

Questions U.S. morality

I am a patriotic American who firmly believes in the fundamentals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness upon which this nation was founded. I am also a Marine veteran of the ground war in Vietnam who is totally appalled by this nation's policies in that part of the world. All people deserve the right to self-determination in regard to the type of government they will institute. The Vietnamese should be left to themselves to decide what form of government will rule their entire nation. The United States had a very brutal civil war of its own at one time.

Incredibly, the U.S.A. has not only lost 50,000 of its finest young men and wasted billions of the taxpayers' dollars attempting to prevent the Vietnamese from determining their own destiny, but it has now placed its moral fiber in serious jeopardy. American pilots have dropped an average of 451 tons of bombs per acre of land in South Vietnam. There are many accounts of planned campaigns of extermination conducted by the U.S. military against areas suspected of harboring Viet Cong sympathizers. America has defoliated much of the vegetation in South Vietnam in order to leave the enemy nowhere to hide. We have even attempted to control the rainfall and weather conditions over North Vietnam in order to hamper supply of troop movement and to help our own bombing campaign. Even officials in our own State Department have misgivings about this policy because they realize it could have disastrous long term ecological effects. The U.S. has protected corrupt high ranking officials in Thailand, South Vietnam, and Laos who have been accused of conducting business in the opium trade in Southeast Asia. This opium eventually finds its way to American heroin addicts in our cities.

However, the gravest problem concerns the recent intensification of the bombing campaign over the north. The largest air and naval armada in the war's history

has been assembled around North Vietnam. Its purpose is to bomb that country into submission. Many eyewitness news reports speak of the U.S. bombing of schools, hospitals, and the dike system so vital to the safety and welfare of the civilian peasant population of North Vietnam. With the rainy season approaching shortly, as many as a million people

could die as a result of flooding and subsequent starvation caused by destruction of the dike system. Even the Nixon administration has admitted that the dikes have been hit 12 times by "mistake." The North Vietnamese say that the dikes have been hit over 60 times. Whoever is right, the fact remains that in an undeclared war thousands of miles away, the U.S. bombing policy is threatening the lives of an entire civilian population.

The truth is that, while we have the power to implement this policy, we do not have the moral right to do so. Unless this bombing is stopped history, which until now has been kind to the U.S.A., will not let future generations forget that the richest and most powerful nation on earth attempted in the words of former General Curtis LeMay to bomb a courageous peasant people "back to the Stone Age." All Americans who care about humanity and who desire to have morality present in our national policy should do all they can to bring about the victory of Sen. George McGovern in the crucial coming election.

B. Hunter