

An Open Letter to the American People

A COUNT OF BROKEN PROMISES

"The air attacks on military targets in North Vietnam have imposed and will continue to impose a growing burden on those who wage war against the freedom of their neighbors . . .

"And if you are too busy or not inclined to help, please count 10 before you hurt."

*Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States,
Omaha, Nebr., June 30, 1966*

FELLOW AMERICANS:

We have counted ten, long past ten. It is a count of broken promises and endless guile.

Ten times we were told that our government seeks no military solution to the tangled issue of Vietnam. Ten times and more we have seen the use of force exclude all else.

Ten times we were told that our allies support us. We count more than ten allies who will not follow us into the Vietnam adventure.

Ten times we were told "we seek no wider war." For 20 months our government has widened the war. American planes from Guam and Thailand now bomb up to the frontiers of China. We are coming closer to the brink of ultimate war.

Ten times we were told that Americans are in Vietnam to help a legitimate government defend itself. More than ten times we have seen the rulers in Saigon exposed as a military clique that is not a government, not legitimate, and not really defending itself.

We were told that we are fighting aggression. Yet the leading experts on Vietnam say this is a civil war among South Vietnamese. The chief outside military force consists of American troops, ships, and planes.

We were told: "We want the killing to stop." Yet, we have seen it grow in scale and proliferate in technique. Daily our newspapers give us the count of the victims of bombs and napalm.

WE HAVE COUNTED ENOUGH TIMES

We will not consent by default to a policy so self-righteous, so unseeing, so ineffective, so dangerous and so cruel.

We call for a clear change in policy, with the resignation of those Cabinet officers most responsible for the current crisis.

We call upon our government:

1. To cease all bombing, North and South, and all other offensive military operations immediately;
2. To negotiate with the National Liberation Front and all other interested parties for a peaceful settlement;
3. To encourage and in no way interfere with the free exercise of popular sovereignty in Vietnam;
4. To realize that the interest of self-determination for the Vietnamese, as well as our own national interest, will best be served by termination of our military presence in Vietnam.

Continued

It now appears we were misled.

WE EARNESTLY PLEDGE THAT UNLESS THE PRESIDENT MOVES TO HALT THE ESCALATION OF WAR IN VIETNAM AND TO SEEK A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT AND ITS ALLIES, WE WILL BEGIN NOW TO WORK FOR HIS DEFEAT AT THE POLLS IN 1968 AND WE WILL ACTIVELY OPPOSE HIS SUPPORTERS IN THIS ELECTION YEAR.

Comments and contributions toward the cost of publication will be welcome. This Open Letter can be reprinted without permission. We suggest the widest publication, distribution, and use in letters to Senators, Representatives, and the President of the United States.

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