

*Supply—External Affairs*

half a million American troops have been sent to Viet Nam, General Westmoreland is calling for another 200,000, to be matched no doubt by further escalation on the other side. The military victory promised so often by optimistic American generals and politicians is no closer. The weight of bombs dropped on Viet Nam, both North and South, exceeds the bombing of all previous wars. But it is still not enough; further escalation is advocated. Yet the U.S.S.R. and China have made it clear, however unwillingly, that they are prepared to compete in giving military aid to North Viet Nam.

For every American escalation there promises to be a counter-escalation. The situation has even gone so far that there are rumours of demands for the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Viet Nam. Such use has been described by the Prime Minister, amongst others, as madness. But who is sure that madness will not take over as the war continues and frustration grows? The Viet Nam situation poisons international relations throughout the world. Progress to a detente in Europe is suspended. I want to sum up the situation by quoting the words of a well known American historian and writer, Theodore Draper. These words come from an article in *Commentary* of March, 1968:

The American war in Viet Nam—

I emphasize the words, "The American war in Viet Nam."

—is a political debacle, a military folly and a moral disgrace. It has become a war to save American pride and prestige, not to save the Vietnamese people from communism or anything else. As long as the only thing that stands between the Vietnamese people and communism is the huge American army of occupation, the U.S. is buying time for South Viet Nam at exorbitant cost. The conditions which breed anti-Americanism are being burned into the Vietnamese consciousness more and more deeply and as matters stand now the communists will be the long term beneficiaries.

That is precisely the viewpoint that we in this party take with respect to the continuation of the war, namely, that it is aiding the cause of communism and taking away from the cause of American or western security. On November 16 the external affairs committee had before it as a witness a Buddhist monk, Mr. Thick Nhat Hanh, formerly director of the School of Youth for Social Services in Saigon, I think. He told our committee that the sheer weight of physical suffering is almost beyond comprehension and the tragedy is increased by the fact that probably well over half the casualties are civilians and

[Mr. Brewin.]

children. There had been, he said, a great deal of talk about peace and negotiations for peace but there has been very little reality behind it.

We in this party have clearly and consistently stated our view that American intervention in what was essentially a civil war has been without moral or legal justification. What is more, from the beginning we have said that it was doomed to futility. We have felt that so far from stopping communism, which was its avowed aim, it has been of tremendous aid to communism. Far from adding to American security it has undermined and will continue to undermine American security. The effort by force of foreign arms to dictate the future of Viet Nam has been a mistake, indeed, a hideous and tragic mistake.

However, it may be said that there is not much to be gained by discussing the past. One's emphasis should be on ending the war. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs has stated on numerous occasions, and I heartily agree with him, there is no way to end the war except by negotiation, or possibly by the total extermination of the people of Viet Nam, although I doubt if that would really end the war. It can be ended in only one way, by negotiation.

At the federal convention of the New Democratic party held in July we made this statement:

We join with U Thant, with world religious leaders and with leading Americans in urging the unconditional cessation of the bombing of North Viet Nam as an essential preliminary to negotiations. We urge the government in Hanoi to indicate clearly its willingness to enter into negotiations when the bombing has ceased.

● (4:10 p.m.)

Since that date the secretary general of the United Nations has sounded out opinion in many countries, and he said quite recently that, in his opinion, if the bombing were stopped North Viet Nam would enter into meaningful negotiations within two weeks. Other sources have reported the same thing from Hanoi, namely, that Hanoi is ready to negotiate if the bombing is stopped. I say that despite the many protestations of a desire to negotiate on the part of the United States administration it has not stopped the bombing of North Viet Nam, and therefore the onus for the failure to negotiate seems to us to rest directly on the United States administration.