

Altogether Convincing

WHILE THE UNITED STATES IS negotiating openly and in private for an immediate cease-fire and a prompt end of the Vietnam war, President Nguyen Van Thieu is singing a different song in another key, and directly advocating prolonged warfare.

Dispatches from Saigon quote him as telling the graduating class of his national defense college that a negotiated cease-fire between Hanoi and Washington would be "a great danger for South Vietnam" and adding: "There is only one way to force the North Vietnamese to talk seriously and that is to destroy North Vietnam — their war industry and their economic power. Let us do it this way for six or seven months and we will come to a cease-fire for all of Indochina."

It has been repeatedly alleged that the U.S. presence in Vietnam has been marked by considerable bungling because Americans do not understand Vietnamese. President Thieu has now gone a long way toward convincing us that this estimate is correct.