getting ready to bomb Hanoi and Haiphong proper.

On June 26th George Ball publicly denied this.

On June 29th the U.S. bombed oil storage depots in the suburbs of Hanoi and Haiphong, sabotaging not only the Ronning mission but also the attempts of the French Diplomat Jean Saintenny, who was unable to enter Hanoi because bombing was in progress. How great the "danger" was that Ronning might succeed in a mission for peace will not be known, since the "Canadian and North Vietnamese governments agreed there would be no disclosure of Ronning's conversation with the leaders in Hanoi," (Kraslow, Ibid).

James Reston commented, in the New York Times of July 1, that "There is not now a single major nation in the world that supports Mr. Johnson's latest adventure in Hanoi and Haiphong."

After the bombing of Hanoi, which alienated even Prime Minister Wilson of Britain, the dissatisfaction of Secretary General U Thant became more vocal and it was clear that the attitude of the U.S. was the main obstacle to his acceptance of another term in office. On September 23 Ambassador Goldberg put forth a set of proposals to the UN, offering to stop the bombing if assured "that this step will be answered promptly by a corresponding and appropriate de-escalation by the other side." However his insistence on "assurance" of good intent showed clearly that the U.S. required a preceding de-escalation by the DRV. It was precisely because of such a demand for preceding U.S. de-escalation that the Administration had previously rejected the North Vietnamese Four-Point proposal. Goldberg reiterated that U.S. troops would be withdrawn eventually and restated that "the presence of the Viet Cong would not present an insurmountable obstacle to negotiations." Though this seemed somewhat hopeful, especially since the USSR was reported to have shown increased willingness to help settle the war (New York Times, Oct. 17), the same day, newspapers reported that MacNamara had called for a new supply of bombers. They had reported that the U.S. had curbed its bombing in a small patch of the demilitarized zone, but even this was largely semantic and was based on a confusion between newsmen and government. The next week, while Pope Paul was calling for peace by negotiations, ex-President Eisenhower stated that he would not rule out any means, including the use of nuclear weapons, to win the war in Vietnam, and to this the Administration was silent. This period also saw a troop build-up just south of the buffer zone, giving rise to speculation (Gavin Young in the London Observer, reprinted in the San Francisco Chronicle). The build-up of troop strength continued at some 4000 per week, with hints that it would rise later in the year.

In this case, to be sure, the initial talks were less hopeful than usual, but the action to nullify them was as effective as ever.

OCTOBER 17, 1966. THE MANILA CONFERENCE

The genesis of the conference was a proposal by President Marcos of the Philippines to hold a conference of "Asian Nations" to try to settle the war. How much hope the conference ever had is doubtful since the nations to be called were all supporters of the U.S. and the others (India, Japan, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia) were not asked. Johnson turned the "Asian" conference into a council of the nations supporting U.S. policy by including the U.S., Australia and New Zealand, and submerged the conference itself in a highly publicized trip to member countries.

This time the "peace" move was to announce that all U.S. troops would be removed from South Vietnam within six months "as soon as the other side withdraws its forces to the north, ceases infiltration and the level of violence thus subsides." This was a nominal reply to the urging of De Gaulle that the U.S. set a timetable for its withdrawal, but in fact it meant nothing. Firstly, another condition for U.S. withdrawal was the consent of the South Vietnamese government, and there is little doubt that the Ky government would collapse in the absence of U.S. troops even with the withdrawal of all North Vietnamese. Secondly, it is unclear whether the withdrawal refers to North Vietnamese regular troops or to all members of the Viet Cong who are Northerners or who have spent time in the North. (Ky himself and over half of his ministers are Northerners, a fact which has caused the resignation, in protest, of Southerners from Ky's cabinet.) Finally to ask the opposition to withdraw its troops at least six months before those of the U.S. is to ask for surrender. Recently, the President has made this even clearer by making U.S. troop withdrawal

dependent not on reduction, but on cessation of violence. The call for surrender is obvious (San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 5).

Since the proposals are quite valueless as a basis for negotiations, there has been no need for escalation to nullify them. Furthermore, as Johnson had the November 9th election to consider, no large scale U.S. aggressive actions were to be expected. Nevertheless the rate of troop movement to Vietnam has moved up to 5000-6000 per week and is expected to remain at that rate or higher, in spite of McNamara's election eve announcement that the rate would soon begin to decline.

Though newsmen have speculated on the next move by the U.S. in the escalation of the war, two significant steps have already been taken. On October 25, the U.S. began shelling coastal batteries, sampans, fishing smacks and other targets along the coast of North Vietnam. Most of this has been concentrated on the "panhandle" area between the demilitarized zone and Vinh and apparently is on a regular basis. (New York Times, Nov. 19).

Missiles Next in Vietnam?

"The heavy losses of U.S. jet aircraft over North Vietnam have caused the Pentagon to examine the use of ballistic missiles, and even battleships, to shell targets in North Vietnam. The main advantage would be that the anti-aircraft guns in North Vietnam would offer no defense against shells or ballistic missiles. The high level of anti-aircraft fire has already brought down more than 400 American jet aircraft over North Vietnam. The U.S. Navy is keen to reactivate cruisers with 8-inch guns to fire on North Vietnam. The economics of bringing one of the four battleships out of mothballs has also been studied."

The U.S. Army also believes that it could carry on with the bombardment of North Vietnamese targets with ballistic missiles fired from South Vietnam. The arguments in favor of missiles have been reinforced by the losses of aircraft, which must have cost the U.S. at least \$300m. (\$340,000,000) since the bombing began last year.

—Defense Correspondent, London Times, Nov. 14.

Meanwhile, inside South Vietnam, the U.S. has taken over still more of the front line operation of the war from the South Vietnamese Army, which is in the future to concentrate on "pacification" of areas already considered to have been cleared. In Tay Ninh Province one of the heaviest actions of the war has been fought for the past weeks. Tay Ninh Province, bordering on Cambodia was previously under the nominal jurisdiction of the ARVN and is one of the strongholds of the NLF. There have been newspaper reports that the U.S. is soon to move troops into the Mekong Delta, the only part of South Vietnam where the U.S. Army does not already do most of the fighting. The recent transfer of the Commander of the South Vietnamese IV Corps (covering the Mekong Delta) to a post in Ky's cabinet, tends to confirm this. U.S. Army officials deny this on the grounds that the South Vietnamese Army must be seen to be bearing the brunt of the fighting in at least one province. However, the AP reports that there are contingency plans for moving U.S. troops in. (AP Dispatch in KPFA News, Nov. 23, 1966). U.S. Marines are deployed along the border of the demilitarized zone. Future estimates of U.S. troop strength range upwards to 500,000-600,000 men or more.

In the coming weeks, one should watch the papers and other news media for any other signs of escalation.

a) Bombing of the dykes in the Red River Delta. North Vietnam has already complained about this on a number of occasions to the ICC. The reports have been denied by the U.S. though confirmed by the French Press. Such a step, by flooding, would destroy crops, inundate villages and starve the North Vietnamese population.

b) Some intensification of the war along the Cambodian frontier. There have been a number of "mistaken" attacks on Cambodian villages, the most recent complaint being the machine gunning of a Cambodian village by U.S. or South Vietnamese planes. (AP Dispatch on KPFA News, Nov. 23), as well as charges that Cambodia has been allowing both sanctuary and passage to North Vietnamese troops. These charges have been denied both by the Cambodian government and by a number of independent observers. Operation Attleboro in Tay Ninh Province has been very close to the border and again the U.S. has made charges of sanctuary and that Cambodians have taken part, (later found not to have been involved). These may at some time be used to justify "hot pursuit" into Cambodia.

c) A further build-up in Thailand. Thailand is at present the base for some 80% of the bombing raids over North Vietnam and some 35,000 U.S. troops are now stationed there. (New York Times, Nov. 18). Thailand has its own guerrilla war, the situation being approximately that of Vietnam in 1962. Recently the U.S. ventured more deeply into that war when it used U.S. helicopters to airlift Thai troops into action.

d) Further attacks in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, including naval bombardments and/or a blockage of the harbor.

e) Commando raids in the North. (Accounts of this are far more likely to appear in the foreign press.)

f) More "mistaken" bombings of China or Chinese ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, coupled probably with news of China's aggressive intentions.

g) Expansion of targets for bombing in the North. Since water buffaloes are already considered to be "military" targets, the mind boggles at what they will include next.

h) Further news of negotiations for a Christmas truce. A short truce is likely, mainly due to Papal pressure. (New York Times, Nov. 19). But Rusk fears that there may be pressure for a longer truce and a pause in the bombing as last year. He is unlikely to give in to such pressure. The New York Times, Nov. 19, says:

The Johnson Administration is trying to discourage any hope that a brief truce would lead to a prolonged cessation in military activity or that enemy respect for a truce would be reciprocated by pause in the bombing of North Vietnam.

The concern of Administration officials is that the enemy's observance of a brief truce would be interpreted in many quarters, both here and abroad, as sufficient justification for a pause in the air strikes.

Operation Was Successful But Patient Died Dept. (Military Division)

Saigon, Aug. 26—Nearly two-thirds of the Americans killed in a fierce battle north of here were victims of American napalm that missed its marked targets by only 50 meters, a general explained sadly tonight. The same napalm wounded nearly one-fifth of the Americans injured in action, said Maj. Gen. Wm. E. De Puy, commander of the 1st Infantry Division. The General said that while "commanders made no mistakes" in the action, one of the American battalions lost its acting commander, and two company commanders were lost along with a number of other officers. These losses, he said, contributed to "a lack of cohesion" during part of the action.

—Ralph H. Kenna in Baltimore Sun, Aug. 27

Saigon, Aug. 27—U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine planes flew a record number of missions Friday against North Vietnamese targets, it was announced today. Despite the increasing air attacks, a high U.S. Navy officer said that sightings of south-bound trucks "have increased appreciably over the past six weeks." He insisted that "this is not indicative that the interdiction campaign has not been performing well. It suggests a much heavier push toward the South."

—Washington Post, Aug. 28

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