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To the Editor:  
In judging President Nixon's statement that "he inherited the war," which was repeated in your lead editorial of Jan. 10, may I suggest that the following be kept in mind?

Mr. Nixon was Vice President when the SEATO Agreement was formulated. This document has been cited as the basis of our "commitment." Does Mr. Nixon not share some responsibility for SEATO?

During the years out of office Mr. Nixon was generally credited with being hawkish in the sense of supporting the war. As a political leader of sorts can he now disavow responsibility of any nature?

As is well known, Mr. Nixon worked hard to win the Presidency with all its attendant problems. Certainly Vietnam was and remains one of them. Is it accurate to claim inheritance when the legacy was so actively sought?

Is there any reason to claim inheritance other than to arouse sympathy for his position and to imply that greater tolerance is due him because he did nothing to earn the responsibility with which he now finds himself saddled through inheritance? And is such claim supportable by any circumstance or definition of logic?

WILLIAM C. WAGNER  
South Pasadena, Calif., Jan. 18, 1971