

# How 5 Student Groups View Viet Nam

**Editor's Note:** The five statements on this page were read by various political groups on campus at Monday's ASUO Senate Public Affairs Committee hearing on Viet Nam. The Senate hearings are being held as advance work for an eventual Senate position to be made on Viet Nam for the purpose of instructing delegates to the National Student Association national convention. All statements are printed in full except that of the Faculty-Student Committee to Stop the War in Viet Nam. That group's statement was cut for space reasons with the agreement of members of the Committee. The Young Democrats' statement is not a position on Viet Nam but rather a statement of disagreement on the issue of the Senate taking stands.

## Young Democrats

At the time of campaigns and elections, ASUO senatorial candidates did not run for office on a supra-campus basis. Not one candidate suggested future foreign policy stands, nor gave reference to the possibility of development of such stands.

Any policy position on the part of the ASUO Senate would necessarily favor the viewpoint of one or more previously formed campus political organizations. This, in essence, would ally the ASUO Senate with a certain group or groups in terms of political viewpoint. We feel that this would be in contradiction to the present non-partisan construction of the Senate.

In view of the extremely low percentage of voter turnout (21 per cent), the University of Oregon Young Democrats do not feel that the ASUO Senate could faithfully reflect the views of its entire constituency, namely, the ASUO, on an issue of the gravity of the Viet Nam conflict.

In brief, the University of Oregon Young Democrats feel the conflict in Viet Nam, is not and should not be the concern of a non-partisan and quasi-political organization such as the ASUO Senate now is. Furthermore, the ultimate source of campus government, the students of the ASUO, AT NO TIME authorized the ASUO Senate to take stands on partisan issues such as the Viet Nam conflict.

This is why the University of Oregon Young Democrats will not enter a policy stand on this matter today.

## Students for a Democratic Society

In the name of freedom, America is mutilating Viet Nam. In the name of peace, America turns that fertile country into a wasteland. And in the name of democracy, America is burying its own dreams and suffocating its own potential.

Americans who can understand why the Negroes of Watts can rebel should understand too why Vietnamese can rebel. And those who know the American South and the grinding poverty of our Northern cities should understand that our real problems lie not in Viet Nam but at home—that the fight we seek is not with Communism but with the social desperation that makes good men violent, both here and abroad.

The war must be stopped.

Our aim in Viet Nam is the same as our aim in the United States: that oligarchic rule and privileged power be replaced by popular democracy where the people make the decisions which affect their lives and share in the abundance and opportunity that modern technology makes possible. This is the only solution for Viet Nam in which Americans can find honor and take pride. Perhaps the war has already so embittered and devastated the Vietnamese that that ideal will require years of rebuilding. But the war cannot achieve it, nor can American military presence, nor our

support of repressive unrepresentative governments.

The war must be stopped. There must be an immediate cease fire and demobilization in South Viet Nam. There must be a withdrawal of American troops. Political amnesty must be guaranteed. All agreements must be ratified by the partisans of the "other side"—the National Liberation Front and North Viet Nam.

We must not deceive ourselves: a negotiated agreement cannot guarantee democracy. Only the Vietnamese have the right of nationhood to make their government democratic or not, free or not, neutral or not. It is not America's role to deny them the chance to be what they will make of themselves. That chance grows more remote with every American bomb that explodes in a Vietnamese village.

But our hopes extend not only to Viet Nam. Our chance is the first in a generation to organize the powerless and the voiceless at home to confront America with its racial injustice, its apathy, and its poverty, and with that same vision we dream for Viet Nam: a vision of a society in which all can control their own destinies.

We are convinced that the only way to stop this and future wars is to organize a domestic social movement which challenges the very legitimacy of our foreign policy; this movement must also fight to end racism, to end the paternalism of our welfare system, to guarantee decent incomes for all, and to supplant the authoritarian control of our universities with a community of scholars.

## Young Republicans

We believe that war is not the proper way to settle international disputes. When, however, the very existence of our friends is imperiled by outright Communist aggression, we feel it is the duty of the United States to come to the aid of the victim, and defeat the aggression with the swiftest and most effective means at our disposal.

Withdrawal from South Viet Nam would mean the loss of that nation to the Communists, for guerrilla victories have brought Communism to North Viet Nam and Cuba. Withdrawal would weaken the ability of the now free people in Southeast Asia and then the rest of the world to resist further expansion of Communism. Withdrawal would indicate that the United States cannot defend freedom in Asia and the other nations where freedom is threatened.

South Viet Nam is not negotiable. We cannot, as the most prominent free world nation, allow the Communists in Hanoi and Peking to continue their program of piecemeal world conquest. It must be stressed that the Communists are the aggressors, the United States the defenders. Negotiation of South Viet Nam proper would appear as surrender of these people to an alien Communist regime.

We feel that the United Nations cannot solve the Vietnamese question. In order for the United Nations goal of collective security to be effective, a substantial consensus of the membership is essential. It is obvious at this time, especially in light of the position of the Soviet bloc nations that this consensus does not exist. Therefore, the most efficacious policy alternative for the United States is continuance in union with South Viet Nam, Korea, Nationalist China, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines of the destruction of the Viet Cong without meaningless gestures toward the involvement of the United Nations.

We feel that the cessation of bombing has been militarily advantageous to the Viet Cong. Since the Viet Cong are dependent in large degree on men and materiel from North Viet Nam, we feel that the bombing of North Viet Nam should be resumed immediately and more strategic targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong industrial complex should be selected.

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## Faculty-Student Committee

Perhaps contrary to popular opinion, the FSC includes as active and associate members approximately 200 persons whose reasons for opposing the war in Viet Nam differ greatly and whose attitudes regarding the "most appropriate" strategies by which to mobilize opposition to the war also cover a wide range. The only correct way for me to serve as a fair spokesman for all of these people, then, is to present to this Senate hearing, a picture of this diversity of attitudes and aims, and to indicate my feeling that it is this diversity itself which is perhaps the most illustrative and eloquent statement which can be made about the nature of the war in Viet Nam as well as the most impressive rationale for wholeheartedly condemning it.

This war in Viet Nam is not only complex, but it is complexly evil. Thus it can be viewed as terribly wrong for any number of reasons—each of which has considerable validity and any or all of which might be concentrated upon by the FSC and other organizations such as this one. At present, the job of the FSC is not that of selecting which of these many possible attitudes against the war it should adopt as its own, but rather is that of providing a voice for each. At least a few of the reasons held by members of the FSC for opposing the war in Viet Nam, then, are the following:

- There is also the factor of what I must call "American Shame" which others—and I believe the majority of FSC members—cite as their reason for opposing the war in Viet Nam. These individuals see that the course of horror is being willingly and enthusiastically followed by the United States for reasons which defy logic. Napalm is being used by U.S. soldiers; destruction of rice crops has recently been undertaken by the U.S. military in this land where rice is the mainstay of military and also civilian diet; the bombings both in North and South Viet Nam have been, according to U.S. military spokesmen, necessarily indiscriminate at times—perhaps at times which are becoming far more frequent than we would desire. Such military actions seem to many members of the FSC to have been undertaken and expanded by the United States without legal justification, without sufficient moral concern, and without respect for many principles which, within its own boundaries at least, the United States has always held sacred—e.g. self-determination, freedom from domination by a foreign power, free elections etc. Though the U.S. administration has repeatedly re-stated these very principles as the motives for its actions in Viet Nam, many members of the FSC look for actions which are as sincere as these statements sound.

- Other members of the FSC oppose the war in Viet Nam for almost purely "pragmatic" reasons. That is, they see the war in Viet Nam as injurious to the U.S. image throughout the developed and underdeveloped world; they see it as a war in which too many American lives and dollars are being wasted; and they feel the war to be totally against national self-interest.

- Moreover, there are members of the FSC who object to the war in Viet Nam for all or many of the previous reasons, but who also see it as symptomatic of a great number of ills which plague U.S. foreign policy, and who want this foreign policy to be greatly altered—who want the basis of that foreign policy (i.e. that there is operating throughout the world a monolithic Communist conspiracy and offensive which needs to be contained at all costs and by whatever means required) replaced by a more realistic point of view, and who want the government of the United States to affirm and respect the rights of self-determination in all countries, by all peoples, regardless of the outcomes of their decisions and in spite of the fact that at times their decisions will not be those desired by this nation. Because the war in Viet Nam seems to these members of the FSC to be but one outcome of a more generally diseased foreign policy, then, they seek to mobilize

opposition to the war.

- In line with this general opposition to U.S. foreign policy, but more specific to Viet Nam, is the feeling by various FSC members that the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam must be recognized by the U.S. government, not only as the target against which to wage war, but also as an important party with which to open peace negotiations. Though, on the one hand, President Johnson has indicated a certain willingness to deal with "anyone, anywhere, anytime," it remains true even in the latest "peace offensive" that he regards Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi as the real spokesmen for the NLF, and that he will not officially deal with the NLF. Because Ho Chi Minh has repeatedly said that he cannot in any way serve as spokesman for the NLF, and because the NLF seems to be the most powerful, and perhaps popular, force in South Viet Nam—and one with which this government will have to eventually deal if it truly wishes to negotiate a just peace in Viet Nam—these members of the FSC desire specific recognition of the NLF by the Johnson Administration.

- Finally, there are members of the FSC who not only want the NLF to be recognized as a viable force and spokesman for the Vietnamese people, but who are also sympathetic to the aims of the National Liberation Front, and to other progressive elements throughout the world. These members are probably few in number for any variety of reasons, but they are there.

Some attitudes are much more prevalent than others and thus have guided the drawing up of petitions and statements issued by the FSC at the teach-in and elsewhere. I want to justify my presentation of this range of views by the statement that the FSC is in existence to give members of a minority opinion a voice in the whole opposition effort, as much as it is in existence to find a "majority" opinion against the war. There are already innumerable organizations which exist to give expression to but one of these positions, and no new organization is necessary in that line. Thus the FSC and other such groups have been formed to coalesce these attitudes and groups, and to mobilize them in one large, concerted effort to stop the war in Viet Nam, and to do so by presenting minority as well as majority opinions. Now, with diversity in mind, I can present the statements which have previously been drawn up by the Faculty-Student Committee to Stop the War in Viet Nam with the permission of a MAJORITY of its members or officials.

Whereas: The United States' military involvement in Viet Nam is not directed towards the welfare of the people of Viet Nam.

And Whereas: We protest American unilateral intervention in Viet Nam.

And Whereas: the United States' government is willfully misrepresenting the facts concerning the war in Viet Nam.

And Whereas: The conception of all Communism as a unified monolith is a

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## Young Americans For Freedom

In formulating the position of Young Americans for Freedom we reviewed the following facts:

A. The Geneva agreements of 1954 stated that both North and South Viet Nam were to order and enforce a complete end to hostilities, and that neither zone was to be used as a military base to resume hostilities or military equipment were to be introduced. These records also called for free elections to take place not later than 1956. Neither the United States nor free Viet Nam was a party to the Geneva treaty, but had we participated our military assistance would still have been justified due

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