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HANOI QUOTES CLIFFORD ON U.S. DILEMMA IN VIETNAM

[Article: "Former Defense Secretary Clark Clifford admits U.S. policy of aggression is bankrupt and the U.S. is more isolated than ever"; Hanoi, Nhan Dan, Vietnamese, 10 July 69, p 3]

We have previously reproduced part of a long article written by former U.S. Defense Secretary Clark Clifford, published in the American press. In this article the former Defense Secretary admits the defeat of the U.S. and holds that all American fighting troops should be withdrawn from South Vietnam. The following is another part of that article in which Clifford concedes that the U.S. policy of aggression has gone bankrupt and that the U.S. is more isolated than ever.

On the failure of the American policy of aggression in South Vietnam, Clifford admits that:

"Vietnam obviously is a great problem for our country (the U.S.). Although the escalation of the war has been ended, we apparently are nowhere near a way out from this fact of the past, a fact which now has become a source of despair. All the provisions of military progress and military victories people refer to so often have turned out to be illusions as the fighting and the dying continue at a tragic rate. All over the country the talks about this are getting more heated and the debates have gained in depth. Our people are becoming more impatient and asking more and more questions about the war and about our (the American) involvement."

Clifford confesses that he has drawn the above tragic conclusion on the bankruptcy of the American policy of aggression in South Vietnam because he has had to experience and "drag his feet painfully from one concept to another". Clifford also recognizes that there are now in the United States more and more people critical of the American policy of aggression in South Vietnam. "An increasing number of people," Clifford writes, "believe that the current disappointing situation proves that our Vietnam policy was wrong from the beginning. Some people even suggest

that our problems in Vietnam have generated suspicion toward the whole foreign policy of the U.S. after World War II."

Clifford has reviewed all the developments of the American aggression in South Vietnam and bitterly admits that they constitute a whole series of setbacks leading to this disastrous result: the U.S. is becoming more and more isolated in the world, and worse still, even among its own satellites. As evidence of this humiliating isolation, Clifford cites his visit with Taylor, Johnson's special adviser, to the Pacific "Allies" of the U.S. (in mid-1967) with the purpose of pressing these satellites to send additional mercenaries to be used as cannon fodder for the U.S. in its war of aggression against South Vietnam.

"Our visit to the Allies' capitals," Clifford writes bitterly, "has brought about the most unexpected results. I realized at that moment that the countries which have made their contributions in troops no longer share our concern about the Vietnam war. General Taylor and I have asked them to increase their contribution, but, in general, our proposal seemed to be ignored." He says:

"Thailand, a neighbor of South Vietnam, with a population of 30 million, sent no more than 2,500 troops to South Vietnam and shows no haste to dispatch any more men.

"The president of the Philippines let Johnson understand that he wished us not to stop over the Philippines because the Filipino people might protest it.

"The Philippines has sent to Vietnam a public health team and an engineer battalion, but no fighting troops. It also let Johnson clearly know that it has no intention of sending any.

"South Korea is the only Asian nation to have a large contingent in South Vietnam, but the official speculation is that the People's Democratic Republic of Korea has prevented it from increasing its aid. Disappointing as those visits were, I did not give up the hope that our mission will be more successful in Australia and New Zealand. I remembered that Australia, with a considerably smaller population, had been able to maintain more than 300,000 troops abroad during World War II. So far, Australia has sent no more than 7,000 troops to Vietnam, so we could certainly have some hope here, but the Australian prime minister has been fully informed about the situation and has given us a whole lot of good reasons showing that Australia has done all it can and could not possibly do more.

"In New Zealand, we spent nearly a whole day discussing with its prime minister and his cabinet while hundreds of students surrounded the Parliament carrying signs with peace slogans. Those government officials, like other government officials, made it clear that any substantial

increase of troops was out of the question. Once, New Zealand happened to have 70,000 troops on many fronts during World War II. It has 500 men in Vietnam. I wonder if it is not the way it evaluates the grave dangers of the conflict.

"I came home, puzzled, worried, and deeply concerned. Is it possible that our idea of the threat to the stability of Southeast Asia and the West Pacific is exaggerated? Is it possible that the neighboring nations of Vietnam see the trend of world events in 1967 more clearly than we do? Is it possible that we are following up observations which could have been right previously but outdated now?

"In conclusion, although I still believe that I remain a faithful supporter of our policies, in the bottom of my heart I cannot help feeling a growing doubt. And this doubt is growing much stronger after I came home and after I attended the White House dinner honoring prime minister Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore. His nation has experienced the bitterness of defeat and foreign occupation during the Second World War, so he has refused to send a single man to Vietnam. When I asked him when he can send troops to Vietnam, he answered that he does not see the possibility since it would have an adverse political consequence in Singapore."

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