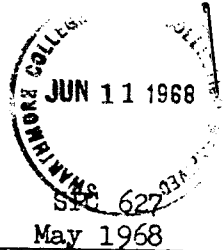


PEACE NEWS LETTER



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NEW DEPARTURES
in UNITED STATES
FOREIGN POLICY

was the theme of the Hon. John G. Dow, Member
of Congress for the 27th New York District, at
the S.P.C. Institute of International Relations.

Congressman Dow advocates the development of a new foreign policy for the United States, one that takes "into consideration the aspirations of the two billion people who live in the undeveloped portion of the world." In Asia, Africa, and South America there "is the revolution of rising expectations" which means "that in the next fifty or one hundred years the world in those areas is going to be in tumult. It's going to be a period and era of rebellion and difficulty because of the efforts of these people to help themselves."

People in these areas "just want something a mite better for their children than what they have known today. . . .they have a notion that the world is better and there are possibilities for them beyond the limits of the villages and places where they live."

The U.S. has failed "to perceive this general fact about the world" and consequently has gotten into difficulties in Vietnam. Vietnam has desired to be free from colonial domination as have other countries in Asia. But it did not happen "and those who represented the nationalism of the Vietnamese were betrayed. . . . in a series of events in which the United States had a hand."

Congressman Dow briefly reviewed the tragic series of events by which Vietnamese nationalism was betrayed by the Western Powers, and noted that the Geneva Accords, designed to solve the problem of Vietnam, were denied by the SEATO treaty under which the U.S. came to "regard South Vietnam as a special area" for our protection and possible intervention.

The American involvement accelerated after 1960 although the Geneva Accords permit us to have only 685 military people in South Vietnam. "At the same time that we were increasing these troops -- which was in contravention of the Geneva Accord which we had agreed to uphold -- at the same time we were accusing the North

Vietnamese of aggression -- aggression from the North. . . . There were some hundreds of North Vietnamese coming down into South Vietnam from North Vietnam. But the accepted definition of aggression in the United Nations and . . . the SEATO treaty is armed attack. . . . The appearance of the infiltrators with small arms. . . was really not any more aggression than the addition of American troops and . . . advisors. . . to the original 685 provided under the Geneva Accord." Those accused of aggression were 50% South Vietnamese, at least. "They were people who had been born in the South and had been stranded in North Vietnam after the French departure and they came back to South Vietnam into their own country. . . ."

Today Vietnam is a land "that requires a political solution, . . . an economic solution, . . . a social solution, . . . a moral solution, and all that we have offered is a military solution and that has failed. . . ." There has been little land reform and "corruption has not been cured in South Vietnam." Meanwhile extensive "devastation" has occurred with some two or three million of the sixteen million South Vietnamese being refugees in their own country. "And the pacification program has failed. . . ."

The worst evil of all is that the South Vietnamese do not have "a government of their own choice" but "live under a puppet government" and "the great aspiration for national self-realization . . . has been denied. . . . They don't have the opportunity to exert or express or believe in their own nationalism. And that is still . . . one reason why the Vietcong fight so much harder than the . . . South Vietnamese Army."

What, asked Congressman Dow, can we learn from the dismal experience of Vietnam? "If only we can learn a lesson from this situation it will save us from countless repetitions of the same occurrences in other countries as they take place again and again in the next few years as other rebellions develop in Africa and in South America and in Asia."

Basic to our difficulty "has been the almost paranoic hatred that exists in this country against communism. . . . This terrible hatred and fear. . . has been instrumental in leading us to this situation we are in in Vietnam. This hatred and fear is so severe and fierce in some of our people that it seems to justify anything we do in Vietnam. . . that what we do there is not subject to the normal measures of right and wrong" because against communism anything goes.

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But Communism is not "a sure fire success." Many African states) have freed themselves without becoming Communist. "Moreover, the Communist world is divided. . . .And not all revolutionaries are Communists. . . .Not all the revolutions are communist and it may be. . .that where the revolutions are more seriously opposed the people may turn to communism as a refuge." Unfortunately Americans assume that "every rebellion and every revolt and every effort of people on these three continents to do something to benefit themselves is colored with communism and we're obliged to stamp out communism. Then we're putting ourselves in the position of stamping out every rebellion, every revolution that is going to occur in the next century." This, suggested Congressman Dow, is impossible.

The few long range proposals for American foreign policy currently under discussion seem not to deal effectively with the roots of our problems. For example, the Navy has proposed a Fast Deployment Logistics vessels program which would facilitate supplying Marines airlifted to any part of the world to deal with outbreaks.

Moreover, the Gulf of Tonkin episode suggested that there was an "effort to generate trouble." If the Defense Department is capable of generating incidents, and has FDL vessels loaded with supplies, American intervention will be facilitated.

Positively, Congressman Dow offered three basic requisites for a new foreign policy. One, "we must find ways in all. . .countries to by-pass the overlay of profiteers, absentee landlords and military autocrats who obviously manage the power. . . ." Presently the State Department maintains we must support "the authorized government," that is, "the people in power." A Bolivian scholar at Columbia pointed out to Congressman Dow that in supporting existing regimes we are intervening in other countries, but "'mostly on the wrong side'" and "'there's no reason why you shouldn't use that same ability and that same capacity to intervene on the side of the masses of people who need your help.'"

Second, Congressman Dow recommends that more American aid be channeled to other countries through international agencies. It is quite likely that much of our present aid, channeled directly to particular countries, is used to influence beneficiary countries to follow "a course that we would like them to." South Koreans and Filipinos are fighting in South Vietnam in all probability because of the aid which their countries get from the United States.

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Third, the United States should avoid getting entangled "in local situations overseas." Vietnam makes clear that such entanglements place the United States at the mercy of small powers. "We have placed our destiny in a large measure at the mercy of decisions by a small leader of a small country, namely Ho Chi Minh. Apparently the whole fabric of American society must be shaken to bits in order to establish that we have held our own with Ho Chi Minh. This is an example of the folly of involvement in situations of which the complexity is beyond our ability."

NEGOTIATIONS: In a speech delivered on the floor of the House on April 30th, Congressman Dow expressed his hopes for "American disengagement" and his feelings that the negotiations should not be vested with euphoria. Two painful issues exist. One has to do with the participation of the Vietcong at the conference table. A second has to do with "the footing upon which the Saigon government participates."

Congressman Dow noted that in April, General Hershey indicated "that the draft will rise in this present 1968 fiscal year from a projected 285,000 to 346,900. A comparable increase is projected for 1969. This poses the question: Does our American Government really put faith in the negotiations themselves?"

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