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Sen. Young's Vietnam Report Presents Disturbing Conclusions

Sen. Steve Young, the peppery Democrat who has accomplished two political miracles in Ohio, has just come back from South Vietnam with some pungent recommendations that will not make President Johnson happy.

He has written the President a blunt letter stating that: "South Vietnam is of no strategic importance to the defense of the United States."

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He has also told the President:

1 — China is a "paper dragon."

2 — "Most of the Viet Cong are not infiltrators nor Communists from North Vietnam. This therefore is a civil war waged in South Vietnam."

3 — "There is no need for the hundreds of CIA officials now in Vietnam and Thailand."

4 — The President should announce a holiday in bombing North Vietnam.

Seven years ago Ohio politicians predicted Sen. Young could never defeat Sen. John Bricker of Ohio, the Republican mainstay who had the prestige of running for Vice President of the 1944 Dewey ticket. Young beat him. Later the politicians predicted Young could never defeat Bob Taft, most promising star on Ohio's Republican horizon. He did.

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Despite his years, Sen. Young last month hopped all over the battlefield, saw German and Belgian mercenaries, their camps full of women, fighting for

the United States; visited what the GIs called "Barbecue Circle" where Buddhist monks set themselves on fire, watched water skiing on the Saigon River with the boom of artillery not far away.

The only thing he didn't visit was the French Club, considered the most luxurious club in the Orient, where French girls in bikini

nis serve its members. High-up generals are the only Americans permitted to join.

Sen. Young found that the United States has very few friends left in the Orient. "You can count them on the fingers of one hand," he said. "Only South Korea, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand. Not even the Philippines are very friendly any more."

"But if we bomb Hanoi and Haiphong and kill women and children, we won't have a single friend left," the senator predicted.

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He also predicted that North Vietnam would immediately retaliate by bombing Saigon, which so far has not been bombed from the air.

"Very definitely, Mr. President," the senator wrote L.B.J., "I hope you will hold against retired General LeMay and those other militarists, including members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who have been urging bombing of Haiphong and destroying



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the North Vietnam air force and bombing Hanoi. Frankly I disagree 100% with retired Gen. Curtis LeMay's statement."

Most disturbing conclusion Sen. Young reached was that South Vietnam was of no strategic value. This coincides with the statement of the Pres-

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ident's close friend, Sen. Richard Russell (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and is just the opposite of both Gen. Eisenhower's and Mr. Johnson's contention that this area is strategically important in checking Asian communism.

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"It's my further personal conclusion," Young wrote the President, "that South Vietnam is of no strategic importance to the defense of the United States. President Eisenhower, on April 7, 1954, said, 'The loss of Indo-China will cause the fall of Southeast Asia like a set of dominoes.' That statement might have had some validity in the years of 1953 to 1960. Since the Stalin era and certainly at present with the Soviet Union no longer a 'have not' nation and Moscow and Peking in bitter conflict, that domino theory makes no sense whatsoever now."

Another disturbing conclusion was Young's report that our war against the Viet Cong was a civil war. The public has been led to believe that it was inspired and maintained almost entirely from Communist sources outside.

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However, Sen. Young quoted Gen. William Westmoreland, top U.S. commander, and Gen. Richard Stillwell, one of Westmoreland's subordinates, to the effect that 80% of the Viet Cong were born and brought up in South Vietnam.

Sen. Young came away with the impression that more and more this has become an American war. Several American generals told him they would no longer disclose their battle plans to South Vietnamese officers beforehand. In the past such disclosure had led to the melting away of the enemy during the night.