

U.S. DIRTY VIETNAM WAR

STRAIGHT TALK

by CHEDDI JAGAN

THE U.S. — backed war in South Vietnam is a cause for great frustration and uncertainty. Official figures now disclose that in 1964 there were twice as many casualties as compared for the three previous years combined. The U.S. casualties for 1964 were 1173 including 136 killed. The combined figures for 1961, 1962 and 1963 was 615 casualties including 107 killed.

So concerned is the American public that the U.S. Senate is preparing itself for a big show-down and a long hard look at the situation. The National Liberation Forces in Vietnam have moved from the first phase of hit-and-run to the second phase of pitched battle. Only a few weeks ago, the Vietnam puppet Government and the U.S. Army (advisors, they are called!) suffered a resounding defeat around the outskirts of Saigon, the capital.

Of 83 Senators recently interviewed in a survey, the majority expressed apprehensions about the future success of the U.S. "The problem is tragically difficult", said Senator Allan Bidle, "I believe we must continue to do everything possible under the present policy — increasing the emphasis on a stable and responsible Vietnamese Government."

Thirty-one of the Senators expressed similar views suggesting negotiations later when the bargaining position of the Americans had improved. Ten favoured negotiations now. Some suggested United Nations mediation towards a settlement based on neutrality.

A few came up in favour of expansion of the war into North Vietnam. But according to Senator Mike Mansfield, "Expansion will not solve the problem. It is more likely to enlarge it and in the end we may find ourselves engaged all over Asia in full scale war."

One Senator said that he didn't "know how to get off the tiger's back". Three Senators called for complete withdrawal of U.S. advisors and military aid.

Why is the war being fought in the first place? And why is it being lost by the Americans?

The answer is to be found in an article by Sol W. Sanders in the U.S. News and World Report, a pro-imperialist, big business magazine. On 19th October, 1964, he wrote: "In the eyes of the Communists, the war which is going on in South Vietnam is not a struggle between North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese. It is, rather, a continuation of the old war against the French, with the United States now playing the villain role once played by France."

The United States is losing out because it is trying to prop up a rotten system. For this same reason its vast military superiority is not winning out. It is like an elephant trying to fight against a mosquito.

It has tried, in its policy of counter-insurgency, to imitate the methods of the guerillas. But as Che Guevara pointed out, there is a world of difference between national liberation guerillas and imperialist guerillas. The first fights with and for the people, while the second fights against their interests.

It is time the Americans learned the bitter lessons which the French learned in Indo-China and Algeria — You cannot hold back the tide.

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