

NYTimes APR 7 1975

# Southerners Now Oppose Military Role in Indochina

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Special to The New York Times

GREENVILLE, Miss., April 5 —A bunch of Delta people went to a party here last night to celebrate the 40th birthday of Hodding Carter 3d, the editor, politician and world traveler. There was champagne and singing, flirtation and nonsense, and for several hours the leaders of Delta society turned away from pressing concerns of the day, the rising Mississippi River, the falling prices of cotton and soybeans, the uncertain stock markets. Then at a late hour someone mentioned Vietnam. A pall fell over that quarter of the room. For the rest of the evening people drifted from the pall

to the piano and back again, mothlike, unable still to avoid that faraway flame that flickers and will not die.

Throughout this weekend people are once more reading the grim headlines and watching the wrenching television reports from Southeast Asia. But even though the war has encroached again, it is different this time. In the South, which traditionally has been the most bellicose and military-minded part of the nation, there seems to be virtually no sentiment for any new American military involvement in Indochina.

Except for the strong feeling that the United States should provide humanitarian aid—food, medical supplies, help for refugees—there is also little sentiment for sending more American money into Vietnam.

From Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama to a black grocer at a remote crossroads, resistance to sending more American troops to Vietnam is the same. It was summed up by the grocer, Sam Ballard, who owns a store on the edge of Camden, Ala.

"If the United States does not have anything over there of

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value," he said, "I don't see that our boys have any right to go back over there and fight their war."

Nevertheless, the war lingers in the Southern mind. Liberals speak of the guilt they still feel for what their country did in Indochina. Conservatives regret the inconclusive outcome of the American effort—some call it defeat—and worry that United States credibility has been damaged.

And across ideological lines, thoughtful Southerners are wondering how they should



United Press International  
**President Ford holding a South Vietnamese child in San Francisco Saturday. Southerners did not favor his bid for \$300-million more in aid for South Vietnam.**

view their nation's role now in a world that is, once again, confused.

As Mr. Carter put it, standing in the yard after his party was over, "The big question now is, where do we go from here?"

The most recent polls by Gallup and Harris showed that the South, for once, agreed with the rest of the nation.

Early in March, a Harris Poll on President Ford's request for \$300-million more aid for South Vietnam found only 17 per cent of all Americans and 16 per cent of Southerners favoring it.

A Gallup survey in February showed roughly the same results, 12 per cent nationally and 14 per cent in the South favoring more money for Vietnam and Cambodia.

With that information in hand, a reporter undertook an automobile tour of the deepest of the Deep South, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama—to talk with some of those Americans who once had been the staunchest defenders of the war. How did they feel now that America's allies in Indochina seemed to be caving in to the Communists?

The tour began in Louisiana more than a week ago, after the fall of Hue but before the new onslaught of reports about the suffering of the Vietnamese civilians. A weekend fisherman gave a blunt but not untypical answer as he headed for his boat in the Atchafalaya swamp. "Let 'em go to hell," he said.

But by last Wednesday, when Governor Wallace was interviewed in Montgomery (just after his Birmingham physicians had once again examined him and pronounced him fit, in case he was thinking of running for President) the news from Southeast Asia had become gloomier. Large numbers of Vietnamese were fleeing ahead of the invaders.

"North Viet advance still unchecked," said the headline in that day's Montgomery Advertiser.

Mr. Wallace said he might favor sending humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese but "without getting involved militarily."

Sounding as if he hoped this would be a final summation, he added, "The big mistake we made in the first place was getting bogged down in a land war in Asia." The United States, he said, should have won the war by doing whatever was necessary, with conventional weapons, or it should have gotten out.

"But we waited and waited and waited," he said.

"Sure, we should have bombed Cambodia," he said. "We should have bombed Hanoi. We should have bombed the docks. And if we were afraid to bomb them because we were going to start another war with somebody else, we should never have been over there in the first place."

"What I'm saying is, this

country has wasted 50,000 lives, hundreds of billions of dollars and the country is wound up being taken over. And we pulled out and they [the Communists] didn't keep a single agreement they made. They lied and they cheated like they've always lied and cheated."

That is the lesson, he said: Americans have been shown again that the Communists cannot be trusted.

Across town, in a bright glassed-in porch that was green with his wife's potted plants, Maj. Gen. George B. Pickett Jr. talked of the Vietnam developments. He retired from the Army in 1973 and he now writes a column of military analysis for the Montgomery newspapers. He was a World War II tank officer. He was



He attributed the failure of

## 'Put Planes Over Hanoi'

He said in a firm voice, "My solution, if I was proposing to the President of the United States—assuming the credibility of the United States as a great power is at stake here, which I think it is —I would go back and put some planes over Hanoi and let them understand when you make an agree-

The war is being discussed quite a bit around Camden, he said, and people think the United States ought to stay out of it except to send food.

## Panthers Discuss Problems

Yesterday, in the Mississippi Delta, James Mabus and Harper Rivers Xyers said they had more problems than usual with their farming this spring. The

"I think they ought to have slaughtered them when they got to Saigon," he said. As the two planters sat in their office in the back of Lawler's store at Mayersville, word came of the crash of an Ameri-

He said, "Sometimes it's hard sitting out here in the country in the backwoods, to know what the truth is."