
The New York Times

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NYTimes

OCT 15 1972

Peace by Annihilation

After the latest and longest round of high-level peace talks in Paris, both North Vietnamese and American officials agreed last week that numerous difficult problems remained in the way of a settlement. That was self-evident as President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam reaffirmed his rejection of any compromise, and as the United States Government continued to underwrite President Thieu's intransigence with a prolongation of the most intensive air assault in history.

In Saigon, the South Vietnamese dictator flung down the gauntlet to rumors of accommodation in Paris, reiterating his "four no's"—no political role for the Communists, no coalition, no territorial concessions and no neutralism. "We have to kill the Communists to the last man before we have peace," he said.

If President Nixon continues to support Mr. Thieu in the manner to which he has become accustomed, as he has given every indication of doing, that may be the only kind of peace Indochina will ever know—the peace of death. Despite the destruction of the French Mission in Hanoi which focused world attention on the indiscriminate devastation wrought by the American bombing campaign, Pentagon officials from Secretary Laird on down insisted the aerial war would continue unabated.

Although despairing of effective Congressional action to stop the war, Senator John Sherman Cooper was among the few who supported a recent effort to cut off funds for the bombing. He did so, the Kentucky Republican said, "to express my feeling that I deplore this bombing and killing on both sides and I must say this as a human being." In the name of humanity, it is past time more Americans spoke out against the blood bath that American power is inflicting on the people of Indochina.