

Veterans' Goal--- 'Destroy the War'

Washington

Our one last mission is to search out and destroy the last vestige of this barbaric war," a spokesman for demonstrating Vietnam veterans told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday.

With John Kerry, a Yale graduate and former naval lieutenant as their spokesman, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War took their plea for an immediate end of the Indochina conflict directly to the committee at a hearing on legislation to end the war.

"We must set a date and this must be the earliest possible," said Kerry, who won a Silver Star and Purple Heart with two clusters for action in Vietnam.

"There is nothing that has happened in Vietnam that justified the loss of one American."

While Kerry, backed by applause from about 200 demonstrating veterans, was making his highly emotional plea to a highly receptive and sympathetic committee, a band of Republicans took to the senate floor to defend President Nixon's refusal to set any specific final withdrawal date.

MILITARY

"I think that by the end of 1972, practically all American military personnel will be out of there. I hope sooner, in fact," said Senator William Saxbe (Rep-Ohio). "Our job is finished there and, except for the logistics involved with so large a movement, there is no longer any reason to stay."

"I reject however," Saxbe continued, "the contention that the President should set a definite date for removal of all American troops. To so telegraph our punches to the other side is both unrealistic and, I submit, ridiculous. This would unnecessarily tie the President's hand and I can't in any way see how it would help to move the negotiations in Paris off dead center."

Senators Robert A. Taft Jr., (Rep-Ohio), Clifford Hansen (Rep-Wyo.) and Con-



AP Wirephoto

JOHN KERRY
'Must set a date'

servative James L. Buckley of New York, also spoke in support of the President. "President Nixon is ending U.S. involvement in southeast Asia," said Taft.

"To heed the demands for a precipitous withdrawal at this time would betray the valiant efforts made to date," said Buckley.

DIE

Kerry told the Foreign Relations Committee that Americans had been sent to die in Vietnam "for the biggest nothing in history."

U. S. soldiers in Vietnam, he said, found that it was "really a civil war" in which the average person "didn't know the difference between Communism and democracy and only wanted us to leave them in peace to work in their rice paddies."

"Vietnamese were hard-put to take up the fight against the dangers we were supposedly protecting them from," he said.

Kerry said U.S. military actions involved incredible brutality against civilians and soldiers alike. Citing "free fire zones, bombings, torture of prisoners, killing of prisoners," he said, "we are more guilty of violating the Geneva Convention than others," adding, "we used weapons which I do not believe this country would

dream of using against a European people."

"Each day someone has to give up his life so that the United States doesn't have to admit what the world already knows, that we made a mistake; so that President Nixon won't be, in his own words, 'the first president to lose a war.'"

PEACE

Kerry said the crimes for which Lieutenant William L. Calley Jr. were convicted were "a horrible, horrible thing, but you must at the same time try all these other people who have responsibility . . . (Calley) interpreted those orders no different from hundreds of others."

As for Vietnamization, Kerry said, it "leaves no chance for peace . . . that's not peace, that's continuing the war."

He begged the senators not to lose "moral indignation," and in turn Chairman J. W. Fulbright (Dem-Ark.) pleaded with him and the other veterans in the room not to be disillusioned. To keep faith in democracy, work within the system. Our system, said Fulbright, is the best ever devised, certainly "not beyond recall."

"I don't think I'd be here if I didn't think it could be made to work," said Kerry, "I don't see another system than democracy . . . but I've certainly been frustrated."

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