

Gardner's Drive on Viet War

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Common Cause, the self-styled citizens' lobby, opens a campaign today to get the United States out of Indochina with the assertion that most Americans want the war ended and need only say so.

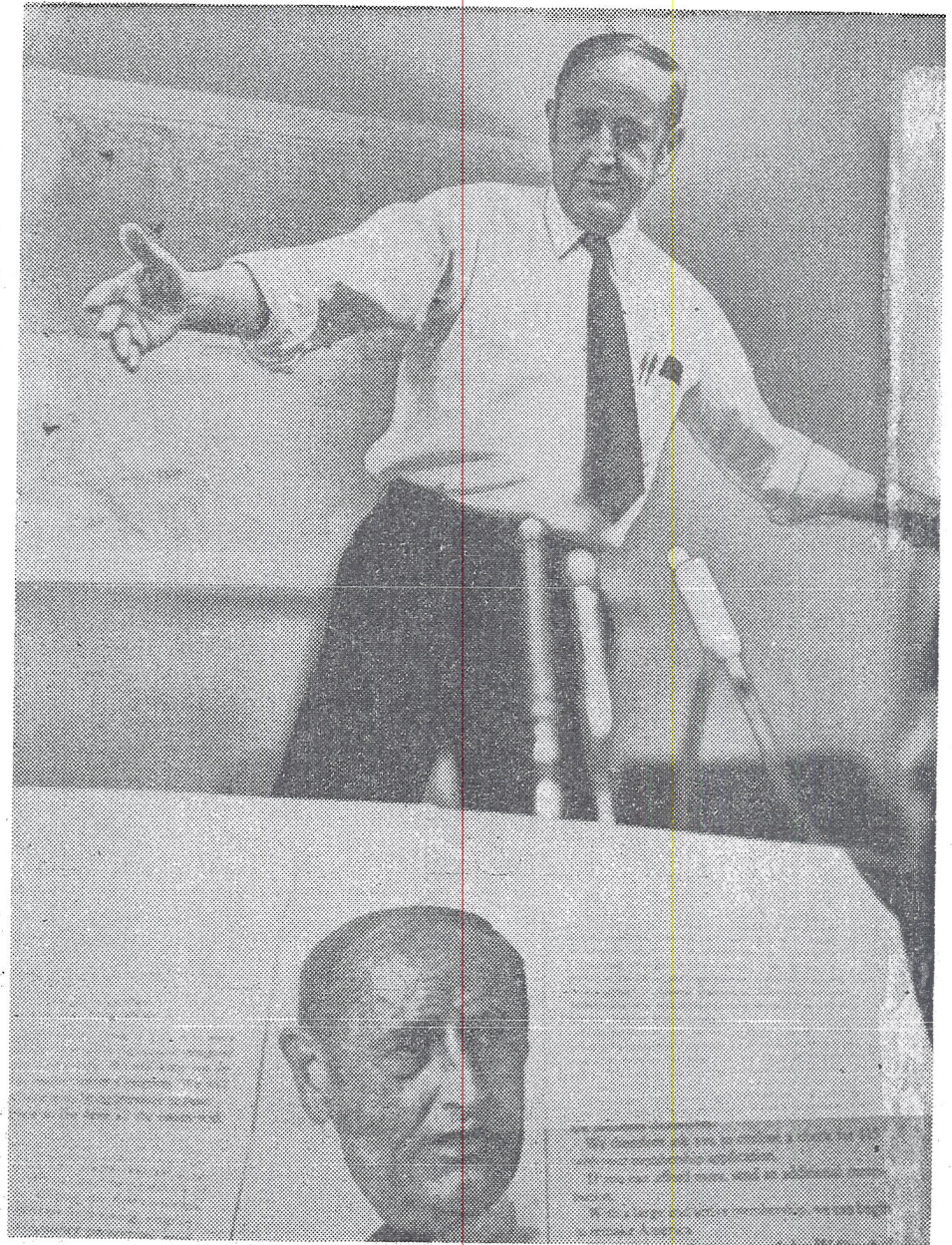
The organization, headed by former Welfare Secretary John W. Gardner, is running full-page advertisements in 26 newspapers across the country saying the average American has the power to end the war.

"As a matter of fact," the ads say, "the more average American you are, the more power you have to influence events at this crucial moment in American history."

Percentages

The ads cite a January Gallup poll saying 73 percent of the American people want all U.S. troops out of Indochina by the end of this year.

"The thing that we believe is happening now is a kind of rising of the moderates," Gardner said in an interview. "When you move up into the percentages such as 60 and 70 and over 70 percent opposing the war, you're rounding up middle-of-the-road Americans, and lots of them."



JOHN GARDNER OF COMMON CAUSE
In the foreground, a piece of his publicity material

—AP Photo

All that's needed, Gardner said, is for this majority to stop being silent. He's asking people to write their congressmen, newspapers, bring it up at union, church, lodge meetings.

"We hope to make it possible for that middle-of-the-road segment to make itself heard," he said. "You know the saying that goes around, 'The silent majority isn't really silent, but the government is deaf,' and I think it may apply in this instance."

"The Congress of the United States should be the target of your message," the ads say. "It can legislate an end to the war."

Undecided

Gardner and Common Cause have not decided that specifically will be backed in Congress, but he says negotiations are going on with supporters of end-the-war legislation.

Whatever measure is to be backed, Gardner said, Common Cause will insist on a Dec. 31, 1971 terminal date for American withdrawal from Vietnam and a reassertion of Congress' authority over declaring war.

"We're going to be making basically these points: the unacceptable risks that the President is taking, the fact that he's never committed himself to full withdrawal, the great instability in a situation in which a high proportion of the American people oppose the war and yet are drafting youngsters to fight and die in that war ev-

ery day," Gardner said.

Unswayed

Gardner further says he does not think the public will be swayed by any announcement by President Nixon of dramatic increases in troop withdrawal rates.

"The public certainly won't buy it if he continues the way he has been," Gardner said, "because you see it isn't just the duration, it's exposure to these unacceptable risks he

keeps taking.

"He doesn't know," Gardner added, "literally no one knows, what the reaction of the Red Chinese might be, or the North Vietnamese, to some of these things. He doesn't know what wholly unacceptable consequences might result.

"And I think that this is what bothers the American people, that we're still in there — even if we've taken

out a lot more troops — that we're still in there engaged in these extremely hazardous adventures."

'Hazardous'

Common Cause, formed by Gardner last September, now claims more than 100,000 members. It has recently engaged in such campaigns as reform of the seniority system in Congress and improvement of state laws on registration and voting.