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OUR ALLIES LOOK AT VIETNAM

U.S. involvement in Vietnam never has been formalized by a declaration of war. Everyone who opposes it is free to voice his criticism—and frequently does. Is the situation comparable in other countries that have sent soldiers to Vietnam? The answer is yes and no—but mostly yes.

OF THE scant four allies who have committed troops to South Vietnam, three—Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines—face as much criticism on the home front as the United States. Only the Republic of Korea, an ATLAS press survey discovered, supports its fighting forces with a national pride and purpose virtually unflawed by dissent.

“Pride” is the operative word in Korea. After forty years of harsh Japanese rule and nearly twenty years as a ward of the United States, the nation has suddenly slucked its inferiority complex and found itself. To be able to help a weaker and more beleaguered friend is a source of intense satisfaction. Its response has been 45,000 troops, including the crack Tiger Division, from a population of 29 million, a higher per capita commitment than the United States.’ The following editorial from *The Korea Herald*, an English-language daily published in Seoul, demonstrates the country’s pride in its fighting men:

In a heavy downpour, Gen. Myong-sin Chae, commander of the Republic of Korea forces in Vietnam, laid flowers at the tomb of each of about 300 warriors who died fighting in the war-torn country under his command. . . .

Quite coincidentally, an influential news magazine enjoying a world-wide circulation hailed the valor and gallantry of the heroic soldiers under his command, who have won high applause from both

the Americans and Vietnamese not only for their fighting capabilities but also for the intensive and effective people-to-people programs with the Vietnamese. The article, dedicated to the soldiers dispatched to Vietnam from allied countries to help the Americans and Vietnamese fight the Vietcong infiltrators, revealed that captured Vietcong orders stipulate that “contact with the Koreans is to be avoided at all costs unless a Vietcong victory is 100 percent certain.”

President Chung Hee Park personally pinned an additional star on the general, an honor which is surely to be shared by all the soldiers under his command. . . . Indeed, the presence of Korean troops in the Republic of Vietnam is a symbol of the resolute determination of all the people of this country to defend freedom and democracy at any cost.

The Korea Herald, which has a circulation of only 20,000, enjoys a Government subsidy to serve English-speaking readers, but there is no discernible difference between its editorial attitude on the war and that of, say, the independent Korean-language *Hankook Ilbo* of Seoul, which has a daily circulation of 280,000 and frequently criticizes the Government on domestic issues. In a representative leader it reviewed recent developments in the war and concluded:

Finally, within a year it will be determined whether the Vietnamese struggle will end in peaceful agree-

ment or lead to all-out war. If the Communists continue to protract the present situation, the Vietcong's strength inevitably will be vitiated. Therefore, they must make the ultimate decision.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk in an explanation of United States' policy toward Communist China before the Subcommittee on Far Eastern Affairs of the House of Representatives testified that the United States will protect allied countries threatened by Communist China despite any provocation of China that might result. We sympathize with the reasoning expressed in his statement.

He stressed that Korea is one of the most trustworthy powers in Asia and that she has sent powerful forces to Vietnam. We, the Korean people, are deeply concerned with the trend of the Vietnam war. Therefore, it is appropriate that the United States confer with Korea in advance of any decision toward peace or intensified war.

The desire to be consulted as equals is a common theme, as is the hope for a peaceful settlement. Despite the vaunted ferocity of the Tigers, there is little bombast or insistence upon crushing the Reds. A representative paragraph from *Seoul Shimbun*, a Korean-language voice of the administration of Chung Hee Park, says:

For an honorable settlement of the Vietnam war, all allied nations, including the United States, should patiently play power politics through both the stick of war and the carrot of peace. President Johnson's speech in regard to the new Asian policy of the United States, in which he asked Communist China to open the door, and stressed peace and cooperation among all Asian and Pacific countries, is a statement of profound idealism.

Next to Korea in the allied order of battle comes Australia, with 4,500 troops in Vietnam and a large and vocal opposition at home, where the Labour Party seeks to regain control in next month's elections on a platform of withdrawing from the war. The present government of Prime Minister Holt, a coalition of the Democratic Liberal and Country Parties, supports involvement in the war as, among other things, a matter of vital self-interest.

Among the staunchest defenders of Liberal Prime Minister Holt in his position that Australia must fight for its own self-interest and ultimate self-preservation is *The Bulletin*, a conservative news weekly published in Sydney. In a recent summing up of the situation, Peter Samuel contends that "It is now abundantly clear to all except those who live in dream worlds that the war in Vietnam is being won," and says it now "becomes as much a political struggle with the faint-



"Is that the best you can come up with . . . ASBESTOS DRAFT CARDS?"
LENNO IN TRIBUNE (SYDNEY)

hearts, the isolationists, the pro-Communists and the pacifists at home as it is a military struggle abroad." Writes Samuel:

In the discussion which has raged in Western countries over the past eighteen months, the protesters have generally had the initiative and an important advantage. Their case is a negative one: for non-involvement, for opting out. To effectively win the argument they have not had to convince, simply to create doubt. It has only been necessary for them to kick up an immense number of bits and pieces of ideas and information to create a cloud of confusion. That is probably why they won at the teach-ins. Farcically long, dreary and repetitive, these were very effective in confusing those who attended.

Being on the defensive, the supporters of involvement have tended to make two mistakes. Firstly, they have become bogged down in rather tedious disputes about trivial matters of fact. The protester often tends to have the utopian assumption that the evidence can be found to prove the rightness of involvement. In fact . . . there is a great deal of phoniness in the search for the facts; many important ones can never be ascertained with much confidence. But politicians, unlike academics, have to make decisions, however unsatisfactory the evidence, because for them to fail to decide to be involved is to decide to be uninvolved. The "untidiness of decision" repels the intellectual and often leaves him a whining dis-senter.

A second mistake is in becoming too tied up in complexities. The notion that the Vietcong insurgency is somehow a spontaneous uprising in response

to unsatisfactory conditions is so romantic that those who hold it will probably never be won over by the necessarily patchy information on Hanoi's role. It is probably more effective to outline the pattern into which the current struggle fits—Burma, Malaysia, India, etc.—and to cite the Communist Party leaders who have insisted on an activist role, on giving history a push—for example, Che Guevara: "It is not necessary to wait until all conditions making for revolution exist; the insurrection can create them."

Another result of being on the defensive is that the problems of the future are overlooked. Thus it is arguable that in not so long the Vietcong will be taking such a thrashing militarily and the prospects of military success will have become so dim that they will agree to the American offer of talks. . . . It is not difficult to imagine what the protesters would demand: immediate cessation of bombing, the cancellation of search-and-destroy missions, perhaps even some troop withdrawals.

Yet . . . in the Korean War fighting continued while truce talks were being conducted. And being a conventional war, fought with an easily determined set of front lines, with the combatants' regular troops, there were relatively few technical problems in arranging and enforcing a ceasefire there. But there is no precedent for a successful negotiation of an irregular war of the Vietnamese type. The 1954 settlement in Vietnam was a capitulation, and the Laotian talks were hardly a settlement. Guerrilla wars of the past have been settled through complete defeat—Malaya, Greece, the Philippines, Indonesia, India—or in complete victory—Cuba, Vietnam, China. Others such as that in Burma go on.

The Nation, a pro-Labour biweekly, agreed with

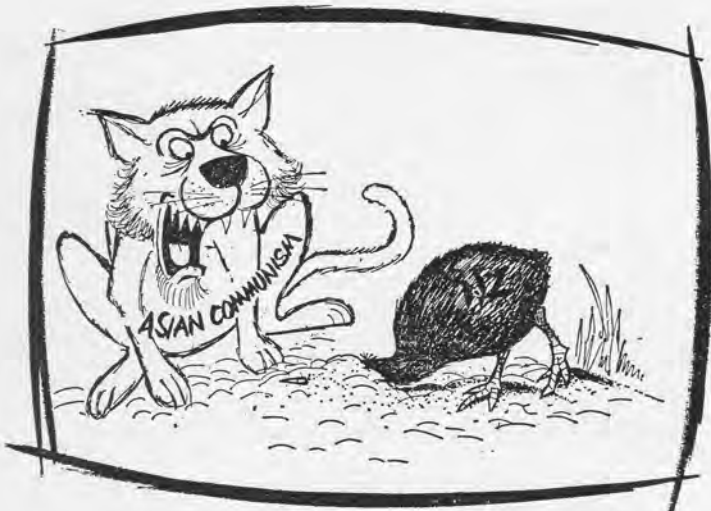
The Bulletin that the Vietcong are on the defensive—but there they parted:

Mr. Holt sings "eyether" and President Johnson sings "eether," but both are keeling to the same basic words and music. The song runs "Eyether eether you sit down and confer, or we bomb the guts out of you." What sort of a deal is it that they are offering Ho Chi Minh, how effective is this threat likely to be in getting negotiations? Eighteen months ago, in February 1965, the position was parallel but in reverse. At that time, the Americans thought they couldn't negotiate because the military tide ran against them, and so they threw in more troops. This was held out to be rational. If Ho Chi Minh holds to the same standards of reasoning, he would not refuse to negotiate but throw in more troops until things run his way. And will he go further, as the U.S. did, and invite allies to help him? Already North Korea is promising volunteers—and perhaps conscripts will come next. How will two great songsters continue their song then?

It is pretty obvious by now that the rich harmony in which President and Prime Minister find themselves humming derives from something more than an association with the amusement industry which played a part earlier in their lives. What brings them together is the audiences that each of them has to face around November this year, the President in the Congressional elections, the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives poll. Each man has his hawks, who could complain that not enough has been done. These hawks will be given their pounds of flesh between now and about the end of September. Then all of a sudden the doves will be given a flutter just in case those peaceful sentiments crystallize out against the ruling parties in either country. Once more top envoys will be circling the globe, calling on religious dignitaries and unallied heads of state. Back home, the audiences will realize that Mr. Holt and President Johnson aren't bad blokes after all—it's the other side that is stubborn. . . .

This is how the rest of the Holt-Johnson score reads, seen through a crystal ball. No Australian Prime Minister could arrange this kind of global production. The Petrov inquiry just can't compare with it as an election turn. But with the huge resources of his country, President Johnson can organize the lot. And to a man who has breathed domestic politics all his life, to whom the reactions of a couple of hundred voters in a suburban seat are more familiar than the attitudes of a hundred million people in Japan, going "All the Way with L.B.J.," round and round in a circle, would seem to be the height of shrewdness.

In Australia's smaller ANZAC partner, New Zea-



FROM THE DOMINION (WELLINGTON)

land, whose 5,000-man armed force has the token representation of a 120-man artillery battery in Vietnam, the political situation is identical and the battle of the press similar. The following editorial from *The Otago Daily Times* defends the government of Prime Minister Holyoake:

The Government appears determined to make the commitment of New Zealand troops to South Vietnam a definite issue at the next general election. This became obvious when Mr. L. F. Sloane opened the Address-in-Reply Debate in Parliament by stating that "our troops must remain as a unit in Vietnam, and our civilian aid should be stepped up."

Mr. Sloane has recently returned from a fact-finding tour of South Vietnam, and his opinion has the backing of personal experience in this disputed region of Southeast Asia. The Government's case for maintaining the New Zealand artillery unit in South Vietnam must also be strengthened by the public statement recently of the men serving there.

But perhaps the most interesting endorsement of the Government's stand came from within the inner councils of the Labour Party itself when the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Kirk, and Dr. A. M. Finlay endeavored to seek from the party's recent conference a compromise on its proposal to withdraw New Zealand troops by suggesting that "noncombatant" troops should be sent to protect civilian aid workers.

New Zealand has decided, and rightly so in the opinion of this newspaper, to join two major allies—Australia and the United States—who are also its partners in ANZUS, in resisting the spread of Communism in South Vietnam. This action has been taken at the request of the Government of South Vietnam, and it is to this Government, or its successor, that Labour would be responsible in acceding to a request for nonmilitary aid.

Much as some Labour speakers may criticize the United States for being in South Vietnam, it follows that civilian aid workers sent under the terms of the party's annual conference would accept the protection of American arms. It was to avoid this kind of political hypocrisy that Mr. Kirk and Mr. Finlay endeavored to get a compromise decision from the party conference. . . .

South Vietnam is something of a test case in Asia. If the Communists have their way there, they will move on to probe elsewhere, in Thailand, Malaysia and farther west. Every Communist step forward in Asia is a step closer to Australia and New Zealand.

The case for the opposition is stated by Vincent O'Sullivan, a lecturer at the University of Auckland, in an article excerpted from the pro-Labour monthly, *Comment*:



FROM PHILIPPINES FREE PRESS (MANILA)

New Zealand's activity at present rests on the paradox of supporting an American administration which claims to seek peace but refuses as far as negotiation is concerned, to admit the existence of its opponents. For while the United States refuses to admit that the National Liberation Front is not necessarily the same as the North (and therefore, as the argument goes, the Communists, and therefore the Chinese) it can claim to fight aggression from the North in defense of the South. Once that admission is made, then intervention in a civil war, with the defense of a dubious regime, is admitted too. The Americans may be obliged for many reasons to take this shadow-boxing for the real thing. But New Zealand has no obligation to do so. It is free to look at the situation independently but chooses not to. . . .

In the meantime, we try to have it both ways. The Minister of Customs tells the Auckland Business and Professional Women's Club that our foreign aid of less than 1 percent of the annual budget is something to take pride in considering our size, that "it flows essentially from humanitarian motives." Along with that, we still believe that our military expenditure is contributing to Asia's benefit. The advantages of a greatly increased foreign aid program (how much medical assistance could be sent at the cost of the artillery unit, for example?) to both Asians, in terms of practical usefulness, and to ourselves, in prestige and old-fashioned good relations, is dismissed as unrealistic. But the nation is asked to take seriously the notion that less than 120 men, or whatever's left of them, can contain the hordes of Asia on their own side of wherever Mr. Holyoake decides to lower the Fernleaf Curtain.

Compared with the international flavor of Australia's and New Zealand's dissents, the opposition in the Philippines is often parochial, based on unmistakable isolationism and such local factors as anti-Americanism, indignation at "trading soldiers for the hope of dollars," and a resurgence of the Hukbalahaps. A majority of the nation's major publications have opposed the sending of 2,000 army engineers to Vietnam (to build, not fight, the government protests), but none more caustically than the *Philippines Free Press*, a popular illustrated magazine, which had this to say about both President Ferdinand Marcos and President Johnson shortly before their Washington meeting:

Here are the extemporaneous remarks made by President Ferdinand Marcos at the signing of the Filipino-troops-to-the-Vietnam-war bill:

"I need not repeat here what I have already stated: that we have acted on the deeply rooted convictions of our people; that the option for the continuance and enjoyment of liberty by every nation on earth must be maintained: that democracy or any other ideology must be allowed to flourish in an atmosphere of freedom; that the ultimate objective of society is individual dignity and not the edification of the state. . . ."

Here is what Presidential Candidate Ferdinand Marcos said of a similar bill proposed by then-President Diosdado Macapagal whom he asked the people to replace with him for, among other things, proposing to send Filipino troops to the Vietnam war—at a much lower cost to the nation:

"History shows that every nation that fell to Communism owed its defeat not to foreign invasion but to disintegration from within through the failure of its leadership and its institutions. . . ."

"What South Vietnam needs is the will to fight, which cannot be exported."

President Marcos . . . [and] . . . Lyndon Johnson . . . [speak] . . . the same language.

President Johnson said to the electorate during the American presidential campaign of 1964:

"There are those that say you ought to go north and drop bombs, to try to wipe out the supply lines. . . . We don't want to get people involved in a nation with 700 million people, and get tied down in a land war in Asia."

The similarity between the performance of Philippine President Marcos and American President Johnson is striking, indeed. They should find their meeting interesting, each other's company, congenial. They would be speaking the same language: double-talk.

Even a rare defense of President Marcos' Vietnamese intervention in the *Sunday Times Magazine* of Manila smacked slightly of temporizing:

A Philippine President, like other Constitutional officials, must work within a framework of "givens"—existing policies and commitments. His freedom of choice is restricted by the given realities. Thus, any Philippine President . . . will be limited by the people's deep-rooted commitment to be reflected in the way our government views outstanding world issues. . . .

Naturally, this [Vietnam] decision has evoked American good will, which may influence Washington to view favorably plans for a huge Philippine stabilization fund and the modernization of our armed forces. . . . If the good will evoked by his Vietnam policy in Washington works to bring about the needed solutions, he could not be blamed, and neither should the American side . . .

That will hardly satisfy J. V. Cruz, television commentator and columnist for the influential *Manila Times*, who complained:

The daily headlines about the resurgence of Huk depredations in Central Luzon succeed in graphically underscoring, perhaps as nothing else can, the silliness of the Philippine decision to send 2,000 troopers to South Vietnam to interfere in the anti-Communist campaign there. Here, right in your own front yard, is a problem that is growing graver and bloodier daily. . . .

So what does the Marcos administration do? It cannot wait to fight, not the Communists who have drawn a curtain of fear around three or four provinces right here . . . but Communists thousands of miles away, in a foreign country, in cities and towns whose names Filipinos cannot even pronounce. . . .



GAT IN THE MANILA CHRONICLE (MANILA)