

An Open Letter to the

President of the United States

Dear Sir:

Five years ago, I wrote an open letter to then President Johnson. Because I felt that his complete commitment to the war in Vietnam made it impossible for him to take on the role of peacemaker, I urged him not to be a candidate for re-election. It was a presumptuous proposal but, apparently, it summarized the feelings of a vast number American citizens. President Johnson decided not to run again.

You were elected, offering hope to many that the war would soon be over. Like your mentor, President Eisenhower, who had ended the Korean War, you would bring peace to Vietnam. We understood you had a plan. We trusted you.

Now, four years later, somehow the war has widened. We not only kill Vietnamese but Laotians and Cambodians as well. We kill from the air so our casualties are smaller but we have already dropped more destruction on innocent people than was dropped during World War II and the Korean War combined.

Is this our America — kindly, benevolent and above all, moral? What we continue to do to the people of Indo-China is brutal and costly and simply makes no sense. To quote a great American, we are engaged in "a war where every victory is a defeat and every defeat a dishonor."

We cannot be seriously worried about a Communist take-over in South Vietnam. If we were you would have not have restored, with skill and statesmanship, a semblance of friendship

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We cannot be seriously worried about a Communist take-over in South Vietnam. If we were, you would have not have restored, with skill and statesmanship, a semblance of friendship with the two Communist powers who could really pose a threat to our existence. You, Mr. President, with your life-time dedication to anti-Communism, would not have jeopardized the security of this country for a trade advantage or personal political gain. So expanded Communist influence in Vietnam cannot be the real issue.

Do we continue the war because, if we do not support General Thieu and his regime, our friends throughout the world will no longer trust our word? Questions of the legitimacy of that government aside, not much happened when you dumped our firm friends, the government of Taiwan, in favor of the Communist government of China. One of our most important friends

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Do we continue the war because, if we do not support General Thieu and his regime, our friends throughout the world will no longer trust our word? Questions of the legitimacy of that government aside, not much happened when you dumped our firm friends, the government of Taiwan, in favor of the Communist government of China. One of our most important friends and trading partners, Japan, has walked into the arms of Communist China at the same time and this hasn't had much of an effect on our world position. Your leadership has made great changes possible; it can surely withstand a disgruntled General Thieu.

Are we looking now to save face or to save lives?

It's much too late for more than 40,000 Americans, for millions of Indo-Chinese. But it's not too late for those thousands who will live if we stop the killing now rather than months from now.

One man, Mr. President, can revoke those death sentences. Now — not on January 4th.

There are no goals for continued slaughter to achieve. The war is over.
Now let the killing stop.

Respectfully,



Harry Roth

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