25,000 in D.C. Protest


The Vietnam Debate

The Vietnam peace proposal, voiced with decorum during the recent "March on Washington," and the reply from Freedom House stem from sharply divergent attitudes toward the conflict. Yet the positions advanced by the two sides on this occasion—which presumably reflect their estimates of what the country is prepared to support—show interesting similarities.

The peace marchers, with a few exceptions, recognized that the United States cannot accept a Communist military victory or unilateral American withdrawal from South Vietnam. The Freedom House statement favored a United States effort "to seek the cost of the war by negotiation" or other honorable means not in conflict with American obligations.

There are, of course, important differences stated or implied in the two positions. The peace marchers believe that "no party to the conflict, the U.S. included, has done all it can to bring about negotiations." They urge that the United States halt both the bombing of North Vietnam and the introduction of additional troops in South Vietnam, and they ask the other side to do the same. The Freedom House signers give quite a different emphasis by urging employment of "whatever national resources are required" to carry out the American commitment.

The peace marchers urge settlement based on the Geneva Accords of 1954, which would require the "eventual" withdrawal of "all" foreign military forces. The Freedom House statement speaks only of Communist withdrawal—while ostensibly supporting an Administration policy which, as clearly enunciated by President Johnson, is identical with the peace marchers' position on this point.

There are other differences. The Freedom House statement treats the war entirely as a North Vietnamese plot, while the peace marchers recognize that the conflict is also a civil war within South Vietnam. They urge that it be resolved, in part, by "constitutio of a representative new government in South Vietnam." On its face, this is not necessarily at variance with the position of President Johnson, who has indicated a willingness to accept the Vietcong at the conference table and to include, in a settlement, new elections in South Vietnam. Obviously, nothing of this appears in the Freedom House statement, which purports to endorse the Administration view.

What is most important, however, about last weekend's exchanges is the tone in which—with a few exceptions—they were conducted. On the whole, they contributed to raising the level of the Vietnam debate—a debate that is vital and must continue in full vigor to help guide evolution of the nation's policy on a dangerous and critical issue.

A Call To Mobilize the Conscience of America

WE SEE no gain coming from the war in Vietnam. We see only the growing victimization of the Vietnamese people, the erosion of a better society at home, and the clear possibility of a world conflict.

Caught between terror, torture, and the senseless use of force, the Vietnamese people have seen their land turned into a bloody testing ground by the Vietcong, the Saigon government, by the North Vietnamese and the United States.

Caught between a commitment to eradicate racial injustice and poverty at home and a growing involvement in an Asian land war, the Johnson Administration will inevitably turn its resources and energies toward the military conflict.

Caught in a competition for the loyalties of the poorest nations, the Soviet Union and China will seek to prove their militancy by aiding North Vietnam, thus increasing the chances of a direct clash with the United States.

WE SEEK to end this war.

WE AFFIRM that no party to the conflict, the U.S. included, has done all it can to bring about negotiations, and since the war will ultimately end at the conference table, we ask new actions to speed that day.

WE AFFIRM our support for all the efforts, including those of the United Nations Secretary General, U Thant, and Pope Paul, to bring the dispute to the conference table, and we welcome a wider role for the United Nations in bringing about negotiations and in implementing any agreement.

WE RECOGNIZE that the U.S. cannot negotiate an end to the war by itself, but we believe there are things our government could do which it has left undone, that could lead more quickly to negotiations. And we believe we can help build the public understanding through which our government can vigorously pursue the path of peace.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON
FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM
Unconvinced by Marches, SANE Leader Plans More

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29—A leader of the weekend peace march on Washington, in which thousands protested American involvement in the Viet Nam war, said today that "a demonstration doesn't convert anybody to the Communist cause."

Despite this, Sanford Gottlieb added in a telephone interview, more demonstrations are being considered by the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE).

Gottlieb is political action director of SANE, which sponsored Saturday's march and picket of the White House in protest of United States policies in Viet Nam. March officials estimated the turnout at 60,000; police placed it at 25,000.

"We were definitely pleased with the turnout," Gottlieb said. "It was a lot better than we had figured. We had a lot more people than we expected, from New York and also from Baltimore."

More Considered

Future marches are being considered, he said, because "at a time when a dramatic event is needed to break the logjam of opinion, there is nothing like a large demonstration."

"But a demonstration doesn't convert anybody," Gottlieb said.

March leaders issued a leaflet during the protest titled "What To Do Next." SANE advised the protesters to write letters to newspapers, support politicians who favor a peaceful solution to the war, and urge congressmen to discuss the major issues of the Viet Nam battle.

"None of us have any illusions about the effect of any simple march or even a large march, like the one here, to stop wars or to change the policies of governments," the leaflet said.

Gottlieb said several thousand demonstrators were prevented from coming from the New York metropolitan area by the refusal of some bus drivers to transport them. He complained bitterly about the action of members of the Amalgamated Transit Workers. Gottlieb, political action director of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), is a former labor union organizer.

NEW YORK POST, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1965

A Responsible Protest

The thousands of peace marchers who journeyed to Washington to exercise their "right to protest" Administration policy in Viet Nam staged a spirited, responsible performance.

The few outlandish extremists who were effectively isolated and controlled. As a consequence, the event constituted an effective antidebate to the continual pressures of Richard M. Nixon and others for a harder policy and a continuation of Vietnamization Initiatives.

The message that 31 leaders of the march dispatched to Hanoi showed that its leaders were neither anti-American domino nor Communist-ruler. Their message made it clear the signatories had no interest in promoting "total victory" by any party in the Viet Nam war, including the Viet Cong. Their concern is with the urgency of negotiations and an honorable, enforceable political settlement.

But press reports indicate that the march would be seized upon by Hanoi and Peking and twisted to their own purposes. But that is the price we pay for freedom of debate and discussion. In parallel exercises, the Communist leaders distort the meaning of the U.S. peace demonstrations. They must know from public opinion polls, however, that there is widespread support in this country for President Johnson's stated policy of "flexible" fire under fire but readiness to conduct unconditional negotiations. We have urged him to reiterate this stand in even more dramatic terms. But the Communist response to the peace march would have been meaningful only if it had contained a hint of authentic conciliation from Hanoi's side. No such hint was audible.
25,000 March in District At White House

By Douglas Kiker and Barnard L. Collier Of the Herald Tribune Staff

WASHINGTON

Thousands of signs-carrying peace marchers converged on the White House yesterday and formed one huge picket line around it to protest the Johnson administration's policy in Viet Nam.

More than 20,000 people, representing 140 organizations, came from cities and towns all over the nation to take part in the largest demonstration of national protest and dissatisfaction since the Negro civil rights march here in 1963.

There were a couple of scuffles and a few sideline arguments, but it turned out to be an orderly, well-disciplined event, on the whole.

The marchers got a sunny, crisp day; courteous but firm police control; a pleasant but unifying White House reception, and a steady stream of jeers from a small group of counter picketers who carried signs supporting the administration and condemning the demonstration.

Later in the day, the pickets left the White House sidewalks and gathered at the base of the flag-scarred Washington Monument, to hear a long line of speakers urge President Johnson to stop the bombing, move for an immediate, United Nations-supervised ceasefire, and then try again for unconditional negotiations with the North Vietnamese.

Leaders of the demonstration conferred for 90 minutes at the White House with Chester Cooper, an aide to McGeorge Bundy. They rejected his proposal that they ask North Viet Nam to begin unconditional negotiations with the U.S. at once, saying such a proposal is unrealistic, because a ceasefire must come first.

Halfway around the world, meanwhile, the Viet Cong announced that two U.S. soldiers, killed in action against the enemy, were being freed in honor of the demonstration.

No evidence exists yet to show that the men actually were freed, nor were the demonstrators aware of the development as they made their White House rounds.

Yesterday began with a thunderstorm over Washington, and it looked like it would be soggy going for the marchers, until a freshening wind swept the clouds away and brought the sun.

By 10 a.m., 6,000 demonstrators were out. By noon there were 12,000 with more arriving every minute. Most of them were young, many of them had beards and long hair, but many were well-dressed, well-groomed and middle-aged.

The march was coordinated by the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), which tried hard to control both its tone and its general atmosphere of dignity and restraint.


The signs reflected SANE's position, as stated by its president, Sanford Gottlieb. "This is not a protest march," he said, "but it is in support of a negotiated settlement and not a pullout."

Nevertheless, there were many other, unauthorized signs carried in the marching ranks yesterday, representing a challenge to this position by more militant groups and especially by the Youth Against War and Fascism, which maintained in a handout that "It is a protest march. And the marchers do want a pullout."


While the picketing continued, a delegation met for 90 minutes in the White House with Mr. Cooper, who is an assistant to Presidential foreign affairs adviser McGeorge Bundy.

"We got very little that was satisfactory," said Norman Thomas, who was present. "They say a victory out of negotiations, but in the meantime, the war has to go on and the bombing and all."

Mr. Cooper, however, described the meeting as a "good exchange, amicable, forthcoming." Did he change the administration's policy? "I don't think they were ready to call off the march, but they felt it was a useful discussion," he said.

Mr. Thomas, the delegation to the White House included Dr. Benjamin Spock, renowned pediatrician, march coordinator, Dr. Forrest, Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. Rep. George Brown Jr. D. Calif. All of them spoke later yesterday afternoon at the Washington Monument.

Dr. Spock vehemently denied the accusation that the marchers were unpatriotic. He urged that 25,000 letters of protest be written each month to President Johnson and called for another rally in Washington in the spring.

Mr. Thomas, maintaining that no satisfactory settlement can be imposed by military victory of either side, urged "upon our opponents, as we most emphatically urge upon our own government, the necessity of negotiation on honorable terms."

The New York Times
Thousands Walk in Capital To Protest War in Vietnam

Demonstrators Decorous — 3 White House Aides Meet With Leaders

By MAX FRANKEL<br>
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27 — A group of 250,000 Demonstrators, including Americans from all parts of the country strode down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House today to protest the war in Viet Nam and urge negotiations to end it.

They were accompanied by the police to number from 15,000 to 25,000, and by their leaders as high as 50,000. The demonstrators joined in what they called a March on Washington for Peace in Viet Nam.

For two hours, they carried placards that for the most part bore cautiously phrased slogans, such as "Stop the Bombing," "Supervised Cease Fire," "End the War," and "Peace Now." They then went to the White House, and then on to the Washington Monument, standing all the time, the speeches at the top, the signs bearing "No More War."''

In the city develop in recent years as a fairly common form of protest, the one today was unusually small and restrained.

The more than 200,000 marchers for civil rights in 1963 had been a mass demonstration, and last summer's Vietnam demonstration, which tried to get past police on to Capitol Hill, ended with hundreds of participants in jail.

A protest is less common. But it was relatively unexcited and non-violent and was confined to the street between 14th and 16th Streets.

The highlight was a parade through Washington in which marchers carried flags, banners, placards and signs. Most of the signs were painted in peace symbols and in large, readable print:

"Stop the Bombs," "Make Peace Not War," "No More War — No More Hate — Love," "Stop the War," "Peace Now.""
Is the U.S. done with international negotiations?

The Johnson Administration has now been acting since the Rice talks in late 1964 and early 1965. This is the point at which the administration began to make some moves in its reconciliation with North Vietnam, which it has been possible to present to many reporters by Hanoi, and while talks might not lead to a formal settlement, it is not possible to justify this rejection and continue to negotiate with the Administration.

The most recent disclosure came only last week, when President Johnson and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam announced that they had reached an agreement that the United States would suspend all bombing of North Vietnam.

"In making his speech, President Johnson emphasized that he had been in direct contact with Vietnamese officials of both the government of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam."

These are the facts that the Johnson Administration ignores in public statements on its Vietnam policies. These are the facts that indicate that there is nothing left to be done to end the war. There are others:

Did Hanoi agree to negotiate when the bombing was interrupted?

The truth is that when the bombing was suspended a few days in the Spring of 1965, Hanoi apparently made an effort to negotiate—except that no negotiations were begun. Neither the U.S. nor South Vietnam officials have made any statement about negotiations possibly being resumed.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11—SANE leaders have been forced to cancel arrangements with Hanoi, and a meeting scheduled for January 14, 1966, has been canceled.

Other accounts of this and similar negotiations offered follow:

The New York Herald Tribune
Sunday, August 9, 1965

"The Johnson administration last fall rejected a proposal for Vietnam peace talks that had been accepted by the United States without conditions by Communist North Vietnam, it was learned yesterday... The opportunity for a private and unpublished discussion with representatives of the Vietminh came under the U.S. embargo early last fall. The chance of a meeting came at the height of the U.S. Presidential election campaign.

"The proposal, made by a non-Communist Asian diplomat, was accepted by Hanoi, which did not set for any conditions..."

"Later proposals for peace talks were turned down by Hanoi and the sources said yesterday that Hanoi had made a new proposal for peace talks that would be accepted by the South Vietnamese government.

The New York Times,
February 26, 1965

"The Communist Government of North Vietnam has notified the Secretary-General, U Thant that it is receptive to his suggestion for informal negotiations on the Vietnam situation.

The Washington Post,
October 28, 1965

"The United States is to continue to negotiate directly with the North Vietnamese representatives of the Geneva agreement, it was revealed last week by Foreign Minister Janos Peter of Hungary.

The Geneva Agreements

The Geneva Agreements of 1954 ended the eight-year war between South and North Vietnam, concluding the French effort to re-establish control over Indo-China. Under the terms of the agreement, a military demarcation line was established to divide the country into two states for governmental purposes between the French and the forces of Ho Chi Minh. This line was not to be a political boundary, but was to be enforceable by right of its existence and to establish areas of administration until the elections provided for in the agreement for reunification of the country and should take place in 1956.

Here are the actual words of the agreement and the declaration:

"A provisional military demarcation line shall be fixed on either side of which the forces of the two parties shall be regrouped after their withdrawal from the forces of the People's Army of Vietnam to the northern territory of the French Union to the South."

Chapter I, Article 1.

"(a) Pending the general elections which will bring about the unification of Vietnam, the conduct of civil and political affairs will be in the hands of the party whose forces are to be regrouped there in virtue of the present agreements... Chapter II, Article 14.

The Conference recognizes that the essential purpose of the present agreement is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line is to be established in a manner which will not be construed as constituting a political or territorial boundary..."

Declaration of Conference, Article 6.

In order to ensure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free and fair elections of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1966 under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the member States of the International Supervisory Commission...—Declaration of Conference, Article 7.

Other important provisions:

"The signatures of the present Agreement and their successors in their functions shall be responsible for ensuring the observance and enforcement of the principles and provisions thereon...—Chapter V, Article 27.

"With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, the introduction into (north and south) Vietnam of any troop reinforcements, additional equipment, and establishment of new military bases is prohibited throughout Vietnam territory...—Chapter III, Articles 15, 18.

"With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement no military base under the control or direction of a foreign state may be established in the territory of Vietnam...—Chapter III, Article 19.

The United States issued its own statement, which said in part:

"My Government is not prepared to join in a declaration by the Conference such as submitted..."

"The Government of the United States declares that it will refrain from the threat or the use of force in international relations so as to view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as a threat to the international peace and security..."

"In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through elections supervised by the United Nations Security Council..."

"...The United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an agreement which would hinder this..."

Both France and the United States bear responsibility for the disintegration of the Geneva agreements. The note of April 3, 1966, France served notice of her decision to withdraw from South Vietnam. Before the French note was issued, the French elections had disengaged entirely.

Ngo Dinh Diem, with United States support, had been appointed Premier by Bao Dai, the puppet chief of State under French rule. On July 16, 1955, the Frenchnote of April 3, 1966, France served notice of her decision to withdraw from South Vietnam. Before the French note was issued, the French elections had disengaged entirely.
The matter of the Viet Cong

There is disagreement on how and at what time the Vietcong became an organized force in opposition to the South Vietnamese regime. The Vietcong, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, was created during the early 1960s and was initially, and was reactivated in 1965. The Vietcong's strategy was to wage a guerrilla war against the Diem regime and to topple the North Vietnamese government.

The matter of Atrocities

Both the South Vietnamese and the Vietcong employed terror, torture, and murder as weapons in the war. As the tempo of the war increased, so has the brutality on both sides.

For the U.S., a new moral dilemma is posed. The U.S. has at the very least condoned the routine "reprisal" killings by South Vietnamese forces. In the best traditions of honesty and truth the American press has documented this course of action.

But all of the brutality practiced by the Vietcong is matched by the South Vietnamese. The Vietcong is a tiny group of well-armed but poorly trained soldiers, while the South Vietnamese army is a well-equipped and well-trained force.

The truth is that the South Vietnam government and the Vietcong are two sides of the same coin. The bombing of the North Vietnamese villages is a daily occurrence. The burning down of entire Vietnamese villages in reprisal for the "suspicious" activities of North Vietnamese troops is also a daily occurrence. The incident at Cam Ne was received with wide publicity because a civilian was on the spot.

A Saigon dispatch included the following paragraph relating to a recent bombing raid:

"...a number of officials suggest that from time to time the Vietcong are struck intentionally but in the erroneous belief that they are sheltering Vietcong troops. Such cases do not get the publicity that is attributed to a more obvious mistake, such as the one at Deduck."—New York Times, November 1, 1965.

The truth is that the Vietcong is a small group of well-armed but poorly trained soldiers, while the South Vietnamese army is a well-equipped and well-trained force.

What about self-determination for the Vietnamese?

The truth is that the U.S. has defined self-determination in its own way, and has assumed the right to prevent the Vietnamese from choosing a regime governed by Ho Chi Minh. How does this U.S. action differ from the system of values it claims to be fighting?
TOWARD THE GOAL OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN VIETNAM

WE ASK that our government call for a cease-fire, and to this end:

Halt the bombing of North Vietnam;

Halt the introduction of additional men and matériel, and ask the other side to do the same.

WE ASK that our government state the conditions under which it will accept peace in Vietnam, and to this end,

Reiterate U.S. support for the principles of the 1954 Geneva Accords—the eventual withdrawal of all foreign military forces, a prohibition against military alliances, the peaceful reunification of Vietnam, and self-determination for the Vietnamese people.

Declare U.S. acceptance of negotiations with all concerned parties including the Vietcong, a primary combatant;

Declare U.S. agreement to constitute a new representative government in South Vietnam as part of the settlement.

Declare U.S. support for U.N. or other international machinery and guarantees to supervise the cease-fire, provide for peaceful establishment of a new government in South Vietnam, protect the rights of minority groups and protect the neutrality of North and South Vietnam.

FOREIGN REACTION

Britain, Italy Marchers Support Protest Here

LONDON (AP)—Hundreds of demonstrators marched through the streets of London yesterday to protest against the war in Viet Nam.

The British march was in support of the mass demonstration that took place in Paris last night. The French protesters, demonstrating against the war in Viet Nam, persuaded President Johnson to halt bombing of North Viet Nam and to negotiate a cease-fire there.

The London marchers, including nuclear disarmament advocates and left-wing peace groups and students, gathered at the Royal Albert Hall across the center of the city. Many carried lighted torches and candles, and heard the slogans “Peace on Earth” and “Pace in Viet Nam.”

PARIS, Nov. 29 — A petition urging the United States government to settle the Vietnam War was delivered to the American Embassy here by a group of American students.

The petition, with about 200 signatures, was sent to United States Secretary of State Rusk, who is scheduled to be in both North and South Viet Nam. The petition calls for an end to the war and a United Nations-controlled cease-fire as a first move toward a peace treaty.

Serbian Students Assembly Special to the New York Times

PARIS, Nov. 29 — Another Peace Vigil was held here late this afternoon by Peace Students in France. In a surprise move, they assembled 1,200 students before the French government and attempted to march toward the United Nations for a demonstration. The police dispersed them on their way.

Opposition in Germany Special to The New York Times

BERLIN, Nov. 28—More than 100 scientists, writers and university professors from West Germany have protested today against American military actions in Vietnam, calling on the West German Government to halt its “financial, moral and military support” for the war.

As an officer in Women Strike for Peace, the organization that sponsored the train, Mrs. Gordon and several others were among the group that greeted the arriving passengers. They had arranged transportation for demonstrators, many of whom were suddenly affected by a boycott of bus drivers. At the last minute, police cars were set up and extra train tickets were sold.

Today at dawn, while a soft drizzle fell on the empty streets, Pennsylvania Station swarmed with demonstrators. They waited on line to buy a container of coffee, the usual ritual, the morning papers, bought bagged sandwiches reading “Peace in Viet Nam” and complained ("Don’t ask me how I am. I really can’t see at this hour.")

The 200-car train, 100 passengers pushed through the aisles, found seats or stood on the men. The group included representatives of the New Left, the New Leftists, the New Leftists, and others, “The Peace in Viet Nam movement,” the “Brothers Karamazov.”

Teaches Bridge to Group

As the train started off, David Kimmelman, an ophthalmologist, began teaching a class of about 150 students from the first car what to do in case of a bridge collapse. Two or three men in the rear of the coach, women, and the seated women, wearing identical brown coats, embraced. They walked slowly down the aisle and then stopped at a water cooler. She signed her name.

“If my presence can do anything to end the war,” said the young woman, Marie Petersen, “then I’m glad to be here. I have enough time to know what we get from them—misery, sorrow— and for what, for what?”

In an adjoining coach, the Rev. David H. Hays, director of the Hitler Methodist Church in Manhattan, joined the group and sat alone and gazed out of the rain-streaked window.