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VIETNAM—CRISIS OF INDECISION

Mr. MONDALE. Mr. President, I would invite the attention of Senators to what I think is a stimulating article on the terribly difficult and divisive subject of Vietnam.

Writing in the October issue of Foreign Affairs, Robert Shaplen entitles his article "Vietnam: Crisis of Indecision." In it, he concentrates on the possibilities of a political settlement of the conflict there, providing both a review of the developing and present political forces in South Vietnam and some suggestions for taking advantage of them.

I found the conclusion of his article particularly interesting in view of the obvious escalation of emotion in this body and the Nation concerning the war. He says:

If Vietnam has been a tragic and often misconstrued chapter of this American commitment and involvement (in Asia), the trend toward withdrawal and neo-isolationism, which has become the confused domestic political by-product of the conflict, does not either represent a practical solution or augur well for acceptance of our unavoidable responsibilities in a world that remains highly combustible and revolutionary.

The article contains much that is speculative in its discussion of possibilities for political developments within South Vietnam and among the various structures of power involved in the war, but I believe it adds an important perspective to our consideration of this vital matter.

Mr. Shaplen is the east Asia correspondent of the New Yorker and former Newsweek bureau chief in Shanghai. I ask unanimous consent that his article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VIETNAM: CRISIS OF INDECISION

(By Robert Shaplen)

As the war in Viet Nam moves well into the third year of the major phase that began early in 1965 with the deployment of large numbers of American troops, there are indications that the long and difficult conflict is in a state of irresolution, or what the communists describe as "indecisiveness." This does not mean stalemate, a word Washington officials rightly reject, since the military contest on the ground remains highly fluid and damaging to both sides, while the population and economy of North Viet Nam, subject as they are to an ever-widening pattern of bombing, are obviously being hurt (reports from the North say that half a million persons, including perhaps 100,000 Chinese, are now engaged in repairing the bomb damage). In South Viet Nam, American troops and their foreign allies, and occasionally the South Vietnamese, are continuing to win some major battles and with the help of coordinated tactical air, heavy bombing and artillery attacks are inflicting heavy casualties on the communists.

Despite these losses by attrition, however, and despite their acknowledged difficulties in replenishing their guerrilla ranks, the communists have held their own, are still able to strike back effectively, and have managed over the last six months, through continued infiltration from the North and some recruitment in the South, to increase their total number of men fighting in South Viet Nam from 260,000 to approximately 300,000, of whom some 60,000 at present are North Vietnamese. According to accounts of pris-

oners and defectors, as many as two-thirds of the four or five thousand men being infiltrated each month in small units into South Viet Nam are being lost within a period of months, through bombing of infiltration routes, as a result of illness (chiefly malaria or intestinal disorders) or in battle. Nevertheless, the replacements keep filtering through the Laos corridor, and in addition the North Vietnamese have committed as many as three full divisions at a time across the Demilitarized Zone for action in the First Corps area, the northernmost part of South Viet Nam; elsewhere, the communists have shown signs of shifting their strategy and tactics and of being less prone to engage in large-unit actions—company-size or better—unless, in their calculation, they either have the advantage of superior strength or total surprise, or unless special circumstances seem to warrant the risks. Their basic weapons, mainly of the Chinese-manufactured 7.62 millimeter family, are as good as or better than ever, and as plentiful, in spite of increasing losses of guns in battle and the Allied capture of some large ammunition caches, while their recent employment of sophisticated Russian howitzers, artillery, mortar and rockets, especially in the area just south of the D.M.Z., has enabled them to retaliate in kind for some of the artillery and bombing punishment they have suffered.

The American response to this sustained communist challenge has undergone some adjustments and alterations of its own as it has become apparent that the Allied momentum of 1965 and 1966 has slowed down and that, notwithstanding their superior firepower and mobility, the Allies cannot provide a knockout blow in 1967 any more than the communists were able to achieve such a blow two years ago. Faced with obligations elsewhere in the world, and eager to avoid having to call up reserves, President Johnson and Secretary of Defense McNamara, despite some hawkish pressure from high-ranking members of the military establishment and of Congress, have limited the additional troops likely to be sent to General Westmoreland this year and early next to two reinforced divisions.

Even if the Koreans and Australians add some more troops, if the South Vietnamese increase their draft calls, thereby building up a total Allied force of some 1.3 million, the war on the ground is not likely to be anything but "indecisive." The communists cannot be expected to fall below the 1:4 ratio of total strength, and the ratio is actually less since a larger proportion of their men is engaged in fighting. In other respects, most importantly in organization of the countryside, the Viet Cong are still considerably ahead of the South Vietnamese. In the murky area of pacification and revolutionary development, after several years of repeated experimentation and reorganization, progress on the government side is still excruciatingly slow. There is a belated awareness that the regular South Vietnamese forces (ARVN) will probably never be galvanized and motivated into providing proper security for the revolutionary development teams, and that the job should be given to the local or Popular Forces, who are to be paid more money (they are still by far the poorest paid of all Vietnamese troops) and given better weapons. This overdue step may slowly improve the situation, but most observers with long experience in Viet Nam have become thoroughly skeptical that the pacification program, under the present complicated and fragmented social-economic and political-military dispensation in the country will ever really get off the ground. Consequently, there has been a shift in thinking and a new concentration on improving certain aspects of the political situation, which is at least more flexible if also more explosive. An improvement politically

should all along have been a parallel objective to successful pacification and revolutionary development, which together define a good counterinsurgency program; but unfortunately it has not worked out that way.

If there are some Americans, including some in the highest places who still believe that the war can be won militarily, or that at least the government in Hanoi can be forced by bombing and by military pressure in the South to come to the conference table, there are increasing numbers who now feel that the way to bring the conflict to an end is through political accommodation in South Viet Nam. This trend of thinking coincides with signs of a new line of thought among the North Vietnamese. While so far they show no indication of giving up or diminishing their commitment, the communist leaders directing the war effort are beginning to talk more and more, as captured documents reveal, of reaching that "indecisive" period when it will pay them to start "fighting while negotiating." General Nguyen Van Vinh, chairman of the National Reunification Commission of North Viet Nam, which directs the war in the South, still speaks of achieving "decisive victory within the next four years," but he has frequently modified this by declaring that "our policy is to continue fighting until such time as we can fight and negotiate at the same time" and has added that "while negotiating we will continue fighting even more vigorously." Vinh, further, has emphasized that "it is possible that the North will conduct negotiations while the South continues fighting, and that the South will also participate in negotiations while continuing to fight."

It seems likely that these possible courses of action were high on the agenda of discussion during the July meeting in Hanoi of North Vietnamese diplomatic representatives summoned home from their posts. Another topic that undoubtedly came up concerned the future relationship between Hanoi and its South Vietnamese offspring, the National Liberation Front, which it dominates and controls more thoroughly than ever but which nevertheless still contains non-Northern and even non-communist elements. Inevitably, if the fighting-while-negotiating phase is coming closer, the position of the N.L.F., which Hanoi has always alleged is an independent entity, will become crucial; Hanoi will have to face the problem of maintaining tight controls over the Front while simultaneously pretending to give it a looser rein. Finally, the July meeting in Hanoi and continuing discussions among North Vietnamese Communist leaders have surely been concerned with the critical national manpower and resupply problems created by the bombing; these are directly related to the complicated question of Chinese internal disorder and to China's capacity and willingness to continue sending unlimited help to North Viet Nam, primarily guns and bullets, without obtaining a pledge from Hanoi favoring Peking over Moscow in the ideological split and promising to go on fighting and not to negotiate—a pledge Hanoi is loath to give.

It is apparent that the North Vietnamese are becoming increasingly upset by the effects the Peking-Moscow clash is having on the prosecution of the war. "We are worried," General Vinh has bluntly admitted, and Le Duan, the Lao Dong (Workers) Party chairman, has declared that the large commitment of United States forces was encouraged by the American realization that "the foreseeable situation would not drive them into becoming involved in a major limited war which required that they cope with the strong reaction of the entire Socialist bloc." Recently, the North Vietnamese have criticized Chinese theoretical thinking about "revisionism," which is described as "too extreme," as well as Chinese strategy and tactics of prolonged "wars of liberation." Gen-

eral Vinh has said, undoubtedly without having first consulted the Russian, "The Soviet Union will support us under all conditions, whether we fight, or negotiate, or fight and negotiate," and has added: "China gives us wholehearted support, but she has weak points," including her "technical ability [which] is inferior to that of the Soviet Union." More and more, the North Vietnamese are stressing their old theme of tough "self-reliance." Reading between the lines, it would seem that Hanoi's careful balancing act between Moscow and Peking, which it has managed to carry on for years, may by necessity be undergoing some revamping; events may force the North Vietnamese to make some sort of choice, or at least a shift, and this is likely to determine what they do about any and all forms of negotiation.

In this context, there are three levels on which negotiations, or steps leading toward negotiations while some fighting in South Viet Nam continues, could take place, beginning either early next year, possibly during and after the annual Tet (New Year's) holiday, or perhaps not until after the November 1968 American Presidential election. (The election in the United States remains another important factor in Hanoi's overall calculation. If the communists decide to gamble on the mounting American debate and confusion, and to wait until after the election to negotiate, they will naturally have to reconsider the other factors enumerated above, especially any drastic change in their relations with China.)

The first of the three levels may be described as "local and political." In certain areas, a series of covert approaches might be made by South Vietnamese hamlet and village representatives to members of the Front or the People's Revolutionary Party, the southern political arm of the Lao Dong; these approaches might be followed by formal or, as is more likely initially, informal discussions and arrangements. Their ultimate objective would be the holding of new hamlet and village elections in South Viet Nam in which *all* local elements would participate; but such elections would follow a period of mutual reconciliation worked out autonomously within the village and hamlet areas concerned, with as little outside interference as possible from higher echelons of either side.

The second level of negotiations might involve discussions between Hanoi and the Front on one side and the Americans and the Saigon government on the other, and they might be engendered and facilitated in one of the many ways suggested over the last two years, either privately or publicly; such negotiations conceivably would deal with some of the basic questions such as an end to the bombing, withdrawals of troops on both sides, etc.

The third level would bring the United States and the Soviet Union into the picture together, and perhaps others, as guarantors of an agreement. The effect of such negotiations, whether they were conducted at another Geneva conference or somewhere else, would be to strengthen the hand of the Russians in North Viet Nam and leave the Americans with a role of some influence in South Viet Nam. For the moment anyway, in view of the havoc in China, the Chinese would be effectively squeezed out, which might produce some loud propaganda screams and intensify the heat of the Moscow-Peking dispute, but not much else. Since a primary objective of both the Americans and the Russians is to persuade Hanoi to disentangle itself from Peking, which despite the strong pro-Peking sentiments among some North Vietnamese leaders may not now be as difficult as it would have been a year or so ago, a joint Russian-American move, if properly timed and executed, would no doubt contain the Chinese and restrain them from taking any rash steps that could provoke a larger

war, such as a "spontaneous" eruption of Chinese troops across the North Vietnamese border. The purpose of the Russian-American détente would be the creation of an effective Vietnamese buffer zone. A further step might then be the neutralization of other parts of Southeast Asia, starting with Cambodia and Laos, both of which would be only too willing to accept this.

There is nothing to suggest that negotiations on these three levels must proceed separately, although it would seem logical that the first level must start first. At some point during the period of "fighting and negotiating" at the same time, while the first-level accommodations were being attempted, the second and even the third negotiatory level might be reached; it would seem practical, if not in fact unavoidable, that the first two levels should sooner or later be conducted simultaneously. However, for the purposes of discussion here, the three levels, and the possibilities they suggest of ending the war, will be taken up one at a time.

II

Any possibility of local arrangements between pro-Saigon and pro-Viet Cong elements in the South Vietnamese countryside must presuppose two related conditions: the existence of a government in Saigon led by civilians who have the respect of all South Vietnamese, including at least potentially that of the five million living in Viet Cong-controlled areas, and a consequent willingness on the part of the local leaders of these five million to begin a series of selective dialogues. At this writing, it is impossible to predict what the effect of the September Presidential and Senatorial elections in South Viet Nam will be. Whether or not the military ticket headed by General Nguyen Van Thieu and Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky has been elected, the key man remains Tran Van Huong, who has been the leading civilian candidate for President. Those Vietnamese who are eager to settle the war through accommodation—and they include almost all civilian leaders and the majority of the population—believe that Huong, if not as President then as the chosen Prime Minister, has the best chance of prosecuting a peace plan. Although he is not physically strong and is not always forceful in action, Huong, a southerner, which is important in itself for purposes of negotiation, is firm in his convictions, and more importantly he is respected for his honesty and integrity and for his dedication to the cause of seeking peace without selling out to the communists. He is for accommodation and for free elections, which ultimately might produce a pro-communist or strongly neutralist President, but he is against any premature coalition government, which surely would have that effect. He is said to favor a gradual approach to peace, locally and then regionally.

If Huong, or anyone else, is to succeed in this pursuit, the military must be held in check. This will be difficult to do unless the United States is determined finally to use its influence and leverage to restrain the generals, individually and collectively, and to give the civilians a chance to *try* accommodation. What Huong or another civilian leader would require, in effect, is a guarantee from the United States that his position would be safeguarded from coups or demerits of the sort that early in 1965 forced Huong himself out of office after he had been Prime Minister for three months. Since the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu in November 1963, which Washington promoted and helped execute, the United States has been signally unsuccessful in the use of its leverage to influence important political decisions and events in South Viet Nam. The next few months may offer the last chance. The only other option short of withdrawal is to go on prosecuting the war through further gradual or rapid escalation to force a military decision. The

search for peace, when it comes, might then include some of the same efforts at accommodation, but they would be much harder to pursue in an atmosphere of more despair, bitterness and recrimination.

If a decent and respected and unmolested civilian government can be established in Saigon, supported by an alert and active Senate (and a similar House of Representatives to be elected early in November), how could it proceed to deal with local Viet Cong elements? One must here begin with some other assumptions. The most important of these is that Viet Cong cadres in enough key areas could be persuaded that the alternatives offered by the Saigon representatives are worth their attention.

The Viet Cong would have to believe that the opportunities to maintain a voice for themselves in the countryside, through participation in local elections and otherwise, would be worth more than maintaining a series of shadow governments while the fighting-and-negotiating continued, with the possibility of resuming prolonged and painful guerrilla warfare of course always in the back of their minds. They would have to be further persuaded that, even though many if not most of them have been well-disciplined communists, the chance to be "legal" at the low levels, and to compete more openly than clandestinely with Saigon's representatives, warrants their cooperation. To turn this around, realistically, it should be said that the impact the Viet Cong have had in the rural areas will not easily be eliminated, no matter how and when the war ends. While it is true that the communists have lost some of their popularity in the areas they hold as a result of higher taxes, rougher treatment of the local population, including conscription, food controls and so on, it is also true that the government's image through the revolutionary development program and in other ways has not come through nearly strongly nor widely enough to compensate for the essentially low regard in which the great majority of government agents are still held; these include tax collectors, the police, district and province chiefs, and individual officers and soldiers, not to mention profiteers and landlords who still engage in widespread corruption and have resumed their own tax collections whenever they can return to cleared local areas behind the skirts of government troops.

The Viet Cong cadres who might be persuaded to participate in new local elections, starting in the hamlets, would, under any circumstances, be making a calculated gamble. They are still ahead of the government in the areas they control, and would conceivably be enticed by the prospect of gaining more initially in the indeterminate and government-controlled places. A contest and a race against time would develop, and the best thing that Saigon under pressure, would have going for itself is the establishment, finally of a viable constitutional government whose popularity would increase in direct ratio to its ability to continue gaining the support and respect of the peasantry. This might be enhanced in various ways, including the proper implementation of the new local election regulations already in effect which call for villages to retain 40 percent of what they collect in local taxes for their own use, instead of turning everything over to the districts and provinces. An immediate reevaluation of the policy on land rents would be another way of gaining popular support. It is a fact, as has recently been brought out, that the abolition or lowering of rent collections would be more meaningful to the peasants right now than the parceling out of former French or Vietnamese holdings; much of this land, along with church or communally held properties, is tied up in a vast confusion of ownership claims and general bureaucratic red tape, and it will take years to clear all this up.

The willingness of the local Viet Cong cadres (a good number of whom have been disillusioned and whose lives have been deeply disrupted by the ever-increasing violence of the war) to cooperate in a new program of hamlet self-rule would also depend on various intangible factors. The native cadres, residents of their areas since birth or for many years, would have to be convinced that by going along with Saigon's "opening to the left" they would not only preserve hamlet and village self-determination as they see it, but as it is part of the historic Vietnamese tradition of local autonomy.

The local cadres who have been most politically active on a day-by-day, week-by-week and month-by-month basis are the nuts and bolts of the Viet Cong and the National Liberation Front machine, and the control exercised over them by the People's Revolutionary Party, while it has been severe, has been in the nature of a steel hood placed over an engine composed of many small parts. Conceivably, the parts could be stirred below the hood. There is another factor: the local cadres would have to be further persuaded to gamble for the chance to maintain their own southern image, in cooperation with a southern-led Saigon government, against the threat by the North to impose its rule. There seems little doubt that the southern cadres, no matter how thoroughly indoctrinated with communism they have been, and how well disciplined, still resent being ordered about in the execution of their revolutionary duties by northern political and military officers. The fact remains, while the southerners may think in terms of ultimate reunification with the North, there is a strong tradition of southern separatism and a desire to retain a southern identity, and to develop and complete the revolution in the South prior to discussing unity. This tradition and thrust of southern revolutionary independence dates back to the 1930s. Can local nationalist and regional expression now be reinvigorated as part of a movement toward peace? Can the true nationalists in South Viet Nam, including among others, a considerable number of Socialists ideologically independent of both Moscow and Peking and a number of peasant labor-union cadres, be projected into the political maelstrom and given a chance to play meaningful roles among the peasantry? These may prove to be the most significant questions as the coming crisis of peace and war unfolds, and they obviously offer challenges and opportunities to both sides.

III

If the attempt to reach local accommodations looking chiefly toward new elections is at all successful, a number of by-products would soon create situations of a second-level negotiatory nature. These would include the opening of some hostile or contested areas to access by both sides; that is, district heretofore available only to the Viet Cong would become available to government representatives, and vice versa. The regional flow of local trade would increase, and communication in and out of areas generally would become more possible. Refugees could return to their homes. It would be illusory to suppose that some degree of clandestine activity of a proselytizing nature would not continue on both sides, but this would be acceptable if the incidence of terror and assassination could be limited. The possibility of establishing local cease-fire zones suggests itself as the best way to achieve a balance of power instead of a balance of terror.

The creation of cease-fire zones would almost certainly have to be negotiated between higher authorities, between regimental or division commanders on the government side, for example, and communist zone commanders. The cease-fires might have to have the approval of even higher authorities, including central government officials in Saigon and

representatives of the National Liberation Front, acting on its own behalf or as the "branch office" of Hanoi, though it would not admit to being that. Actually, there are numbers of areas in Viet Nam today where tacit cease-fires already exist between communist and government forces, each agreeing to leave the other alone, so a framework of such accommodation has been established.

Whether Hanoi would condone a formalization of such cease-fires without the Americans first calling off the bombing of the North is surely doubtful. And whether the Americans would call off the bombing without evidence that Hanoi had ceased infiltrating reinforcements south is problematical. At this point, the bombing issues might become a matter of negotiation between the United States and North Viet Nam, or, if not yet of full negotiation, of probings or even of tentative acts of faith. In the meantime, in any event, it would not be supposed that all military activity would have ceased in the South. In fact, American search-and-destroy operations against communist main-force elements would probably have continued all along, and would probably still go on even as small cease-fire zones or truce areas were established. But the way might now be cleared to enter into the major second-level area of discussion, including cessation of bombing in the South as well as the North, and the bombing question as a whole would thus become more of a tactical instrument in the large strategy of the search for peace and not simply an almost irresolvable issue in itself. The difficulty of calling off the bombing in return for some significant large act of de-escalation on the part of the North Vietnamese, such as an abrupt end to infiltration, would thus be eliminated, or reduced to a more workable perspective. Social psychologists have aptly pointed out that too broad and unspecified a "behavior" has been requested of the North Vietnamese in order to achieve too broad and unspecified a goal, and the longer such demands are made the more difficult it becomes to attain that goal. By breaking the goal down into lesser goals, attainable step by step, the ultimate goal might become more realizable.

This does not, for a moment, mean compromising with our primary goals, foremost of which is our insistence that the territorial and political integrity of South Viet Nam, and for that matter of North Viet Nam too, be preserved and guaranteed. However, the Americans and the South Vietnamese must take certain risks as well as the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese, for under any circumstances, especially during a period of fighting and negotiating at the same time, politics, to reverse the classic formula, is simply a means of waging war by other means. Nor is there any reason to suppose that, whatever happens, the North Vietnamese Communists will give up their efforts to subvert South Viet Nam to their own purposes through a phased social-economic and "national democratic" revolution in the South aimed at ultimately building a single nation of some thirty million people. Our objective is to limit the scope and possibilities of subversion by imposing a workable legal framework, and then to convince as many local southern communists as possible that this framework offers them the best opportunity for the welfare and development of South Viet Nam.

The North Vietnamese themselves have declared that the existence of a communist state in the North "cannot replace the inherent social contradictions of South Viet Nam." An approach of gradualism in the rural areas is obviously best calculated to create conditions for challenging local Viet Cong cadres to a true revolutionary contest. If this groundwork can be laid, suggestions have been made that the establishment of an increasing number of cease-fires accom-

panied by political accommodation be then tied to a reduction of the bombing of the North on the basis of a phasing down of the attacks. For example, the United States would agree not to bomb certain parts of the North or to halt all bombing north of certain lines, unless violations of the cease-fires in the South occurred. This idea has already had some currency, most recently in the recommendation of a group of Republican Congressmen. It seems unwise to couch any such offer in terms of punishment for violations, although that is what it might amount to, or to place any formal deadlines on it. At some point, perhaps halfway through the process of establishing cease-fire areas in the South, as the selected zones have been extended to a number of important delta provinces and to some key provinces elsewhere, and perhaps the bombing within these provinces as well as in at least part of the North has been cut down, an effort might be made to create two larger cease-fire zones involving both major American search-and-destroy units and communist main-force elements. One logical zone would be within the D.M.Z. and in an area extending south of it for a stretch of at least ten miles; the projected electronic detection barrier to be built by the United States might fit into this plan. The second zone ostensibly could take in an area stretching east from the Cambodian border in the Third Corps region and eventually could extend across the highlands and plateau to the coastal provinces of Quang Nhai, Binh Dinh and Phu Yen.

It is perfectly possible, if not likely, that the North Vietnamese would not go along with any gradual reduction of the bombing and would still insist, as they have all along, that the bombing be stopped completely before any discussions can start. However, if the United States dropped its insistence on a positive and specific reciprocal gesture—namely, a cessation of infiltration from the North—the above plan would stand a better chance. The dangers of permitting infiltration to continue while the plan is being launched are not nearly as great as the advantages that would accrue from a gradual extension of the cease-fire zones, since infiltration, by itself, is more the effect than the cause of the continuing war; for the real cause is the determination of Hanoi and the Viet Cong to go on fighting at the current level of activity or to revert to action somewhere between phase one and phase two. The time to bring up the question of infiltration and the total end of the bombing of the North, as well as the extension of the cease-fire throughout South Viet Nam, would come when the plan had succeeded up to the point of reducing the level of action sufficiently to warrant the hope that an overall agreement might be negotiated. It might even be argued that if there are enough hopeful signs as the process unfolds, the United States could end the bombing unconditionally even before the third level of the negotiatory process gets under way.

IV

If the process of local accommodation accompanied by the establishment of cease-fire zones has even been partially successful, with Hanoi as well as the Viet Cong accepting the challenge, third-level discussions would serve to enlarge the scope and portent of the peace plan. It is at this juncture that the role of the Russians, as adjudicators and as persuaders of Hanoi, would be of paramount importance. The initial spirit and purpose of the 1962 Geneva Conference that sought to neutralize Laos could here perhaps be recaptured. There is no reason to doubt the desire of the Russians to bring an end to the war in Viet Nam, and no reason to suppose that they would not, at this point, join with the Americans in diplomatic manoeuvres to encourage and facilitate a broader agreement. As stated earlier, the mechanics and techniques of such an approach are best left to the parties concerned.

It would, however, seem advisable to project an agreement on Viet Nam as much as possible into a larger Southeast Asian context, and to bring Cambodia and Laos, and possibly some other nations of the region, into the ultimate discussions, wherever they are held. In so far as possible, the earlier stages of such discussions, of establishing and exploring contacts, should be secret. And certainly the talks, when they begin in earnest, should not aim at the exclusion of the Chinese; in fact, at the opportune time the Chinese should be assured that their participation in the economic development of Southeast Asia is welcomed, and that both the United States and the Soviet Union are eager to discuss such larger problems as nuclear disarmament in cooperation with China. The settlement of the Viet Nam issue, once Peking is forced to accept the idea of a Vietnamese buffer state, may yet prove the way for a larger accommodation with China, unless, of course, that country by then is convulsed in civil war.

A broad Geneva-type conference, if it develops out of initial private soundings and arrangements, would obviously have to deal with the difficult matter of policing any agreement reached. It is the writer's opinion that almost any policing plan that would include such straightjacketed mechanisms as the International Control Commission is doomed to failure. Not only would the present members of the I.C.C., if they are retained, end up in bickering and in vetoing of each other's purposes and prerogatives, but they conceivably would tend to exacerbate friction among the Vietnamese seeking to resolve their own problems.

What the Viet Nam situation desperately demands is a more free revolutionary expression of its own ethos, something which, during the long and tragic postwar period when the French refused to let go in the South, was denied it, and which, under Diem and since, has continued to be precluded. If the South is to rediscover its own revolutionary traditions, and to preserve or modify them in relation to the communist North, it must be as unmolested and even as unsupervised as possible. This naturally involves risks of communist domination or subversion, but the risks must be taken in a true revolutionary atmosphere and milieu, and not under the gaze of an ineffective international police element.

This does not mean that the Americans and the Russians and possibly other powers should not play a role, but in so far as possible the role should be of a "good offices" nature. A Geneva-type conference might properly define the purpose of such a mission, and the United Nations might underwrite it. It could project its own mechanism for action, either if called upon by the Vietnamese or perhaps on the basis of its own readings of the unfolding situation in Viet Nam, as a result of which it might interpose suggestions for resolving potential or actual issues and quarrels. There remain some substantive preliminary matters that should rightfully be considered and acted upon at a conference. These include the phased withdrawal of troops from South Viet Nam, both American and North Vietnamese, the surrender of as many weapons as can feasibly be uncovered in the villages during the prolonged cease-fires (obviously some weapons will always remain hidden), the dismantling of bases or the procedure for turning them over to the Vietnamese, the reestablishment of fuller trade and communication between North and South Viet Nam, and perhaps the selection of a date, no less than five years away, for the holding of a referendum on reunification. The implementation of a Mekong Valley development program, the benefits of which, as President Johnson has pledged, would extend to North Viet Nam, could also logically be brought within the purview of a broad agreement that genuine-

ly concerned itself with the future of all of Southeast Asia.

None of this is meant, furthermore, to deny or exclude considerations of power or influence. The often stated determination of the United States to remain involved in Southeast Asian affairs is one that this writer strongly shares, though the commitment today is confused and undefined. Such involvement unavoidably requires the existence of a military shield. There would appear to be ample reason to reapproach this matter with a fresh set of ideas and to replace the somewhat tarnished Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) with something more acceptable to the Asians and perhaps more palatable to at least part of the neutral and unaligned if not the communist world. To expect that this might become part of a larger Russian-American accommodation is too much, and is illusory or naive for Moscow cannot afford to renounce its own concept of revolutionary development and will undoubtedly continue to project it in competition with Peking. We cannot realistically assume anything otherwise. However, we can operate in the hope that a peaceful contest for influence in Southeast Asia, on behalf of nationalist development in revolutionary terms, will prevail; though it would also be naive to presume that the Chinese will not continue their efforts to disrupt such peaceful evolution by fomenting violence in Thailand, the Philippines and again in Indonesia. The effort, on our part, should nevertheless be designed to encourage as much peaceful development as possible, and, if that proves ineffective or insufficient, to promote successful programs of counter-insurgency.

Whatever impetus to regional cooperation develops out of a Vietnamese settlement—such cooperation is already burgeoning in several fields, such as education, transportation, banking and finance—should not be inhibited by threats or interpositions of major military might from any outside source, including the United States. Once the Viet Nam situation is regulated, the security of the area will nevertheless depend in the immediate future on the existence of a protective shield supplied in large part by the United States, with the help of Australia and perhaps a lingering British contribution. In the final analysis, the degree of American determination to support nationalist development in Viet Nam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and to back up its support with its multifarious resources, will prove the key factor, politically and economically more than militarily. One of the generally unrealized benefits of the war in Viet Nam has been an awareness on the part of Asian leaders—as best expressed so far by Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew—that the United States has bought time in Viet Nam for the rest of Southeast Asia to get together and avoid another Viet Nam. The success of the American commitment in the future will depend on our inner resolve, on our understanding of the area's problems and potentialities, as well as on our patience and willingness to remain "involved" indefinitely.

If Viet Nam has been a tragic and often misconstrued chapter of this American commitment and involvement, the trend toward withdrawal and neo-isolationism, which has become the confused domestic political by-product of the conflict, does not either represent a practical solution or augur well for acceptance of our unavoidable responsibilities in a world that remains highly combustible and revolutionary. The crisis of indecision that confronts us in Viet Nam has simply prolonged and aggravated the confusion, and has made it more difficult to deal with the long-term problems of creating a constructive peace in Southeast Asia. Whatever the risks involved, we now must face up to the "indecisiveness" of the war and attempt, as best we can with the best elements

among the Vietnamese we can find, to reach a political solution for a war that has always been essentially political.

TOUCH OF TRAGEDY IN ANTI-BALLISTIC-MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM

Mr. McGEE. Mr. President, as the Chicago Sun-Times said in an editorial comment upon this Nation's decision to undertake an anti-ballistic-missile defense system, there is a touch of tragedy involved. It lies in the fact that such a system, designed to guard us against possible attack by the unstable Chinese nation, can be effective in neutralizing the danger of nuclear holocaust but not the danger of continued guerrilla warfare as practiced by Mao Tse-tung and his followers.

This is not to say that such sophisticated defenses are not needed. Indeed, as this editorial aptly points up, the need for nuclear weapons and deterrents against their use will remain with us so long as the battle for men's minds and world security is not won. It is that battle in which we are now engaged, of course, in Southeast Asia.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sun-Times editorial, entitled "Escalation for Safety," published on September 20, 1967, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ESCALATION FOR SAFETY

The U.S. decision to build an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense network to guard against a nuclear attack from Red China is significant in two areas. It recognizes the growing threat of Red China's nuclear weapon capacity. It acknowledges that the United States is confident that Russia, and its nuclear armory, poses no present threat to world peace.

Sec. of Defense Robert S. McNamara, in announcing the new ABM network, made the point that neither the United States nor Russia possesses "first-strike capability." That is, neither nation has the ability to attack the other with nuclear weapons without suffering lethal retaliation. Nor, in McNamara's assessment, is either nation likely ever to gain such an advantage.

McNamara says both Russia and the United States are at the point where an escalation of defenses or weaponry by either nation would result in matching escalation by the other. In McNamara's opinion such an effort, which would result in the same balance of deterrence that now exists, would be futile—although the United States is willing to spend any amount of money and effort to protect itself.

The unknown danger to the United States and the world is Red China. Isolated, suspicious, torn by internal dissensions, possibly irresponsible, Red China and its future actions cannot be charted. Its animosities cannot be assessed. Its potential for destruction has been computed. McNamara said a limited ABM defense against the Red Chinese nuclear weapons armory would have a "higher degree of reliability against a Chinese attack than the much more massive and complicated system some have recommended against a possible Soviet attack." The proposed ABM network is thus a necessary effort to safeguard the future.

The tragedy of such a necessity is that a major power can guard itself and others against nuclear attack with the most sophis-