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VIET-NAM: IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL

No. 9

What would be the results of a precipitate, unilateral U.S. withdrawal from Viet-Nam?

1. The hasty withdrawal of large numbers of U.S. combat troops would give the enemy forces an immediate and significant tactical advantage. It would be technically impossible to redeploy rapidly a body of troops the size of our force in South Viet-Nam without greatly endangering many of the troops involved.
2. If U.S. withdrawal were carried out faster than South Vietnamese forces could fill the gaps, unprotected parts of the country would fall under Communist control. Such reverses would severely damage South Vietnamese morale.
3. The military and psychological advantage thus given the enemy would probably lead in time to a North Vietnamese takeover of the South and forcible imposition of Communist dictatorship -- a political system repugnant to the great majority of the people.
4. North Viet-Nam would deal harshly with thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of those associated with the long anti-Communist struggle. Precedents:
 - . The liquidation of at least 50,000 people by the new Communist regime in North Viet-Nam in 1954-56.
 - . The murder of some 3,000 men, women, and children during the North Vietnamese Army's brief occupancy of parts of Hue in 1968. Captured documents confirm that such purges are a deliberate element of North Vietnamese strategy.
5. Precipitate withdrawal would be considered around the world as a failure by the U.S. to fulfill an important international commitment. As a result, the risk of armed conflict in other areas of the world where peace has been maintained in part by a U.S. commitment--the Middle East, Europe including Berlin, Latin America--would be increased.
6. The 20-year effort in Asia for collective security against Communist expansionism would be dangerously weakened, with serious implications for all non-Communist countries in the area.

(over)

7. Political divisions in the U.S. could well be enlarged and embittered, rather than eased, by what many Americans would regard as a dishonorable course and one damaging to the national interest.

FURTHER REFERENCE: . President Nixon's November 3, 1969 televised address.
 . Viet-Nam Information Notes No. 6, Why We Fight In Viet-Nam, and No. 7, Viet Cong Terror Tactics in South Viet-Nam.