

PA "Professors' Petition" 7/17/61

The writer of your editorial of July 14 came to two unwarranted conclusions following the press conference at which Hans Morgenthau and two colleagues released the names of 5000 educators urging the neutralization of North and South Viet-Nam.

One conclusion was that the professors did not make a case for "neutralization now." The other was that Professor Morgenthau "came up with a position in harmony with the apparent Administration policy of fighting more effectively now in order to bargain more effectively later." Having presided at the press conference and taken ample notes, perhaps I can clarify some of the thoughts presented there.

First, as to making a case for "neutralization now," Robert S. Browne of Fairleigh Dickinson University, who served with the International Cooperation Administration in Cambodia and South Viet-Nam from 1955 to 1961, said that South Vietnamese officials used to talk to him about "your war." In Mr. Browne's view, the South Vietnamese people want to end the war, not to win it. They fail to make a distinction between one group of white-skinned foreigners and another, he observed.

David B. Arnold of Princeton University, one of the few USIA officials to work in the Mekong River Delta, told the reporters that Americans were not believed because they insisted on stressing things the people knew to be untrue. Thus, Americans hailed elections in the strategic hamlets as the beginning of democracy in the countryside. The day before the elections, Dr. Arnold explained, representatives of the province chief came to

the hamlets and told the people how to vote. "If this is what you mean by democracy," Dr. Arnold was told, "we'd rather not have you." More soldiers, money and time will not win over the South Vietnamese people, Dr. Arnold concluded.

As to Professor Morgenthau's position "in harmony" with Administration policy, he opened the press conference with the flat statement that it is "utterly misleading to speak of the defense of South Viet-Nam against foreign aggression." The same day the State Department rejected the educators' appeal with the comment that "under the present circumstances we see no alternative to our policy of assisting South Viet-Nam to the maximum to resist Communist aggression."

A settlement could be achieved, Dr. Morgenthau suggested, by creating a united front of the non-Chinese nations to establish countervailing power to Chinese influence in the region. Far from contradicting his statement that Southeast Asia is a natural zone of Chinese influence, this suggestion provides the means to offset that very influence. Fear of the Chinese is the potential cement for such a coalition.

Considering all the alternatives, he said in answer to a question, one lesser evil might be unification of north and South Viet-Nam under Ho Chi Minh. With the support of a number of political parties, he added, Ho could then play the role of a Tito in the Far East.

Is this indeed in harmony with Administration policy?

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