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# The Nonwhite War

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WASHINGTON—There is one human matter that is virtually unmentionable in the official American pronouncements about the Vietnam war. It concerns the casualties and refugees—practically none of whom are white—caused by present bombing policies over allied, enemy and neutral countries in Indochina.

Repeatedly, the Administration has emphasized that the war was inherited and that a half-million ground troops have been withdrawn from South Vietnam. True enough, but a big omission here is that, because of expansion of the war theater with Air and Navy units and their deep infrastructure, there are still a half-million Americans supporting Vietnam hostilities across the wide Pacific command.

President Nixon's declaration that there will only be 27,000 Americans in South Vietnam by Dec. 1 is more than a concealment of the actual military manpower engaged in the war. It plays down the risks run daily by carrier pilots off the Gulf of Tonkin and fighter pilots taking off from Thailand bases against Soviet MIG's and missiles; and it withholds their role from public attention.

But the greatest omission of all concerns the nonwhite people on the receiving end of the terror falling from the skies. Watching Senator Kennedy's subcommittee on Refugees attempt to extract the facts from Administration spokesmen is a despairing sight. A few days ago, in the old Senate Office Building, he asked: Why is it easy for you to tell us how many bridges have

Nevertheless, the subcommittee on Refugees has been able to assemble the human cost of the expanded Vietnam war. Sources include church, medical and voluntary groups, United Nations agencies, the General Accounting Office and field observers reporting to the subcommittee's counsel, Dale S. De Haan, plus whatever information is made available by the Government's intelligence and military groups—which do not have civilian refugees and casualties high on their lists of concern.

The "regrettable by-products" include these statistics: In the last two years about 400,000 people have been killed throughout Indochina—a frightening number that is an actual "blood-bath," as distinct from the theoretical one predicted by President Nixon in the event that American support was withdrawn from the Thieu Government. Since the North Vietnamese do not divulge their casualties, the real figures could well exceed this estimate.

The people displaced from their homes by the war's continuation in the last two years include: 1,850,000 South Vietnam refugees; 2,000,000 Cambodian refugees; 250,000 Laotian refugees and an unknown number of North Vietnamese. South Vietnam has suffered the most; the Refugees subcommittee estimates that the total number of refugees since the war began is 8,000,000, almost one-half of the South Vietnamese population.

The military and civilian dead, wounded and displaced throughout Indochina will only be known when

the war finally ends. In the meantime, there is little preparation by the United States to alleviate the suffering of the nonwhite people whose governments have been supported and whose bases have been used as airstrips to launch new casualties, new refugees among the civilian populations. Efforts to pay for the suffering, as distinct from the armaments, have been cut in Administration budgets.

Based on hospital records, about one-fourth of the wounded civilians in South Vietnam are children under 12. Most of the South Vietnamese doctors go into military service, leaving hospitals understaffed. Some hospitals have been destroyed, others no longer function. And the wounded and refugees still run at the rate of several thousand every day the war goes on. They run to Saigon's side when North Vietnam's shells burst and run again when American bombs fall. But the Senate subcommittee's analysts report a new development in recent months: Hundreds of thousands in the northern provinces chose to remain under North Vietnamese rule and did not "vote with their feet" for Saigon.

Bombing from on high, obeying the call of the sensors and unleashing the smart bombs, American fliers fortunately are sustaining few casualties. The same cannot be said for the nonwhite civilian populations of Indochina, about whom the American public does not hear in its Presidential bulletins.

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been destroyed in North Vietnam and the precise number of trucks hit along the Ho Chi Minh Trail but not how many hospitals, schools, churches and other civilian installations have been hit by our bombs? The evasive response by an Assistant Secretary of State was that these were not deliberate military targets but only "regrettable by-products" of the violence of warfare.