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LOOKING BACK ON A TRAGIC WAR

Mr. MONDALE. Mr. President, the Minneapolis Tribune on January 28, published an article by its distinguished correspondent, Ronald Ross, who covered the war in Vietnam for many years.

Perhaps better than anything I have read in recent days, this article portrays the irony, anguish, and tragedy of the Nation's involvement in Southeast Asia during the last decade, an involvement which thankfully is now coming to an end.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

FOR THE VIETNAMESE: A SILENT PRAYER (By Ronald Ross)

Well, that's it. President Nixon finally has negotiated the withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam and the release of American prisoners of war.

No champagne and rockets Tuesday night. No victory day Wednesday. Just relief: We're getting out. And sadness for the untold dead and the misery it all has wrought.

For the reporter, the war in the South never was a war like, say, World War II. Mostly it was a disconnected, unrelated series of small and nasty engagements: bursts of rifle and machinegun fire, the sudden explosion of hidden mines and booby traps, the distant holocaust of a B52 raid, the swooping of jets on jungles from which flames of napalm would leap like suddenly blooming flowers, red fire, black smoke.

It made sense only on the acetate overlays where wax crayons, red, green and blue, neatly delineated dispositions that you knew to be untrue and lists of body counts, scored like gross national products, that you knew to be lies.

Well, for Americans, at least, all that's over in South Vietnam. And you're left with some strange, vague feelings, wondering still about what it all meant when you were there: the heightened emotions, the constant questioning, the disgust, the anticipation.

You remember the war talk at dinners with colleagues (some now dead) in French restaurants, the loneliness in the midst of crowded Vietnamese bars, the martinis that came to symbolize the safety of your hotel room, the comradeship of a colonel who served champagne on your birthday, the gut feeling that this was the real world, awful and rich.

And you remember the choking moments of fear under fire, and the fear that followed that you may move your bowels; the long hours of boredom at dusty airports and the sudden rages at brutality and incompetence alike.

And the Vietnamese? What will happen to those you got to know well, to love and respect? The Vietnamese woman who so often guided you through the jungle of Saigon politics; the doctor who could tell you more about Vietnam in five minutes than the American Embassy could in five years, and young Bao, your first and last good friend, who had a dream that one day his son would take a train from Saigon to Hanoi. What will become of them?

And what of the simple but sophisticated people you squatted beside in their well-swept bamboo huts in the Delta; and the students at Hue University who were caught between the Viet Cong and Saigon; the province chief who shared an evening with you, talking of Confucius and local government as a giant moon drifted over the South China Sea? What of them?

The American involvement will be bitterly debated for years to come. The full cost has

yet to be counted. Pride and shame contend for the national conscience. It was a tragic folly, some will say. We had no quarrel with these people. We were right in what we did, others will say. Communism and aggression had to be contained.

For the Vietnamese: a silent prayer. For them, it's just another beginning. The agreement leaves unanswered the question: "Who is going to control Vietnam?" That's what the war was all about. We're going to leave the answer—where the French left it almost two decades ago—to the Vietnamese.

And so ends, we trust, an American war that did for America what the Boer War did for the British: weaken the confidence of its people in their vision of what they ought to be.

It was a war America could not—and did not—win, unless America physically destroyed Vietnam, and that, as Eric Sevareid said Tuesday night, "was beyond the spiritual means of the people of the United States."

But it was a war many Americans were unwilling to lose; so, on and on and on it went, long after the illusions that nurtured it were shattered, until, at the last, its overkill was sustained only by personal and national prestige.

ON THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC TELEVISION

Mr. BROOKE. Mr. President, I am concerned about the uncertain future of perhaps the most promising medium of communications and information in this country today, our public television system. Public television in the United States has grown from the pioneering efforts of isolated, noncommercial broadcasters scattered across the country to a system of more than 200 stations broadcasting high-quality programs produced at the local, the regional, and the national levels. We are all familiar with such national successes as "Sesame Street," the "Masterpiece Theatre" series, William Buckley's provocative "Firing Line" program, and the excellent coverage of the 1972 campaign. These examples of what public television can achieve are mere glimpses of the potential of noncommercial television.

Six years ago, Congress formally recognized the progress and the promise of public television by passing the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which was to be the first steps toward a politically independent, adequately financed national system of public television stations. The act established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and charged it with the responsibility for assisting the Nation's public TV stations. The Corporation was to support the production of programs for national viewing and to help develop a system to interconnect the stations.

Today the dream embodied in that legislation is seriously threatened. It is threatened because the basic principle underlying the Public Broadcasting Act—the principle of independence and autonomy for local stations within a national system—is being undermined. Along with this vital principle, the intent of the Congress is being undermined.

According to the Public Broadcasting Act, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting was intended to serve the public TV system and to help it grow by supporting stations and producers with

Federal funds and by assisting in the establishment of an interconnection system among the public TV stations. The Corporation was specifically forbidden in the legislation from operating this interconnection system itself, for clearly, whoever controls the interconnection determines what programs will be made available to stations served by the interconnection. The intent of the Congress was clear: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, as the dispenser of Federal funds, was not to control the selection of programs for distribution.

In order to carry out the intent of the legislation the Corporation and the stations together created another body, the Public Broadcasting Service, to operate the interconnection. PBS was created as a membership organization, funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting but answerable to and controlled by its members—the stations. In this way, the program support function, which was clearly within the Corporation's mandate from Congress, was separated from the distribution function, which was put in the hands of PBS through the member stations.

Regrettably, station control over the interconnection now appears to be in jeopardy. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, on January 11, 1973, announced plans to assume full and active responsibility for deciding not only what programs it will fund, but also for deciding what programs will be distributed to the station via the interconnection, regardless of the source of funding for these programs. If the Corporation proceeds with its announced intention to assume all programing responsibility for itself, I fear that the local stations will lose not only the voice they have had in controlling the operation of the interconnection but also the vital insulation from those outside pressures that would necessarily be brought to bear upon a Government-funded, centrally controlled broadcasting operation.

The matter of local station control of the public television system is important for the future of public broadcasting in another important regard—that of long-range financing for the system. Last June, the President vetoed a bill which provided for 2-year funding of the Corporation at increased funding levels. In his veto message, the President expressed concern that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting was becoming "the center of power and the focal point of control for the entire public broadcasting system." The President made it clear that he would not approve legislation providing long-range financing if that legislation failed to place adequate emphasis on localism, since the individual local stations are closest to the communities they serve.

I agree wholeheartedly that the individual stations should control the national public television system, and that is why I am both amazed and concerned by the action of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in assuming even greater centralized control over the system, in apparent violation of the limitations imposed by the Public Broadcasting Act. Control must and should remain