

On Aug. 28, there was published in The Times an [Op-Ed] article by the Rev. John McLaughlin, S.J., a deputy special assistant to the President of the United States.

In the article he alleges that all 2,180

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In the article he alleges that all 2,180 Catholic and Protestant clergymen (including 58 resident Jesuits) in South Vietnam "uniformly believe that continued self-defense is licit, necessary, moral and upright—even though they abhor war and yearn for peace. They further uniformly believe that the help being given by the United States—including the mining of the harbor and the interdiction bombing—is likewise licit, moral, necessary and upright."

That Dr. McLaughlin could not possibly know the "uniform" beliefs of over 2,000 clergymen even if they had felt free to talk to a priest so close to the center of American executive power is so obvious as to make his testimony worthless.

I would not have written this letter, however, if Dr. McLaughlin had not charged me with condemning "U.S. policy in a fact vacuum." In one sentence he "discredits" a news article which appeared in one of the world's greatest newspapers (Le Monde) and which, so far as I know, that paper has not "corrected."

In view of the record over the past years of the White House staff and Pentagon spokesmen of denying what they later have admitted to be facts, I stand by my original letter to President Nixon which on July 22 was supported by the lead editorial in The Times.

I hardly need to defend the Secretary General of the United Nations for his statement made a few days after mine. I should have thought that any White House spokesman would have taken his statement as a support of my credibility rather than to attack him with the false allegation that his statement was based upon mine.

EUGENE C. BLAKE  
General Secretary  
World Council of Churches  
Geneva, Sept. 5, 1972