

All these factors were weighed by President Johnson and his advisors before the peace missions were dispatched.

Peking has charged that America's search for peace is a smoke screen designed to obscure a desire to widen the war. Patently, it is not.

#### Awful Alternative

The U.S. has conducted its diplomatic operations without any fanfare; in the beginning it embarked secretly on its multi-pronged mission so that there might be the greatest chance of its prospering.

But Peking is probably alerting the people of Southeast Asia to the consequences of its intransigence. For, if the peace advances by the U.S. are rejected, the price of that stubbornness will come high.

If peace cannot be obtained by diplomatic and political means, then there is no course toward settlement other than that of war.

The U.S. has offered to treat with the Viet Cong and their allies, anytime, anywhere, with no advance conditions. The U.S. has offered to negotiate any subject relating to the crisis, for as long as anyone desires.

But, failing that, it is bound to seek a military solution with all the resources of its arsenal--except nuclear weapons.

It will not only be justified in doing so; it will be duty bound to do so. For if the U.S. deserted a country to which it had pledged its support against aggression, all the treaties which bind the free nations of the world together--and of which the U.S. is the keystone--would be perilously weakened.

Time is running out. The world is watching patiently, anxiously; but not with the painful patience of the men who are defending the purlieus of a militant Red empire.