

The Lesser Risk...

The key to success in the peace talks which resume in Paris today lies not only in Hanoi, as the Administration has asserted, but in the White House. The end of the long American involvement in Indochina requires a tough but inescapable decision—a decision to acknowledge at last the United States cannot impose a political solution in Vietnam by any acceptable military means.

The best that any American leader could hope to salvage from this tragic error is the safe return of American troops and prisoners, leaving the Vietnamese to work out their own solution to an essentially Vietnamese problem. Although manifestly imperfect, the accord announced by Hanoi and confirmed by Kissinger last October fulfills these essential conditions. It obviously does not offer a firm foundation for a stable and lasting peace. But no amount of diplomacy could hope to clear up fundamental problems that more than a decade of war has failed to solve.

There is undeniable danger of fresh outbreaks of civil strife in Vietnam—possibly even a Communist takeover in Saigon—which could provoke political repercussions in the United States. This potential threat to the President and his party is virtually eliminated however, by the forthright position Congressional Democrats have taken in favor of a solution that is essentially similar to the one negotiated by Mr. Kissinger in Paris last fall.

In any event, it is the duty of a President to place the national interest above personal political considerations. There can be no hope for peace in Indochina or honor for the United States until the Administration—or Congress—has the courage to abandon frustrated violence for the lesser risk of an imperfect peace.

...As Others See Us

"O Wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
 "To see oursels as others see us!
 "It wad frae monie a blunder free us
 An' foolish notion."

—Robert Burns

The image of the United States in the eyes of the world today—in the wake of President Nixon's intensive twelve-day bombing attack against the heavily populated Hanoi-Haiphong area of North Vietnam—is one that no American can regard with equanimity. From Stockholm to Sydney, from Turtle Bay to Tokyo, reports of the bombing have been received with horror and nearly universal condemnation. Just across the border, the Canadian House of Commons has voted unanimously to deplore the United States action.

The respected French newspaper *Le Monde* called the raids an "abomination" and likened them to the Nazi bombing of Guernica. Japan's largest circulation daily, normally friendly to the United States, described this country as a "blinded giant," adding that "nothing is more grotesque" than Washington's claim that the attacks were aimed at establishing peace. In Buenos Aires, the attacks were labeled "genocide."

Secretary General Kurt Waldheim of the United Nations called in United States Ambassador Bush to voice his concern while at the Vatican Pope Paul VI expressed "profound bitterness over the all too many victims that this long conflict has reaped in either camp, and particularly those who were sacrificed in the recent frightful exacerbation of hostilities."

Premier Olof Palme of Sweden, who compared the blitz against North Vietnam with Nazi massacres of World War II, and the new Labor Prime Minister of Australia, Gough Whitlam, were the most verbally unrestrained official critics of the American action. The diplomatic rebuffs they received from Washington could not stifle the widespread belief that their comments reflected the unexpressed feelings of many of this country's closest friends and allies abroad.

Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany maintained a diplomatic silence but he was quoted by friends as saying he found the bombing policy "disgusting and unfathomable." In Britain, the usually restrained Labor Party leader Roy Jenkins, another strong friend of this country, described the aerial assault as "one of the most cold-blooded actions in recent history." French officialdom discretely muted its obvious disapproval in hope of preserving a useful mediating role in the revived negotiations but President Pompidou criticized the bombing before a diplomatic gathering.

The cessation of bombing north of the 20th Parallel and the resumption of peace talks today offer the United States a chance to begin to redeem itself in the eyes of the profoundly disillusioned and embittered world. It is an opportunity that must not be lost. The implications of this worldwide censure extend far beyond Indochina, vitally affecting this country's ability to lead its allies and others toward the generation of peace that President Nixon has repeatedly promised.