

## Vietnam at the U.N.

The application of unified Vietnam for membership in the United Nations is scheduled to come before the Security Council today. Mr. Ford has ordered Ambassador William W. Scranton to cast a United States veto. Twice before, the United States has vetoed Vietnamese membership, first on the ground that the two separate governments of North and South were insufficiently established in authority, and then—when that pretext fell apart—because the world body would not at the same time consider membership for the two Koreas. Now that second excuse has also collapsed: Vietnam is no longer a divided country; the old goal of unification has clearly been achieved under Hanoi's Communist leadership. The dubious Korean connection is no longer relevant.

In an election campaign it might well be too much to expect a beleaguered President to risk conservative support by making friendly gestures to the former enemy in Vietnam. But a simple abstention in the Security Council when Vietnam's United Nations membership comes up would hardly constitute an official embrace. It would, however, permit the world community in general—and the United Nations in particular—to start forging constructive political relationships with an influential and relatively independent new power in Southeast Asia.