

Aid to Thieu perpetuates morally bankrupt policy

By MARK O. HATFIELD
Special to the Los Angeles Times

The request by the Ford administration for an additional \$300 million in military aid to the government of South Vietnam and \$222 million for Cambodia is the latest attempt to perpetuate an Indochina policy that is morally and politically bankrupt.

It is a policy grounded in the myth that we can intervene in any nation we choose, and that we are totally free to shape the world in our own image. For those who had rightfully hoped that this myth had ended with Vietnam, the renewed request for funds comes as both sad and dangerous news.

Again we are asked to view fiction as fact. Again we are asked to commit ourselves militarily in the name of creating a peaceful solution to the conflict. Again, as when the French were fighting in 1950, we are told that we are sending in military supplies to defeat "communist aggression."

Again, as in 1955, we are told that it is the communist side alone which is responsible for the breakdown of the international agreement reached regarding Indochina. Again we are told that an increase in American military arms is necessary to insure the survival and freedom of South Vietnam.

The truth is that the Vietnamese people do well simply to survive Thieu's leadership; they are not being freed by it. Their land has been shattered by 25 years of war.

In the years 1965 to 1973 alone, over three million Vietnamese were killed or wounded. Over 11 million Vietnamese lost their original homes. Today, 20 per cent of Vietnamese children are orphans.

South Vietnam is a country ruled by a political regime which continually practices the most basic denial of human rights. The Thieu government continues to use tactics of arrest and torture, it continues to hold thousands of political prisoners, and it refuses to allow countless refugees to return to their homes.

Last week, in pre-dawn raids, some of Saigon's most influential journalists, publishers and editors were arrested in their homes and jailed. The press runs of nine daily newspapers confiscated, and five more were shut down completely.

Yet, we are told by the administration that we cannot abandon our "moral commitment" to the Vietnamese people. We are told, after 55,000 American lives have been lost, after 300,000 Americans have been claimed as casualties, after nearly \$200 billion in U.S. treasure has been spent, that an additional \$300 million will insure the ongoing business of the Thieu government. We are told that if the money is not forthcoming, then Congress, not the administration, will be responsible for the collapse of the current Saigon regime.

We are told these things, but little else. The administration spokesmen do not explain, for example, why our "moral commitment" is directed toward Thieu and his generals, rather than to the structure of international law and the achievement of a political settlement to the conflict.

We have no international legal obligation to support Thieu's continuing quest for power. In fact, it is the clear intent of Congress, by reducing the administration's request, to disengage ourselves from a blanket underwriting of Thieu's power and encourage a negotiated end to this war.

Administration spokesmen do not emphasize the obvious: that any additional funds granted by Congress in addition to what has already been appropriated will set the most dangerous of precedents. If Congress agrees to any portion of the supplemental request, it will have committed itself to aiding the Thieu government beyond that which we have already deemed necessary this year.

This is far from the end. The new budget just presented to the congress requests another \$1.7 billion in military aid to Indochina (\$1.3 billion for South Vietnam, and \$400 million for Cambodia), plus another billion for other purposes there. And what progress has our military assistance brought toward establishing a final peace in Vietnam? Again we are told little.

We are not reminded that since the Paris peace accords were signed barely two years ago, the United States has spent over \$7 billion in Indochina. We are not reminded that 149,000 Vietnamese have lost their lives in those two years. It is not emphasized that last year the administration vetoed a \$550 million bill to aid the American veterans of Vietnam while simultaneously asking for \$1 billion in additional military assistance to the Thieu regime.

We are not reminded that the \$7 billion spent since the Paris accords were signed could have provided \$5,000 each to 1.5 million unemployed workers.

We are told that the Thieu government is the victim of communist aggression, that Thieu has acted defensively since the Paris peace accords to maintain his military position. But this fails to conform to the total truth.

The facts, documented by both independent observers and analysts in Saigon, show clearly that almost from the moment the Paris agreement was signed, President Thieu, with U.S. military assistance, launched a military offensive aimed at eliminating enemy sanctuaries. As a result of this drive the enemy lost 15 per cent of the territory it controlled in January, 1973, while Saigon gained dominant control of an additional 6.2 per cent of the population, which included about 770 hamlets.

We are told by the Department of State that the North Vietnamese and the Provisional Revolutionary Government have "built up the North Vietnamese main force army in the south through the illegal infiltration of over 160,000 troops; tripled the

strength of their armor in the south by sending in over 400 new vehicles."

We are not told that, along with this infiltration of troops, the North has reportedly exfiltrated nearly 115,000 back to North Vietnam, and that the resulting increase in men accounts roughly for casualties and troop replacements. The image of a massive new troop buildup by the North is, then, largely myth.

Despite the fact that the Thieu government has received well over twice the military assistance that the North Vietnamese have received from China and the Soviet Union since the Paris accords, despite the fact that it has fired ten times the ammunition as the opposing side, and despite the effective imposition of martial law in South Vietnam, Thieu's political power has eroded to the point of collapse.

The administration's request at this time seems to be the waning attempt to save a Vietnam policy that should have been abandoned long before the first American soldiers set foot on Vietnamese soil. It also seems to be an effort to lay the ultimate blame of that policy on Congress, which might no longer choose to further the myth that has cost us so dearly in lives and honor.

Our intervention in Indochina has been a moral and diplomatic disaster from the beginning. It was wrong when we paid for 78 per cent of the French military intervention in Indochina 20 years ago. It was wrong when we installed leaders of our own choosing and tried to create a sovereign state out of half of Vietnam. It then was a moral outrage when we used half a million Americans, and millions of tons of bombs,

to try to achieve these same ends.

Now, it is no more moral, and no more diplomatically wise, to pursue these same ends through financing a war by proxy in that country. The fact that now it is simply our dollars and bullets rather than U.S. soldiers, which carry out our policies in no way corrects the fundamental, tragic error we have made over the past two decades in Indochina. It is not the means or the strategy of our intervention in Vietnam which has been wrong; it has been the intervention itself.

The administration's request is not made in order to bring the final chapter of a long effort to a close. Rather, it is being made to perpetuate a policy that has from the outset been strategically mistaken and morally disastrous.

Our best hope for ending this tragic intervention lies in refusing to sign Thieu's blank checks, and thereby creating the environment where the military conflict can be shifted to a political one, as intended by the Paris agreements signed two years ago.

By restraining our aid to the present government of South Vietnam, we will make it clear that this prolonged war must be brought to an end through a political accommodation. Either Thieu will realize this reality or he will be replaced by a coalition of South Vietnamese who are prepared to compete politically with their adversaries.

Sen. Hatfield (R-Ore.) is a member of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

opinion

Things must change in Mac Court

By DAVE BUSHNELL

The time has come for us to step back and take a good, hard look at the Oregon basketball program and its fans. The events of the past weekend represent the climax of the problems that many observers have been forecasting for some time.

As *Register-Guard* Sports Editor Blaine Newnham said, McArthur Court has become more of a hindrance than a benefit. With fans, and only a small number at that, who insist on throwing paper and ice on the floor, running on the court to protest an official's call, and, in one case, pursuing the referee after the game is over, it is completely understandable why Oregon didn't receive a break when it needed it most.

But under no stretch of the imagination can the crowd be held totally responsible for the behavior that, rightly or wrongly, has become a trademark of the Pit.

When a large number of persons are subjected to four to 12 hours of pushing and shoving while standing in line, it is unrealistic to expect them to respond with rational behavior when the game finally commences.

The lack of seating has also contributed to the Mac Court problem. The Eugene Fire Marshal said the fans seated on the benches must be provided with 18 inches of space. By game time Friday and Saturday nights you were lucky if you could claim 12 inches for yourself.

And finally, many point to the style of basketball which Dick Harter brought to this campus four years ago as the cause of Mac Court mania. But the program is based on out-hustling, out-defending and out-toughing the opponent, not on inciting riots and endangering the visiting teams as some newspapers have claimed.

But as last weekend's events showed, adverse actions by the fans only serve to hype-up the opposition and make them tougher to beat. And, if you think harassing the referees is a way of helping the team, then you're dead wrong!

The worst name a referee can be called is a homer. So when they work a game in the Pit, the officials often go to the other extreme in order to skirt the offensive label. The more the crowd baits the referees the more they resist. In fact, it may have reached the point where Oregon will be un-



No more bullshit

able to count on receiving any sort of help from the officials at home.

The sad part is that Harter and his staff have cooperated fully with all programs to control the crowd. But, ironically, they are now the ones who are suffering at the hands of a few uncivilized, ill-bred, emotion-crazed fans. After all, how can Harter be expected to recruit in Southern California, when the *Los Angeles Times* writes stories about the heathens who attend games in Eugene.

The fans, both student and adult alike, who continually throw paper on the floor and disrupt play, have all but ruined the Mac Court experience for the other 9,950. These 50 or so "fans," are the same kind of people

who were in the front lines a few years back when Ohio State was physically attacked by the Minnesota team and its supporters.

These are not the type of supporters Oregon basketball is looking for. If these 50 or so fans are to be controlled, some measures must be taken by Athletic Director Norval J. Ritchey and his staff.

—The public address announcer should be instructed to inform the crowd, before the game (as is done at all National Basketball Association games) that anyone caught throwing objects on the floor or in any way disrupting play, will be ejected from the game and subject to prosecution.

—The police officers on hand should start ejecting fans who step on the floor, or in any way threaten the safety of the players or the officials while the game is in progress.

—The Athletic Department must take the initiative to make sure the number of tickets sold correspond with the number of seats. Trying to squeeze 500 extra people into the student section is only asking for trouble.

If these three measures, or some sort of alternative means of dealing with the uncontrollable few are not enacted soon, then basketball as we have come to know it at Oregon is in serious danger of extinction. After all, why should Harter and his highly qualified staff stay at a school where winning and recruiting are so difficult.

When it comes right down to it, Ritchey and his staff have not been tough enough. All but a few of the spectators are complying with the conduct cards, but those who do not must be dealt with.

Something is going to have to change and it's up to the crowd whether it will be them or Harter. If it's the latter, then the former are going to be left with nothing but a losing team and their faded yellow and green pom-poms.

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