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Features)

Laos

ugh territory which would have been left to the absolute control of the Vietcong... Neither have we examined the problem of where to find enough men to maintain the strength of the ARVN in a country whose population is left to the absolute control of the enemy. Nor have we examined the problem of how to prevent the Vietcong from getting the rice, the rubber, and hundreds of other things which can be collected leisurely for export and purchase arms and ammunitions to carry on the war indefinitely and with many advantages on their side.

It would not be a bad idea for Mr McNamara to suggest to general Gavin to come to Vietnam and stand guard for half an hour on the 17th parallel or along the Lao and Cambodian borders, to see reality for himself instead of talking about strategy in the comfortable armchairs of the Pentagon, or to talk to the GIs who have taken part in the battles of Chu-Lai, Chu-Prong, Ia-Drang and hear what they have to say about being shot from behind by men who popped up from nowhere !

With regard to the enclave theory, I have discussed them in connection with Mr. Reston's ideas, and there is no need to repeat them here. Concerning the search of a solution through the United Nations or a Geneva Conference, the news of the last few days provide a cold answer to the general's proposal : the other side won't have it. If they have talked about peace, it is peace on their own conditions, because they believe they are going to win. There can be no peace until AND UNLESS the other side is convinced that it cannot win now, in ten years, in fifty years, or in a hundred years. Then, they will have to explain to their people as well as to the people of the South, and perhaps to the communist in other countries, too, what they sacrifice men, money, resources, and the prestige of the communist camp for. Perhaps Jaspao can do some thinking along these lines and put something of it in their 140 million leaflets.

We are told that those who spoke against US intervention in 1954, in particular general Gavin and general Ridgway have saved a lot of American lives. I do not agree with that view. If the United States had intervened then, a lot of lives would have been saved in the last twelve years (Vietnamese, Viet Minh. Viet Cong); and a lot of American lives and money would have been saved in the past two years, because we would have had a much better peace at Geneva in 1954.

On one thing I entirely agree with general Gavin : we should not be reluctant to express opinions, and our government should encourage us to express our opinions, even when we strongly disagree with the official point of view. What matters is not so much our views as the reasoning that supports those views, and the governments can derive tremendous benefits from looking closely at the reasons given, in order to think afresh about the problems on hand.

Newspaper Comments

(From col. 2)

U.S. problems

Presidents Johnson's decision has to face 3 problems :

1. Should bombing be re-

hard attitude, nobody can believe Somalia will ever succeed.