

To the Editor:

Our citizenry seem to have reached a consensus on the merits of withdrawing our troops from Vietnam, but this coincidence of opinion should not obscure the differing motivations which have produced it. These differences have already caused major disagreements on how quickly we should withdraw those troops, and soon another issue will emerge to divide our nation.

When will we cease our bombing in Vietnam? Will it be when we withdraw our troops, or at some later date? The Administration has been studiously equivocal in commenting on this issue, an issue which is both crucial and revealing. It is crucial because it is our aerial bombardment that has caused the greatest number of civilian casualties, and it is revealing because responses to it clarify the extent of our humanitarian concern.

If one's motivation for withdrawal of our troops is to eliminate our own losses, as exemplified by the "we have done enough for them" argument, then one will evaluate the continuation of our bombing primarily in economic terms. After all, there is little danger to our airmen when they fly at high altitudes from bases outside the war zone and bomb defenseless civilians. This Administration, if public apathy permits, will probably advocate the continuation of bombing as a logical, cheap, and effective adjunct to Vietnamization.

However, if one is persuaded that the war is a politic mistake, then one is appalled by the suffering it causes everyone involved, and one will work hard, not only for a speedy withdrawal of our troops, but for the concomitant cessation of our bombing.

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Canon, Washington Cathedral  
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