

## Journey Into Peace

The current Asian journey of Henry A. Kissinger will lay the groundwork for the future role of the United States in Indochina and its relations with the emerging powers across the Pacific. In signaling just how low will be the American profile in post-war Asia, Mr. Kissinger's nuances will be as important as his overview—and his hosts in Hanoi, Vientiane and Peking are not exactly novices in sensing nuance.

These governments should be assured from the start that the United States will accept, in conjunction with other developed nations, responsibilities for post-war rehabilitation and continuing economic development in a battle-scarred zone of the world.

Reconstruction aid to Vietnam, the central point on Mr. Kissinger's agenda, has become a knottier subject than many anticipated when President Johnson first offered it in 1965. There is strange opposition to post-war Vietnam aid in the Congress; hesitation to help rebuild North Vietnam's shattered cities and countryside is particularly unseemly when voiced by legislators who had been loudly articulate in moral outrage at the American bombardments which caused the damage.

For its part, the Executive branch will have to show good faith toward Congress when it comes to determining the amount of United States aid. President Nixon's budget has no provision for Vietnam aid; the Congress could fairly require this aid to be drawn from other budget items, particularly from the military budget, rather than be maneuvered into the position of raising taxes to meet America's moral—and, under the cease-fire agreements, legal—obligation.

Dangerous political problems attach to the provision of American aid in South Vietnam. Vice President Agnew's talks with President Thieu on this subject last week were defiantly secretive, feeding fears that the Administration will try to tailor its economic aid to the immediate political needs of the Thieu Government. If for no other reason than to quiet such suspicions, it would be wise to channel this country's South Vietnam aid through multilateral organizations as quickly as the machinery can be provided.

Equally disturbing are the hints that the Administration hopes to make rehabilitation aid to North Vietnam into a device for ensuring Hanoi's good behavior during the early months of cease-fire and political maneuvering. Time and again it has been demonstrated that such carrot-and-stick tactics against the North Vietnamese leadership will not work, and Hanoi officials have already spread the word that they will not accept any aid with political strings attached.

If Mr. Kissinger charts the immediate United States obligations to Vietnam after the war, it is in everyone's interests that longer-term rehabilitation and development be a responsibility shared among the great economic and political powers. The forthcoming Paris peace conference will be a good occasion to start planning multilateral aid machinery, with Japan participating as well as the United States, China, the Soviet Union and the United Nations.