

Letters to the Editor

What Are We Doing in Vietnam?

To the Editor:

This nation has descended very close to the nadir of moral degradation. It is well-nigh unbelievable that a people that professes commitment to the sanctity of life and humane consideration for its fellow man would so long suffer murderous employment of our great economic and military power against people in a small divided nation halfway round the world and totally incapable of posing any direct threat to us. Yet that is our national stance in relation to Indochina.

It is as though this predominantly white nation, not content with its record of enslavement of blacks, of cruel exploitation and enforced segregation of the American Indian and of second-class-citizen treatment of the Chicano, is running the gamut by pouring bombs upon an Asian people in unparalleled quantity and with like persistence.

¶What moral basis is there for the massive bombing of North Vietnam that is going on relentlessly by order of the President? Is it for us to bomb the North Vietnamese to their knees in order to influence political developments in Southeast Asia and to keep a dictatorial government in power in Saigon? The Ten Commandments have not been repealed.

To claim preservation of national honor by killing under the self-serving rubric, "war," is a gross affront to the most elementary sense of human decency. To say that the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong are our enemies is utterly at odds with reality. They have neither the capacity nor the disposition to attack us. Our Government has used our resources to treat them as enemies and has

caused untold death and enormous destruction in both South and North Vietnam.

¶What credibility can we hope to have before the larger community of man when we make such brutal and irresponsible use of our power? What we are doing is intolerable in the sight of men and women who believe in love and beauty and the dignity of human life.

¶Why do not Americans show concern about the cowardliness of our posture as to Indochina? It is as though a giant were to take the field against a small lad and to use all of the weapons available through the use of advanced technology. What an uneven match in Vietnam, with our land and our people subject to no risk of adverse military action.

¶The President has asked why critics do not express more concern about the conduct of the Vietcong and North Vietnamese in their military methods and treatment of civilians. The answer is obvious. Our responsibility is for what we do as a people. In 1968 we were sensitive enough that the man who got us into a shooting conflict in Vietnam saw that he could not be re-elected.

At this juncture it can only be hoped that we shall not be so debased and benumbed as to put our imprimatur upon the record of continued slaughter and destruction that has marked the succeeding years. Two successive national administrations seriously deficient in moral leadership are more than enough.

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