

The American Friends Service Committee is profoundly disturbed with the pressures for United States military intervention in Indo-China. On the basis of long Quaker experience in international service, we are convinced that nothing but disaster lies down this road. The destructiveness of modern war can produce nothing but hatred, even among those on whose behalf the fighting ostensibly is undertaken, and hatred is no foundation upon which freedom and democracy can be built.

We urge our fellow citizens to remember that a real victory for freedom in Indo-China, as elsewhere, depends upon winning the minds and hearts of the Indo-Chinese. This requires that American first understand that the legitimate yearnings of Asian peoples are for independence for a better standard of life. These are the fundamental issues in the present raging Indo-Chinese revolution and they are not issues that can be met by military threats.

On the contrary, America's best hope is to channel the revolution in ways that will mitigate its violence and turn it toward democratic ideals. This will require profound changes in present U.S. policy toward the area. It means, first, supporting an immediate cease fire in the present conflict. Second, it means continued encouragement to the French to implement their commitments to grant independence. Third, it means support of free elections in Viet Nam and a willingness to abide by the results even if they should prove distasteful to the United States. Fourth, it means a long-range commitment to provide the new government of Viet Nam, as well as the governments of Laos and Cambodia, with economic assistance.

Finally, we believe that a just and durable peace in Indo-China depends on stabilizing the whole Asian scene. This is a task that can best be handled by the United Nations, provided that body can be returned to its original status as a forum for the settlement of disputes. We believe that in the present world the attempt to convert the UN into an instrument of collective security courts disaster and that it would be far wiser to strengthen its mediation machinery and support the principle of universal membership. Obviously, this will require the admittance of Communist China, a step which in our judgment in no way implies moral approval of its government. Moreover, the rewards of such action would be great, not only in terms of facilitating a settlement in Indo-China, but also in providing an opportunity for face to face negotiation in the future.

It is our hope that our government will see fit to move along these lines. We believe that a program of this nature could restore U.S. leadership at Geneva, solidify democratic forces, and provide a moral basis for a policy consistent with American ideals.