as well as the structure of American society is being warped by anti-democratic pressures, so that the longer a showdown is delayed, the harder it becomes to stage one. The extent of this damage is not known, but in some fields—education is a case in point—it will not be easily repaired.

Despite his latest and dizziest triumph McCarthy lives on borrowed time. But so did Hitler—for years—until his backstage sponsors finally overcame their distaste for his methods and placed him in power. And thus too could happen here, with or without gentlemen's agreements.

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**SOLUTION IN INDO-CHINA**

**Cease-Fire, Negotiate . . . by Bernard B. Fall**

"WHAT we have here is a sort of government dépassé—twilight government," said the French colonel in charge of the Pacification Bureau in Hanoi. "In our own area we control the cities and major roads from daybreak till nightfall. Thereafter the Viets have the country itself to levy taxes, attack our posts, and execute the 'Vietnamese traitors,' that is, the Nationalists who still profess to believe in victory for our side." Such, in a nutshell, is the situation in war-torn Indo-China, a country about eight times the size of the Republic of Korea, after more than seven years of bitter fighting. France has spent twice as much on the Indo-China war as it has received under the Marshall Plan for its own rehabilitation, and America has furnished much more military and economic aid—calculated on a per capita basis—than it ever gave to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. Why, then, has the war become a military stalemate in which the French and Vietnam Nationalists are unable to hold the countryside and the Viets, short of massive Red Chinese intervention, cannot hope to breach French defenses around the major urban strongholds?

Politically, the situation looks even more hopeless for the West. France has not succeeded in convincing the Vietnamese that it will make good its promises of full independence, though it has already granted more independence to Bao Dai than Ho Chi-minh ever asked for. At the same time the Vietnamese Nationalist government, by its accumulating psychological mistakes, has been divorced not only from the mass of the farmers but from its most promising military cadres. A young graduate of the Ecole Militaire Inter-Armes at Dalat said to me, "How do you think it feels getting oneself killed in the jungle for that man who comes up here to swear us in wearing a Riviera suit, a polka-dot tie, and inch-thick crepe soles?" He was referring to His Majesty Bao Dai, commander-in-chief of the Vietnamese forces, who has not yet been seen in the uniform of his army.

AS LONG AS the military situation had not too seriously deteriorated and as long as the Chinese Communists were committed in Korea, the possibility of a political solution of the Indo-China conflict was pushed into the background by everyone concerned. Now, however, the French are obviously eager to stop the fighting in any way possible, and the Big Four, influenced by the problem of German rearmament, have agreed to a broad conference on both Indo-China and Korea to be held at Geneva next month.

Repartition of the troops in the Far East would increase France's field forces in Western Europe and North Africa from about twelve divisions to an army of some twenty-two fully equipped and well-trained divisions and put a stop to the heavy drain of casualties on its elite commissioned and non-commissioned officers. The easing of the strain upon French financial resources would also speed up domestic economic recovery.

This line of reasoning has been expounded by the French left for the past seven years—with emphasis upon the fact that an end to the Indo-China conflict would mean "liberation from American tutelage." Last fall the debates in the French Parliament made it dramatically clear that the desire to put a halt to the war had cut across all party lines. It was a Gaullist deputy, a former general, who presented the problem in its simplest form: "Having promised independence to the Associated States, we would have to leave Indo-China even if we won a total victory. So what are we fighting for, and for whom?"

The vote to continue the war was more a matter of political pork-barreling than an expression of the deputies' feelings. The widespread desire to "get rid of the whole mess" was heightened by Ho's offer of peace talks made through a Swedish non-Communist newspaper and by Mr. Dulles's threat of an "agonizing reappraisal" of United States foreign policy if E D C did not go through. Another discouraging fact was the refusal of the Vietnamese "congress" which had been handpicked by Bao Dai, to rubber-stamp his policy of integration into the French Union or even to vote a motion of thanks to the French soldiers who were fighting and dying within gunshot of the building where the congress met. Few Nationalist leaders seem convinced of the "usefulness" of the war, not to speak of the possibility of an ultimate victory for France and the Nationalists.

That true talks must and will eventually take place is by now accepted by every responsible French politician. It is
merely a question of when, how, and with whom. A face-saving victory that would make negotiation palatable has eluded General Navatre for the past six months, and the military situation while by no means desperate, was never more humiliating than at this moment.

On the other hand, self-styled experts on both sides of the Atlantic have oversimplified the situation by comparing it to Korea. Both countries have a Communist government supported by the Soviet bloc and a Nationalist government supported by the West, but here the similarity ends. Korea, as a peninsula, has well-defined boundaries on three sides, while Indo-China's borders are so uncontrollable that their tracing is a matter of doubt and controversy. Korea is a country of bare hills, while Indo-China is 85 per cent covered with thick sub-tropical jungle which makes movement of large units impossible and considerably reduces the effectiveness of modern heavy weapons. It also renders enemy movements practically immune to air observation and bombing. A Western defeat in Korea would not immediately affect its neighbors, separated from it by hundreds of miles of open sea, but a Communist victory in Indo-China would immediately put all of Thailand and its vast open country between the Burmese border. In the latter area Kuomintang guerrillas are not the only foreign troops. The Cominform headquarters for all Southeast Asia are at Muong Lene, under the command of a Viet Minh general, Nguyen Van Long, and are protected by a Viet Minh regiment alternately stationed in Burma and Yunnan.

There can be no doubt that the United States has already considered what course it would take in the event of the loss of Vietnam. It is certainly not by sheer co-

incidence that General Donovan, wartime OSS chief, is now ambassador to Thailand. However, the separation from Vietnam of the ethnically related states of Laos and Cambodia—as was discreetly suggested in a Thai note to those states a few weeks ago—would have dubious results. The present peacefulness of Thailand, though hailed by the Department of State as the success of a "working democracy," is more probably due to the fact that Thailand is an extremely useful transit base for the Communist régime around its borders. Arms can be imported through it and such dollar-earning exports as opium, wolfram ore, and rice can be sent out of Viet Minh-held areas. No one has any immediate interest in disturbing the proverbial goose that lays the golden eggs.

WHAT CAN BE done, by the French alone or by the Big Four at Geneva, to bring about a cease-fire in Indo-China? Two alternatives may be ruled out—a "total" French victory and a fighting evacuation à la Dunkirk. A decisive victory would require a war effort which France could not make when the war was still young and certainly not now without depleting its European forces to the point of mortal danger. A fighting evacuation is equally senseless, for the army would have to take along 50,000 French civilians living in Indo-China, about 50,000 Eurasians who are French nationals, and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese too compromised to be left behind for mass "People's Court" trials. Thus negotiations offer the only solution, and the first step, as Nehru has suggested, must be a cease-fire.

A cease-fire, however, is likely to prove even more difficult to achieve in Indo-China than in Korea, where negotiations were held up for eight months, for in Indo-China no front and no battle lines exist. The French army guards the Red River Delta with pillboxes, forts, and bunkers, but French Intelligence acknowledges that from 30,000 to 60,000 guerrillas are within the Delta, including certain famous regiments. The same infiltration is found along the northern and central Laos fronts, the tiny sliver of French-held Annamite coast, and in sizable areas of southern Vietnam. An armistice would stop the French from hitting major enemy units while giving the Viet Minh a unique chance to enter

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This text is from The Nation. The Nation is a weekly magazine of literature, politics, and culture. It was founded in 1865 and is one of the oldest weekly magazines in the United States. The text discusses the political situation in Indo-China and the potential for a cease-fire. The magazine covers a wide range of topics, including politics, culture, and current events.
Franco-Nationalist areas in such numbers as to completely paralyze whatever remains of orderly government.

It has been argued that Indo-China should be partitioned across its waist, on the Sixteenth Parallel, just as Korea was divided. In that case the northern part, which contains the Vietminh's strongholds and is contiguous to Red China, would be left in the hands of Ho's regime. This would mean handing over to the Vietminh two-thirds of Vietnam's population, the bulk of its industry, some of Asia's best anthracite fields, the flourishing port of Haiphong, and the capital city of Hanoi, with its powerful transmitter and the country's only full-fledged university. Most of Indo-China's non-ferrous metals, including uranium phosphates, are also located north of the Sixteenth Parallel. Moreover, there would be no iron-clad guaranty against further Vietminh infiltration into the part of the country left to Bao Dai. The Franco-Nationalist side could hardly win popular support after having sold down the river more than one-half of the territory and about fourteen of the twenty-three million inhabitants of Vietnam.

If a cease-fire could be arranged, the most promising next step would seem to be the establishment of an intermediary government, after an internationally supervised cooling-off period. The West would still have a number of trump cards in Indo-China which the Soviet bloc could hardly match. The southern part of the country is its "iron lung," with its huge rice surplus and dollar-earning exports of rubber, pepper, coffee, and precious woods. It is obvious that, deprived of the south, the Ho Chi-minh regime would face either starvation—as it did in 1946 when it was deprived of southern imports—or a type of integration into the Red Chinese economy that would be the equivalent of annexation. And any Vietnamese, no matter what his political color, is highly wary of the Chinese "big brother." Therein lies the great opportunity for the West to use economic aid to swing the balance and substitute for the total loss of Indo-China in a creeping war the building up of a neutral regime. Such a regime would depend upon Western supplies to survive economically, for neither Red China, plagued by its own lack of consumer goods, nor the Soviet Union, already behind in its promised deliveries to North Korea, could possibly fill the immediate requirements of the ravaged country.

Political successes almost entirely due to the intelligent dispensation of economic aid have been won elsewhere—notably in Yugoslavia and Austria. Economic aid to all of Indo-China, under either United Nations or neutral auspices, might make possible a solution acceptable to both sides. Ho Chi-minh's interview with the Swedish Expressen made specific reference to such aid.

Any solution that accomplishes the effective neutralization of Indo-China would be more desirable than this hopeless stalemate in the jungle swamps. In this lies the importance of the Geneva conference. We need no illusions about Ho's regime, it is of course Communist-dominated. But so are North Korea and Red China, with whom the United States sat at the conference table for two years, and so is the U. S. S. R. and its satellites, with whom the United States and France, maintain normal diplomatic relations. A farsighted policy in Indo-China based on well-administered aid might do more to stem the Communist tide in Southeast Asia than the sending of a few technicians or of a few additional plane-loads of napalm.

CHINA'S IMPACT

Facts That Must Be Faced . . by J. Alvarez del Vayo

FROM now until April 26—and after China will dominate the international controversy. Within the United States it will be the most talked-about subject in the field of foreign affairs. European opinion and American opinion clash on this issue more than on any other. Summarizing the French position, Harold Calender writes from Paris in the New York Times of February 22: "These [French] experts consider that the issue of recognition of the People's regime is sure to arise sooner or later under the compulsion of realities." Summarizing the American reaction, William S. White reports in the same paper from Washington on February 23: "Most of the Republican Congressional leaders looked with reserve and misgivings to the forthcoming Geneva conference."

In this context the picture of Communist China today as drawn by non-Communist observers is of particular interest. During my recent stay in Geneva I had the good fortune to meet an outstanding United Nations authority on Asian affairs who recently spent several months in China studying its internal situation and talking with officials and informed citizens. What follows is an accurate résumé of a long interview he gave me just before I left.

The first thing to be kept in mind—he began—is that Communist China was born of a struggle not only between two rival factions or two opposing political conceptions, but between the 85 per cent of Chinese who wanted to be sure of getting their daily bowl of rice and the 15 per cent who, supported by foreign capital, wanted to go on living in luxury at the expense of the others. Anyway, Americans cannot with good grace complain if the Chinese decided to take seriously their denunciations of colonialism and poverty. Of the four freedoms proclaimed by Roosevelt, it is the third—freedom from want—that the Chinese, like the rest of Asia, have made the supreme goal of their struggle. Today there is no abundance in China; there is
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