

'And This Should Outrage the

By Edward M. Kennedy

WASHINGTON—In recent weeks President Nixon has had another opportunity to end the Indochina tragedy and accomplish the return of our prisoners of war—on a basis which would have had the support and praise of all Americans. But events suggest a return to the same old war. For we cannot read about the heavy bombing, the new targets, and the unprecedented loss of American pilots and planes, without a deep and despairing sense that peace is not at hand.

And as we gather with our families during these special days of peace on earth and good will toward men, how can we help but think about this war? How can any American be proud of the face that our country is presenting to the world during this holiday month of 1972?

The President promised peace. He made a decision that nothing in Vietnam and Indochina was worth the dying of another American soldier. But we are still killing others for something that we are no longer willing to die for in Vietnam. And this should outrage the conscience of all Americans.

There can be no mistake about the impact recent developments are having on the people of Indochina. As the violence continues from both sides and the bombing escalates to new highs, the crisis of Indochina's people grows and grows. Tragedy is piled upon tragedy. More children become orphans. More thousands of men and women and children become refugees, and thousands more are injured or maimed or killed. They are joining the ranks of earlier war victims—nearly 15 million—all for a few clauses in an agreement being debated half-way around the world.

I yield to no one in condemning the brutality of the other side. But this violence cannot relieve our side's responsibility to minimize the impact

of battle on civilians. The American people expect this of their Government.

Since 1965, however, our country has dropped nearly 7.5 million tons of bombs over Indochina, the bulk of it during the last four years. This is more than eleven times the tonnage dropped during the Korean war, and more than three times the tonnage dropped during all of World War II. At least one million tons of bombs have been dropped since January of this year. And for anyone to imply—as our military planners so often do—that these bombs have little impact on civilians, on the creation of war victims, defies common sense and an eight-year record in the hearings of the subcommittee on refugees.

The people problems of Indochina

have been bad enough for many years. But in 1972, the people of both Vietnams—let alone those of Laos and Cambodia—have taken the most ferocious beating of the war. The number of war victims continued to mount in Laos and Cambodia. In North Vietnam, where our guns and bombs are the *only* source of destruction and death, tens of thousands of civilians have suffered immeasurably. And no-

Conscience of All



Anita Siegel

where has the heavy pace of the war been more evident than in South Vietnam, where enough data is currently available to measure the war's tragic impact on civilians. There were more war victims in South Vietnam this year than in any previous year of the war. In 1972, some two million people in South Vietnam became refugees; civilian war casualties totaled at least 200,000—including some 65,000 deaths. Based on the official count of hospital admissions alone, up to one-fourth of the casualties were chil-

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dren 12-years-old and under, and over one-half were women and children.

The human suffering in Indochina staggers the imagination. It is difficult to comprehend the aggregate statistics of war victims. It is even more difficult to comprehend the implications of these statistics—and the continuing war—on the family structure, traditions and social fabric of nations confronted with massive upheaval and total war. Millions holed up in a nightmare of death and destruction are crying out for peace and relief. And we must answer their cries for help. The war in Indochina has been with us longer than understanding and patience can bear. The people of this country are not only tired of this war—they are tired of hearing the stale arguments for it and against it. They are tired of seeing our men withdrawn from Vietnam, only to have others show up across the border in Thailand—or on the decks of our gunboats at sea—or in the cockpits of our bombers in the air. They are tired of having their hopes for peace met with plans for more war. And they are tired of seeing pictures of refugees and casualties and orphans and maimed children flash across their television screens and the pages of their newspapers.

The American people want peace. They want the return of our captured pilots and an accounting of the missing-in-action. And they ask today more than ever before—how many more pilots and planes will go down? And how much longer will we be prisoners of this war?

Today we pray that the peace that was at hand can be retrieved with the early renewal of negotiations in Paris. The support of the Congress and our citizens in pursuing this objective is there for the President's asking. But if the war goes on, if the stalemate in negotiations continues, then the Congress must and will act on the peoples' mandate for peace.

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