

PEACE NEWS LETTER

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31 SYRACUSE PEACE COUNCIL'S 31st BIRTHDAY PARTY 31
31 Friday, January 27, 1967 -- Dinner 6:15 p.m.
31 First Presbyterian Parish House, 620 W. Genesee Street 31
31 The Whole World in Whose Hands? 31
31 with 31
31 NORMAN J. WHITNEY 31
31 who returned mid-December from a 5 months' world tour
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PRESTIGE: The Johnson Administration has frequently said that U. S. prestige would suffer if the nation did not stand firm on its commitments to the government of South Vietnam.

This assumption is questionable. Ray Gibbons, Director of the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ, attended the World Council of Churches Conference on Church and Society at Geneva last year. On his return, Mr. Gibbons reported that "fellow Christians" from other parts of the world were "nearly universal" in their criticism of United States armed conflict in Vietnam. Only South Korean delegates at Geneva "clearly favored United States policy."

During the past two summers, the editor has taught at Lakehead University, Port Arthur, Ontario. A reading of the Canadian Press, viewing Canadian Television, and conversing with informed Canadians--students, faculty, clergy, and plain people--make one aware that there are deep misgivings if not outright opposition to American policy.

Last summer two clergymen called my attention to the enclosed statement by the Rev. J. E. Hord, THE AMERICAN RAPE OF VIETNAM. Originally in mimeographed form, this statement was widely circulated in the United Church of Canada. It must be remembered that Mr. Hord is executive of the most influential Board of the largest Protestant

denomination in Canada. That Mr. Hord was not speaking to an un-receptive audience is attested to by the fact that in September, the General Council of the United Church of Canada (the top representative administrative body) adopted a resolution on Vietnam. In that resolution, North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front are criticized for their acts of terrorism in South Vietnam. The United States comes in for more severe criticism for its use of Napalm, Chemicals, and Heavy Bombing in both North and South Vietnam.

FURTHER COMMENTS ON PRESTIGE SANE sponsored an anti-war rally in Madison Square Garden on December 8th. Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish Social Scientist, spoke on "The Vietnam War and the Political and Moral Isolation of America." We are indebted to I. F. Stone's Weekly (12/19/66) for these excerpts.

"There is not a single government in Western Europe which would dare send a squad of soldiers to Vietnam as a symbolic gesture of sympathy with the U. S.

"Sweden is one of the very few countries where there is not a trace of basic anti-Americanism. But over the Vietnam issue the overwhelming majority of Swedish opinion is sharply critical. Only 8% think America is doing the right thing in Vietnam. In Sweden we have a fairly large armaments industry to make ourselves independent. To keep this industry efficient we need to export armaments. But there is government control, so that armament exports do not go to active disturbers of peace. The Swedish government now includes the U. S. in this group. To allow Swedish-produced weapons to be used in Vietnam would have outraged Swedish opinion.

"The U. S. government might have sympathizers for its war in Vietnam among the ruling whites in Rhodesia and South Africa. But in all the poor and colored nations in Africa, however much they need financial assistance, I know of no government or articulate individual who can be counted as a supporter of the Vietnam policy of the U.S. I believe the same is true of Latin America. The U. S. tries to create an image at home that it has trusted allies in 'Free Asia.' The truth is that [these are] 'client governments'..."

THE POLITICS OF ESCALATION IN VIETNAM is the title of a recent book, the authors of which are Franz Schurmann, Chairman of the Center for Chinese Studies; Peter Dale Scott, English Department; and Reginald Zelnik, History Department, all of the University of California at Berkeley. The authors were assisted by

other scholars at the University of California at Berkeley and at Washington University in St. Louis.

As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. says in the Foreword: "After a close examination of the relationship between diplomatic and military action in Vietnam in the years since the overthrow of Diem, the authors believe they have found a pattern in United States policy. The chief American moves to widen the war, they contend, seem to have come at times of particular pressure for negotiation; and our own gestures toward negotiation seem to have preceded, or even cloaked, steps toward our larger military involvement. Their conclusion is that our government has appeared to regard the possibility of a negotiated solution more as a threat than as a promise."

The Politics of Escalation is available for 60¢ in the Fawcett paperback edition.

IS ESCALATION
STILL THE
PATTERN? During November and early December international pressures for negotiations began to increase once more. Hanson Baldwin, Military Affairs editor of the NEW YORK TIMES wrote (12/17/66):

"Without public announcement, the military pressure upon North Vietnam is being slowly increased.

"This is the opinion of well-informed military officers in Washington. They noted that some of the restrictions on target selection and on other aspects of the air and sea operations against North Vietnam have been gradually lifted...

"Military observers have noted, too, that targets of key importance--very close to Hanoi... -- have been bombed for the first time recently...

"The recent extension of the Navy's destroyer patrol against North Vietnamese coastal shipping to 78 miles north of the 17th Parallel... was also considered indicative of the trend toward a slow but definite increase of pressure against the North. The trend is expected to continue, and targets hitherto immune to bombing or to naval gunfire will probably be struck in the future, though without prior announcement and with no public emphasis."

THE U. S. On December 19, Ambassador Goldberg wrote Mr. Thant
AND and asked him to "use every means at your disposal
U-THANT to determine what tangible response there would be
 from North Vietnam in the wake of such a prior step
toward peace on our part."

On December 30, U. N. Secretary-General U-Thant replied. He said, in part: the overall situation is one "in which a powerful nation like the United States should take the initiative in the quest for peace and show an enlightened and humanitarian spirit. I believe that, in the circumstances, only action deliberately undertaken in such a spirit which, because of its power and position, the United States can afford to undertake, can halt the escalation and enlargement of this war, and thus bring about a turning of the tide towards peace." U-Thant then reiterated his three point program for peace, the first of which demands "the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam."

On January 1st, Mr. Goldberg replied. The key passage seems to be the following:

"We have carefully reflected on your ideas... about the cessation of bombing of North Vietnam... I wish to assure you categorically that my Government is prepared to take the first step toward peace: specifically, we are ready to order a prior end to all bombing of North Vietnam the moment there is an assurance, private or otherwise, that there would be a reciprocal response toward peace from North Vietnam." (Emphasis supplied.)

It would appear that the U.S. has imposed an important condition which prevents negotiations towards a cease-fire. However, the National Council of Churches suggests that the Goldberg letter was approved by the President against the advice of important military and political advisers.

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