

# On Resuming the Bombing

To the Editor:

The fulminations of The Times' editorials and of the commentaries by Messrs. Wicker and Lewis seem directed solely at the United States and Saigon Governments. This attitude is surely unjustified.

The position of the United States during the Paris negotiations has consistently been that this country will withdraw all of its forces from South Vietnam and cease all military activities throughout Vietnam as part of a settlement which will leave the various conflicting elements in the South free to choose the political future of the South. As Dr. Kissinger stated in October, when the North seemed finally to accept this principle, serious negotiations began.

Moreover, both sides seemed to accept the principle that the results reached at the negotiating table would reflect, at least at the beginning, the present battlefield situation, which is that a stalemate exists in the conflict for supremacy throughout the South. A negotiated settlement is supposed to end the warfare under the supervision of an international truce team and transfer the struggle for the South to the political front. Thus, the way would be open for eventual unification of the North and South if the political process so dictated, but, on the other hand, such an eventuality might not occur.

It is not sufficient to say that the question of one or two Vietnams "is what the war is all about." The point of any real settlement is that such decision will be made politically, not on the battlefield among the Vietnamese in the South.

If Vietnam were to be recognized as a single political entity at this time then a military cease-fire could only be a truce in a war for control of all of Vietnam. This is contrary to the underlying assumption which led to the progress that was made in October.

WILLIAM F. TREANOR  
New York, Dec. 20, 1972

To the Editor:

The editor of a national weekly magazine recently observed: "Violence has become our method of communication." The violence of the terrorist or the bomber pilot is not directed against any particular person or thing, for it is merely symbolic. The choice of victims is random and irrelevant. The violence is used to send a message to a third party who is not related to the victims. The message is that the author of the violent act is deadly serious about his purpose, and he is willing even to kill for it.

If the world still had any doubts about President Nixon's seriousness of purpose about winning the peace in Southeast Asia, these doubts should now be laid to rest. The bombs are falling again, during the season of the year set aside for the celebration of goodwill among men, peace, love, and new birth. And now that our President has convinced us all that he is in deadly earnest, how shall we make sense of his purpose? How much longer do we intend to communicate to the rest of the world our longing for peace through the violence of death for random, irrelevant victims?

MARGARET B. MORSE  
Cleveland, Dec. 21, 1972



Ross Lee Bateup

To the Editor:

We all share the disappointment that in this Christmas season, peace with justice has not yet been achieved for Southeast Asia. Hostilities continue in spite of the drastic reduction of United States armed forces in South Vietnam accomplished during this year and conscientious efforts by the United States in negotiations.

As has been true so often in connection with this tragic war, when developments do not conform to our hopes, the tendency on the part of many has been to suggest error on the part of the United States, the President or members of his staff and of the leaders of South Vietnam. There has been a consistent neglect to indict the Communist side. Similarly, there has been a failure by many adequately to appreciate the cleverness of Communist strategy and tactics which could be stated:

"To create or exploit by any means

situations which pose the adversary courses of action characterized only by risks, unpleasanties, expense and dissension."

For years Hanoi has manifested a three-faceted objective:

(1)—To win South Vietnam and ultimately all of Indochina by one means or another, sooner or later—preferably sooner.

(2)—To eliminate the United States as a power of influence in Southeast Asia, thus to discredit the United States in world opinion.

(3)—To cause maximum dissension within the United States and between the United States and its allies.

Diabolically conceived political, military, subversive and propaganda programs support these objectives. For example, immediately following the resumption of U.S. bombing of North Vietnam last spring, after North Vietnam had launched the major attack across the demilitarized zone into South Vietnam, the headquarters of the International Students Union in one of the Eastern European capitals responsive to Hanoi promulgated a directive to student organizations worldwide "vigorously to protest the bombing." A similar program had been conducted most successfully during 1967 and 1968, greatly influencing American public opinion. We now see efforts along the same lines even as Communist attacks in South Vietnam continue.

The late Adm. Turner Joy clearly delineated the problems of negotiating with Communists in Korea in his book "How the Communists Negotiate." In the preface he stated:

"The measure of expansion achieved by Communism through negotiations is impossible to disassociate from what they have achieved by force, for the Communists never completely separate the two methods. Yet their negotiating methods have yielded them rich returns. . . ."

In short, all negotiations are part and parcel of the over-all conflict to achieve subservency on the part of the adversary.

All Americans who genuinely seek a just and lasting peace should not try to discredit the efforts of our own public servants or the leaders of our ally. Neither should they contribute to the objective of the Communist side by furthering dissension within the United States or between the United States and its allies. The blame should be placed squarely on the North Vietnamese Government where it belongs.

GEORGE W. ANDERSON  
Admiral, U. S. Navy (Ret.)  
McLean, Va., Dec. 20, 1972

To the Editor:

President Nixon has often said that he seeks to move from confrontation to negotiation and that he does not wish to enter negotiations unless he is backed by power second to none.

The renewed bombing of North Vietnam makes it perfectly clear that his desire for such power enables him to move directly from negotiation to confrontation.

HARRY R. RUDIN  
Hamden, Conn., Dec. 21, 1972



To the Editor:

Those of us with some experience of the Far East have long felt that our Asian policies took the decisively wrong turn with the refusal to recognize reality in China when the present government came to power. The Nixon-Kissinger initiatives with China therefore brought us hope that sanity might have returned at last. The negotiations to end the Indochinese involvement strengthened such hope.

Now we discover that the talks with the envoys from Hanoi are broken off and that the bombing has been resumed on a heavier scale. Unlike some of my friends, I am not yet convinced that all this was the cheapest of election maneuvers by Richard Nixon. But it is sickening.

Hanoi has said that the bombings are insane. For a country as powerful as ours to set about systematically to destroy a small nation on the other side of the world, to kill many thousands of people on whom the destiny of the world does not immediately depend, and to spend such treasure desperately needed to cure our own ills—surely these actions are insane. They are also immoral and cruel.

We are reduced to agonized questions. When will our capacity to recognize Asian reality come to life? When will we recognize our common human bond with Asian peoples? When will we recognize that the issue is not "peace with honor" but rather that peace which alone will retrieve something of our honor?

Surely any sober judgment is that our country has perfected the science of going to military as well as to celestial moons, although without the same blest art of return.

(Prof.) EARL MINER  
Princeton University  
Princeton, N. J., Dec. 20, 1972

To the Editor:

At stake in the recent breakdown of negotiations with Hanoi was not verbal nuances, but the whole political meaning of the agreement.

When the American team in Paris agreed in October to the nine-point draft, it must have appeared to Hanoi that, as Henry Kissinger himself put it shortly thereafter, the U.S. had decided to do no more than "give the South Vietnamese an opportunity to survive" in the coming political contest.

But we failed to get Saigon to accept this draft. We requested many changes. We demanded some formula about the sovereignty of South Viet-

nam. Hanoi must have understood that the U.S. did not merely want to disengage from Vietnam, while keeping outside the military means to intervene in case of a flagrant North Vietnamese violation.

To Hanoi, the U. S. which was trying to impose on it guarantees and restrictions which we did not demand of President Thieu, must have appeared determined to support him fully, to limit drastically North Vietnam's chances in the political contest, and to build up a legal case for intervention on Thieu's behalf even if the peace broke down due to bad faith in Saigon (as after 1954).

Stalling and haggling by Hanoi thus becomes comprehensible, quite apart from the fact that we had done the same just before. Only weeks of talks, direct and indirect, could have helped clarify each side's intentions, and dispel mutual misgivings—the prerequisites to agreements either on specific terms or on deliberate ambiguities.

Putting military pressure on one's opponent is not an unknown tactic, but our goal is thoroughly unreasonable, since it is a settlement which would go far beyond merely ratifying the political and military realities in South Vietnam and keep the U.S. deeply involved.

As for the means, not only are they likely to stiffen Hanoi's will, as in the past, but they are also wildly disproportionate to any just and fair end. Moreover, in their revolting brand of brutality and hypocrisy, they are destructive of our own values—not to mention our face, supposedly one of our main concerns in the interminable process of extrication. Our current policy is therefore immoral as well as unsound.

STANLEY HOFFMAN  
Professor of Government  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 22, 1972

To the Editor:

I don't know why people complain that President Nixon is not trustworthy. He promised us a long time ago that the war would not be an election issue. And he delivered on his promise; it was not a real issue at election time.

THOMAS MAYER  
Berkeley, Calif., Dec. 18, 1972

To the Editor:

The prescription President Nixon has written for a Vietnam peace agreement, as vouchsafed to us by his foreign affairs adviser (news story, Dec. 17), includes as its *sine qua non* the mandate that it shall be "just and fair."

South Vietnam has long insisted that, to be just and fair to it, a peace agreement must rid South Vietnam of the armed forces (currently estimated at 145,000 to 300,000) that North Vietnam still has there. Whatever may be said by way of denigration of South Vietnam, its government, or its people, it cannot be said that they are entirely without brains; hence South Vietnam is insisting that the withdrawal of the North Vietnam military be specifically provided for in any agreement it is asked to sign. And what was our answer to that demand? The United States, Dr. Kissinger says, "rejected that demand as unreasonable."

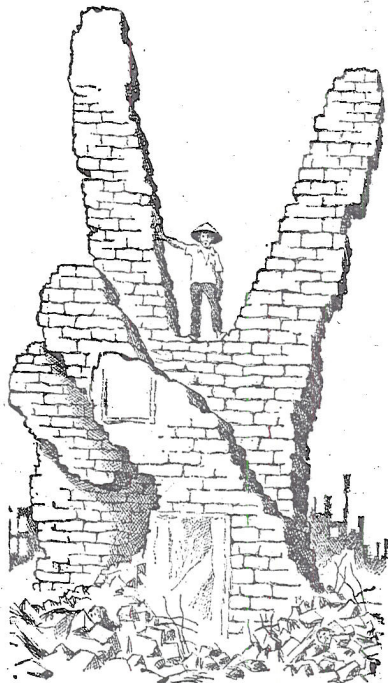
The absurdity of that rebuff is magnified several diameters when it is laid alongside another of Dr. Kissinger's disclosures, i.e., that the United States "cannot accept the proposition that North Vietnam has a right of constant intervention in the South." Well, as long as North Vietnam's troops are in the South, it is intervening, isn't it? Isn't that what the troops are there for?

LESTER E. WATERBURY  
New York, Dec. 18, 1972

To the Editor:

Christmas. Humbug. B-52's.

HOWARD A. BRIDGMAN  
South Dartmouth, Mass., Dec. 21, 1972



Klaus Albrechtsen