

MASTER

F. A. S. NEWSLETTER

Volume 20, Number 2
February, 1967

----- to provide information and to stimulate discussion. Not to be attributed as official FAS policy unless specifically so indicated.

FAS RELEASES PAPERS ON VIETNAM

Most of this Newsletter consists of the text of three papers relating to the Vietnam war, which were released by the FAS on 5 March 1967. The texts of two of the papers begin on this page, and the third is inside. Also included in this Newsletter is a summary of the results of the postcard poll of FAS members on the question of an FAS Vietnam statement.

ON INDISCRIMINATE USE OF MODERN WEAPONS IN VIETNAM — Position Paper

After the very extensive application of science and technology to the conduct of World War II, there has been a strong temptation to believe that advanced weapons and techniques could make it possible for the United States to conduct limited warfare with a saving in American lives and with a substantial advantage over a less technically developed adversary. We believe this to be a dangerously false assumption.

In particular, we believe that in the long run, lack of restraint in Vietnam will do more harm than good to U.S. interests. To be sure, the United States has declared that it will not use nuclear weapons there, and it has placed certain constraints on the bombing of North Vietnam. Otherwise it has employed nearly every weapon system available.

The United States has introduced into what was once a guerilla war many weapons which were originally designed for large-scale, "open" conflicts. The latest supersonic fighter bombers are being used to attack rail and road lines, suspected storage sites, and even villages thought to house Viet Cong. Airborne craft, from jet planes to helicopters, are being armed with rockets and with advanced anti-personnel devices capable of killing persons at large distances from the impact point. Napalm bombs have been dropped on suspect military sites and "Viet Cong villages." Chemical agents are being used to incapacitate suspect Viet Cong personnel and herbicides are used to defoliate large areas of the jungle. Lastly, strategic bombers (B-52's), long thought to be the special instrument of nuclear warfare, are dropping tons of explosive and incendiary bombs on suspect Viet Cong areas.

All of these weapons systems share the common characteristic that they are indiscriminate in their application. Almost daily there are reports of accidental attacks on non-combatants. Even the best trained and most conscientious bomber pilot cannot avoid errors of the order of hundreds of feet; and, in a war in which friends and foe live side by side and look alike, pilots cannot attack the enemy without causing widespread casualties among the innocent.

Destruction of forests and crops by herbicides (with long-range effects that are still not well understood) will damage the economy of the country as a whole, not just that of the Viet Cong. A shortage of food punishes the non-combatants, especially the children and the aged, long before it affects the ability of the fighting forces to function effectively.

The use of new types of anti-personnel weapons is a further unfortunate development. One such weapon is the cluster bomb which dispenses several hundred bomblets over a wide area, each bomblet in turn throwing out shrapnel like a large hand grenade. The area that is filled with flying

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 1)

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM — Position Paper

We would like to discuss some aspects of the Vietnam war which appear to have special relevance to the arms race and to the long-run dangers of nuclear warfare. As scientists and engineers we have long been involved in studies of arms control and disarmament and have participated in the development of several generations of military hardware. The bombing of North Vietnam is of particular concern to us because of the broad issues which it raises.

Official Rationale

Three reasons have been given for the bombing of North Vietnam: to raise the morale of the South Vietnamese, to reduce the flow of assistance to the Viet Cong, and to persuade Hanoi to negotiate. Much has been made of the first by the President and his chief advisors, and yet U.S. policy is in even more serious condition than many people fear if this has any validity at all.

On numerous occasions in the past Government officials have stated that the bombing was effective in curtailing infiltration to the South. Many supplies have been destroyed, and the effort involved in transporting them has been increased. Yet Secretary of Defense McNamara has recently been found to agree that it has had a minimal effect: "I don't believe that the bombing up to the present has significantly reduced, nor any bombing that I could contemplate in the future would significantly reduce, the actual flow of men and materiel to the South."

Lastly, there has been no sign that the bombing is forcing the North Vietnamese to the negotiating table. Instead, Hanoi demands a complete halt to the bombing before any talks can begin, and Administration spokesmen have admitted that they no longer believe the bombing of the North, by itself, will cause the political leaders of North Vietnam to cease their activities in the South.

Nature of the Bombing

Consistent bombardment of North Vietnam started on February 7, 1965, when carrier-based aircraft struck barracks (Continued on Page 2, Col. 2)

FAS COUNCIL TO MEET—

The FAS Council will meet in Washington on Sunday, April 23rd, and again on Tuesday, April 25th. The meetings will be in the Sheraton Park Hotel, the headquarters hotel for the American Physical Society meetings. Exact times and places of the Council meetings will be given in the March Newsletter (which should reach FAS members a week or so before the meeting).

VIEWS OF FAS MEMBERS ON FAS VIETNAM STATEMENTS

The question of whether or not FAS should issue a statement (or statements) on the Vietnam war has been extensively discussed over the past year. Following the September 1966 Council meeting, the November NEWSLETTER carried a draft statement, with a request for comments from FAS members. In response to this request, about 40 letters had been received by mid-January.

Also, in January, cards were mailed to all FAS members with the following request:

"There has been a lively but limited response to our request for comments on whether FAS should issue a statement on Vietnam. This matter is on the agenda for the Council meeting in New York on Jan. 29-30. Since some have suggested that the proposed statement is a departure from past FAS policy it would be useful if the Council became aware as possible of the views of members. We are therefore asking you to answer the questions on the enclosed postal card and mail it promptly."

By the time of the January Council meeting, 570 of the tear-off reply cards and some additional letters had been received. More cards and letters have come in since then.

The wording of the questions on the postcard questionnaire and the diversity of views expressed in letters and notes do not permit an exact and "clean" tabulation of FAS membership opinion. But opinions can reasonably (if somewhat arbitrarily, in a few cases) be sorted out as shown in the following table, which includes comments received through early March.

In favor of FAS issuing a Vietnam statement	685
Specifically supporting draft published in NEWSLETTER	620
Favoring statement but disagreeing with draft	65
Opposed to FAS issuing a Vietnam statement	244
Because Vietnam is not "FAS-type" issue	217
For other reasons (including about 20 members who generally support U.S. policy)	27
Total responses (letters and postcards)	929

Six members had resigned because of the Vietnam statement issue by the time of the January Council meeting. Several others indicated they would resign if a statement were issued. The total number of resignations stemming from the discussion and release of the statements is not yet known.

There does not appear to be any correlation between views on the Vietnam statement issue and the professional specialties of FAS members (physical scientists, engineers, biological scientists, etc.). The same is true for roles within

FAS NEWSLETTER

Published monthly except during July and August by the Federation of American Scientists, 2025 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D. C., 20006. Subscription price: \$2.00 per year.

ChairmanMarvin Kalkstein
The FAS Newsletter is prepared in Washington.
Editor: Harriette L. Phelps.

The FAS, founded in 1946, is a national organization of scientists and engineers concerned with the impact of science on national and world affairs.

Sources of information (given in the articles in parentheses) are for further reference. Items reprinted directly from other publications are designated as such in an introductory paragraph.

FAS (members, Council members, Executive Committee, etc.). Altogether—including the postcard poll, letters, polls taken in FAS chapters, and the involvement of Council members—it appears that about 55% of the FAS membership contributed in one way or another to the debate. (The above tabulation of views—no trivial job—is mainly the work of W. A. Higinbotham, to whom the NEWSLETTER Editor is very grateful.)

A large part of the January Council meeting was also spent on the Vietnam statement issue. Finally, the Council voted 17 to 9 to adopt and publicize the essentials of the draft statement published in the November Newsletter as FAS policy. The Council also voted to adopt three other draft papers as position papers.

The statement, "On the War in Vietnam," represents the final version of the paper which the Council voted to adopt and publicize as FAS policy. The three "position papers" were combined by the Executive Committee into the two other papers printed in this NEWSLETTER. All three papers were released at a news conference in Washington on March 5th.

At the conference, FAS Chairman Kalkstein presented the papers and distinguished between the policy statement and the position papers (although the distinction appears to have been lost in the press reports). Kalkstein pointed out that, although the FAS had previously spoken out on issues such as chemical and biological agents in Vietnam, this was the first time the FAS had addressed itself to the total question of the war. He also outlined for the reporters present the results of the poll of FAS members, and noted that 70% supported the statement. (See the New York Times, 6 March 1967.)

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE BOMBING

(Continued from Page 1)

and staging areas north of the demilitarized zone. Gradually the target list has been broadened to include all "military targets" except airfields, and the target areas have been extended to include all of North Vietnam to the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos.

Clearly the effort to interdict military supplies must have other side effects. Destruction of railroads, bridges, power plants and road traffic must also disrupt the civilian economy. Professionals know how difficult it is to identify targets in a bombing raid and to avoid destroying homes and non-military buildings. As recent reports have shown, a decision to strike at military targets is unavoidably a decision to damage the civilian economy and to kill civilians.

The Danger of Escalation

To the extent that American attacks are successful in reducing aid to the Viet Cong or destroying the economy of North Vietnam, the North Vietnamese and their Chinese and Russian allies are forced to respond. On the other hand, to the extent that a stalemate continues, pressures in this country mount for permission to broaden the attacks to airfields, to Haiphong harbor, or to Hanoi. "We may well have to add additional targets in the future" said Secretary McNamara on February 24th. Until now, Chinese and Soviet personnel have not taken an active role in Vietnam. But extension of the bombing (and perhaps even continuing at the present level) will call forth a deeper involvement by the major powers.

Although nuclear war does not seem very likely at present, it cannot be altogether discounted. A nuclear war might come about through a pre-emptive first strike, through accident, through escalation from a limited war, or through "miscalculation," when one nation misinterprets the actions of another. It is generally believed that the first two contingencies are extremely unlikely today. However, a conventional war such as the Vietnam conflict, involving three nuclear powers, could become nuclear by escalation or through serious miscalculation.

Each new military step by the United States invites a

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 2)

ON THE WAR IN VIETNAM — Policy Statement

During the past two years United States involvement in the Vietnam war has avalanched. What had been a relatively modest contribution of advisory manpower has turned into a large-scale military operation which engages a large part of our armed forces, dominates the international relations of the United States, and interferes with progress on domestic issues. It has become unrealistic if not impossible to consider public policy without facing the issue of the war itself.

The Federation of American Scientists has previously issued several statements related to the war. These have opposed the use of chemical and biological agents and have opposed escalation of the conflict. We have called attention to the war's adverse impact on international negotiations for a non-proliferation treaty and other measures of arms control. Heretofore, however, the FAS has not issued a comprehensive statement concerning the Vietnam war.

We do not attempt to judge the complex political and ideological issues involved in the origins of the present war in Vietnam. However, when we view the war as it is being fought by the United States today, it is evident to us that continuation of the war is damaging to the interests of our nation, of the people of Vietnam, and of mankind. We are opposed to our government's present role in Vietnam and urge the United States to take immediate steps to reduce its military involvement and to achieve an early termination of hostilities.

The casualties now being inflicted on the civilian population in both South and North Vietnam and the ever-widening destruction must make the concept of "victory" appear meaningless to the people of that unhappy country. As a nation we seem to have maneuvered ourselves into a situation in which we destroy our friends as effectively as we punish our adversaries and in which the means we employ appear to destroy the ends we seek.

While we are engaged in South Vietnam in a war that is part foreign war, part intervention in the internal strife of a country in which democratic government is notably absent, much urgent business elsewhere is being sidetracked. On the domestic scene, programs of social improvement have been cut back and the sense of direction present in the Kennedy and early Johnson administrations has given way to a sense of frustration. In the field of international relations, we are rebuilding walls of mistrust between East and West that had begun to crumble in the early sixties. We cannot expect to meet across the conference table open minds on the part of diplomats of Eastern countries while we are engaged in a bitter struggle with their allies in Southeast Asia. U.S. actions in Vietnam have caused the non-Communist countries to lose confidence in our wisdom and ability to lead.

Many eminent persons here and abroad, who are not the spokesmen of our adversaries, have urged on the United States Government new policies which will help to bring about peace. Groups of scientists in a number of countries,

including France, Italy, and Japan, have issued calls for peace. The voices of such men as Secretary General U Thant, President de Gaulle, and Pope Paul VI, should remind us that this war is not a matter just for the United States and the Vietnamese to be concerned about; their recommendations and offers of help should command our respectful attention and grateful acceptance.

The Federation of American Scientists urges the United States immediately to take steps that have the possibility of leading away from escalation and towards a peaceful resolution of the war. Foremost among these are the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam and ceasing to employ those tactics which, whether intended or not, lead to indiscriminate destruction.

We believe that such measures coupled with an unambiguous willingness to negotiate with the National Liberation Front as North Vietnam can set the stage for a cease-fire and a peaceful settlement. Even if they do not produce this result for a considerable length of time, the United States will have done much to reduce the danger of world-wide conflagration, to give a chance to the voices of rational counsel in the other camp, and to lessen the suffering of the unfortunate people of Vietnam.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE BOMBING

(Continued from Page 2)

corresponding step by the Soviet Union and China, each of which has the ability to counter the increased military efforts of the United States. On the other hand, the frustration of a costly war continuing year after year, and involving hundreds of thousands of American troops, will generate increasing demands on the President for a full deployment of US power, including ultimately the use of nuclear weapons. Introduction of tactical nuclear weapons by the United States is likely to force a nuclear response by the Soviet Union and perhaps, because of Soviet logistic problems, that Soviet response will be less limited than our initial use. Thus, step by step, we may be led to the disastrous nuclear war which any rational policy must seek assiduously to avoid.

Confrontation of the Major Powers

More sophisticated weapons systems are being introduced by the United States and new tactics developed as the air war continues. The Soviet Union in its turn has supplied North Vietnam with advanced fighter aircraft, radar and anti-aircraft missiles. Each side must counter moves by the other in this fascinating, dangerous game. Neither side can afford to lose and the inevitable result is an arms race in conventional but highly sophisticated weaponry. Unless measures are taken to halt it, this race will place increasing pressure on each major power to confront the other with its most modern weapons.

Effects on Arms Control and Disarmament

Since Hiroshima, we have seen nuclear weapons improved more than a thousandfold in power, and the number of nuclear powers increased to five. In all these years only one significant step has been taken to slow the arms race, the limited test ban treaty of 1963, and the spiraling arms race is leaving arms control ever farther behind.

Certainly it will be difficult to achieve the mutual understanding required for progress on disarmament while three of the world's major powers confront each other in Southeast Asia. There does seem to be some hope that the United States and the Soviet Union can agree on the terms of a non-proliferation treaty to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons, but such agreement has not yet been reached and the non-nuclear powers, whose approval is essential, are raising more and more objections. An equally urgent need is an agreement or understanding to refrain from deploying ballistic missile defenses. The bombing of North Vietnam casts doubts on American sincerity toward disarmament and makes it very difficult for the Soviet Union to join publicly with us in any arms control measures.

Conventional arms races are also threatening stability in

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 2)

PACEM IN TERRIS CONVOCATION AT MANHATTAN COLLEGE —

Of possible interest to FAS members in the New York area and elsewhere is the Inaugural Convocation of the Pacem in Terris Institute of Manhattan College. Principal aims of the Institute are to bring to bear the disciplined thought and attention of the academic community to the problems of peace, and to examine means for introducing issues related to peace into college curricula.

Some 40 panel workshops are planned for the Convocation on Friday afternoon and Saturday, April 14th and 15th, and several hundred persons, mostly from the academic community, are expected to attend. FAS Secretary Tom T. Stonier is Chairman of the Pacem in Terris Institute, and details may be obtained from him (Manhattan College, Bronx, New York 10471, or (212) 548-1400).

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE BOMBING

(Continued from Page 3)

several areas of the world. By its heavy commitment to a conventional local war the United States is discouraging efforts toward control of conventional weapons. Further, the major powers can hardly be expected to agree on limiting traffic in conventional weapons while they are competing in supplying them to Vietnam and to its neighbors.

Both nuclear and conventional arms control depend on the development of new peacekeeping institutions. The bombing of Northern Vietnam is particularly inappropriate to this context. Members of the United Nations are pledged to refrain from aggression, and yet it is difficult to view massive American attacks upon the territory of a sovereign nation as anything other than overt aggression, regardless of the provocation. Do the results of this action justify destroying the small progress that has been made toward agreement on acceptable modes of international behavior? The United States has a primary interest in supporting and extending the principles which underlie the United Nations and a primary responsibility for setting an exemplary example.

Conclusion

We have not stressed the impact of the bombing, and particularly of the killing of civilians, on world opinion and on opinion in this country. All of these pose political problems affecting the future world position of the United States, and affect adversely our ability to deal with the issues of nuclear proliferation, disarmament, and the future role of the United Nations. The United States is anxious to improve relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. But there can be little hope for progress while Russia and America are engaged in a political and military struggle, even of limited proportions.

World leaders have repeatedly called for a cessation of the bombing as a prelude to negotiations to end the war. We believe that this is the proper course of action, even if it does not lead immediately to negotiations and even if it should make operations in South Vietnam more difficult and costly. From the broader perspective which we have emphasized, the dangers inherent in the air war outweigh any gains that might accrue to us through continuation of this discredited policy.

ON INDISCRIMINATE USE OF WEAPONS

(Continued from Page 1)

pellets reaches out several hundred yards. Soldiers lying in trenches are relatively secure, but civilians running for cover have little chance for escape. Similarly, the use of napalm has led to severe casualties among civilians, and debilitating chemicals used against the Viet Cong may cause serious damage to less virile civilians.

Various new and advanced technological devices are being

used or tested in Vietnam. Here we must caution that decisions to test or to employ new devices must be taken with full regard for consistency with our announced objectives in Vietnam and for their long-range consequences.

The use of weaponry which is, by its very nature, indiscriminate can have a variety of far-reaching and harmful consequences:

1. Mass loss of life—civilian casualties numbering in the tens of thousands have already been reported—destruction of property, and unforeseen large-scale damage to the social and ecological structure of South Vietnam may well result.
2. The effectiveness of such indiscriminate and highly destructive weapons in a counter-insurgency war is highly questionable. The object in such a war must be not so much to destroy the guerrillas (which would require a greater numerical advantage than we possess), but rather to win over the population to the side of the Government and persuade them to reject the Viet Cong. The use of advanced weaponry has tended instead to fill the people with fear of our military forces, to create large numbers of refugees, and to make their lives even more chaotic and insecure, while the Viet Cong continue to operate effectively. If the methods chosen result in uprooting the people and destroying the fabric of their society, then we may indeed win the battles, but lose the war.
3. Reports of the destruction wrought in North and South Vietnam have already produced widespread anti-American reactions, and severe damage has been done to the position of the United States in the eyes of the world.
4. Our use of these weapons generates pressures on the other side to use similar weapons, as in the recent successful use of anti-personnel gas by the Viet Cong. Successive rounds of increasingly widespread destruction can easily be the end result, with no net advantage to the U.S. and its allies.
5. Our use of modern weapons is forcing the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong to rely more and more heavily upon the Russians and the Communist Chinese, who alone can provide adequate means of defense and response. This leads to an increasing danger of direct conflict between these major powers and ourselves.
6. The U.S. is establishing precedents in Vietnam which will make it easier for other countries to utilize similar weapons in other places. Thus the general level of military violence, which has already risen disastrously in this century, may rise still higher and the chances of developing workable peacekeeping arrangements in the future will be diminished.

For these reasons, the FAS believes that the United States should adopt a policy of far greater restraint in the weapons it chooses to use in Vietnam.

FAS NEWSLETTER

Federation of American Scientists
Suite 313
2025 Eye Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

Volume 20, Number 2

February, 1967

Second Class Postage

Paid at

Washington, D. C.

Return Postage
Guaranteed

Master