

A CALL TO ALL STUDENTS TO

March on Washington to end the war in Vietnam

April 17, 1965

The current war in Vietnam is being waged in behalf of a succession of unpopular South Vietnamese dictatorships, not in behalf of freedom. No American-supported South Vietnamese regime in the past few years has gained the support of its people, for the simple reason that the people overwhelmingly want peace, self-determination, and the opportunity for development. American prosecution of the war has deprived them of all three.

• The war is fundamentally a *civil* war, waged by South Vietnamese against their government; it is not a "war of aggression." Military assistance from North Vietnam and China has been minimal; most guerrilla weapons are home-made or are captured American arms. The areas of strongest guerrilla control are not the areas adjacent to North Vietnam. And the people could not and cannot be isolated from the guerrillas by forced settlement in "strategic hamlets"; again and again Government military attacks fail because the people tip off the guerrillas; the people and the guerrillas are inseparable. Each repressive Government policy, each napalm bomb, each instance of torture, creates more guerrillas. Further, what foreign weapons the guerrillas have obtained are small arms, and are no match for the bombers and helicopters operated by the Americans. The U.S. government is the only foreign government that has sent major weapons to Vietnam.

• It is a *losing* war. Well over half of the area of South Vietnam is already governed by the National Liberation Front—the political arm of the "Viet Cong." In the guerrillas the peasants see relief from dictatorial Government agents; from the United States they get napalm, the jellied gasoline that burns into the flesh. The highly touted "counter-insurgency" the U.S. is applying in its "pilot project war" is only new weap-

onry, which cannot substitute for popular government. Thousands of Government troops have defected—the traditional signal of a losing counter-guerrilla war. *How many more lives must be lost before the Johnson Administration accepts the foregone conclusion?*

• It is a *self-defeating* war. If the U.S. objective is to guarantee self-determination in South Vietnam, that objective is far better served by allowing the South Vietnamese to choose their own government—something provided for by the 1954 Geneva Agreement but sabotaged in 1956 by the American-supported dictator Ngo Dinh Diem and never allowed since. The Diem government that invited U.S. intervention was thus illegitimate, having violated the agreement that established it. The Vietnamese, North and South, have no taste for Chinese domination—these two countries have fought one another for over a thousand years. Moreover, South Vietnam is not a "domino"—the "threat" to it is internal, not Chinese, and the greater threat to stability in other Southeast Asian countries is U.S.-inspired provocation of China, not China's own plans.

• It is a *dangerous* war. Every passing month of hostilities increases the risk of America escalating and widening the war. Since the '50s U.S.-trained South Vietnamese commando teams have been penetrating North Vietnam, considerably provoking the North Vietnamese. We all know of the presence of American destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf, a body of water surrounded on three sides by North Vietnamese and Chinese territory. How calm would the United States be if Cuban commandos were being sent into Florida, and Chinese ships were "guarding" Cape Cod Bay?

• It is a war never declared by Congress, although it costs almost two billion dollars a day and has cost billions of dollars since the U.S. began its involvement. The facts of the war have

been systematically concealed by the U.S. government for years, making it appear as if those expenditures have been helping the Vietnamese people. These factors erode the honesty and decency of American political life, and make democracy at home impossible. We are outraged that two million dollars a day is expended for a war on the poor in Vietnam, while government financing is so desperately needed to abolish poverty at home. *What kind of America is it whose response to poverty and oppression in South Vietnam is napalm and defoliation, whose response to poverty and oppression in Mississippi is . . . silence?*

• It is a hideously *immoral* war. America is committing pointless murder.

But the signs are plain that Americans are increasingly disaffected by this state of affairs. To draw together, express, and enlarge the number of these voices of protest, and to make this sentiment visible, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) is calling for a

MARCH ON WASHINGTON TO END THE WAR IN VIETNAM

We urge the participation of all students who agree with us that the war in Vietnam injures both Vietnamese and Americans, and should be stopped.

The March, to be held on Saturday, April 17, 1965, will include a picketing of the White House, a march down the Mall to the Capitol Building to present a statement to Congress, and a meeting with both student and adult speakers. Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska and journalist I. F. Stone have already agreed to address the body.

Thousands of us can be heard.

We dare not remain silent

For more information, contact:

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, 119 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. AI 4-2176