

EMERGENCY BULLETIN

by Fred Cohen of of Pacific Studies Center Nixon's invasion of Cambodia revitalized a sleeping anti-war movement and generated an unprecedented shockwave of protests throughout the country. Yet, as in the past, those who have opposed American involvement in Southeast Asia have derived their strategy and tactics from a sense of moral outrage. Any anti-war movement which is to have the possibility of achieving its

aims must understand the structures of power in America and the foreign policy they have shaped. What follows is a sketch of the nature of power in this society and how the interests of the dominant power groups have determined U.S. policy in the Pacific Basin. From this analysis certain general conclusions concerning a strategy for forcing the U.S. to totally withdraw from Southeast Asia can be drawn.

### Private Power & Foreign Policy

Since World War II United States foreign policy has not been a series of tragic errors, nor has it been fundamentally irrational. Rather, it has had an underlying logic which is consistent with a certain conception of "national interests," and has been designed to promote a specific kind of growth and stability in the United States. This conception has been shaped by one crucial assumption held by all men who have formulated national policy during this century—corporate capitalism is both good and permanent.

The "national interests" which they seek to promote have actually been the class interests of the controllers of the country's largest industrial, commercial and financial corporations. Their major priority has been to maximize profits; and policymaking is structured to serve this end by working to preserve and expand the existing social system. These men have perceived the objective political, economic, and social needs of American society in terms of a healthy capitalism.

Following the Great Depression and the subsequent failure of the New Deal to lift the economy out of seemingly permanent stagnation, U.S. policymakers sought to save American corporate capitalism with a foreign policy designed to facilitate economic expansion. This increase in U.S. expansion abroad was seen as the only viable means to promote growth in the economy at home. Since that time the continuing fear of internal economic stagnation and the paramount desire for profit maximization have served to mold the long-term objectives of United States foreign policy.

Regardless of which particular men have been in public office, these structural imperatives have been the major forces acting to determine U.S. policy. The responsibility of government bureaucrats on every level is to develop policies which will enhance coporate growth and provide the needed stability. Their function has already been defined for them by forces operating outside the bureaucracy itself.

The importance of the economic role of the

Federal government has been constantly increasing since the Progressive Era at the beginning of the century. As Gabriel Kolko has convincingly argued in The Triumph of Conservatism, American corporations have been unable to provide the rationalization and stability that they need without the active support of the state.

This interdependence of the polity and the corporations also grew out of, and has continually been reinforced by, an interchange of personnel between them. Aware of the importance of political tools such as regulatory agencies, cabinet posts, and official advisors, corporate leaders have sought to directly control them, and thus have been both willing and anxious to spend time within the government. This analysis of government-corporate interrelationships is substantiated by the fact that between 1944 and 1960 slightly over 61% of those men who have occupied major positions in the executive branch originally came either from key corporate law firms or the major corporations themselves. 1

Complementing this formal control of government are a set of crucial informal relationships between the state and the economic elite. These informal ties have taken on two basic forms. One is the establishment of advisory groups or task forces dominated by members or direct representatives of the corporate elite. In the field of foreign policy a typical example of this kind of group is Nixon's Peterson Commission on foreign aid, which included men like Rudolph Peterson, former president of the Bank of America, and David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan Bank. Another pertinent example is Johnson's special advisory group on Vietnam whose eight members all represented either specific corporate interests or the overall class interests of the economic elite. 2

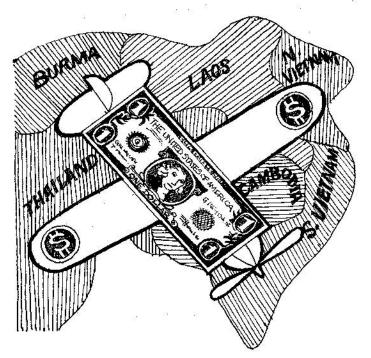
The second major form of informal corporategovernmental interaction operates through a number of important private organizations which are composed of leading members of the economic elite and a few of their favorite intellectuals. Among the most influential of these groups have been the Council on Foreign Relations, the Business Council, and Committee on Economic Development. Their role in formulating overall United States foreign policy was clearly presented in a State Department pamphlet which described that policy in the following manner:

They \( \subseteq \text{U. S. policies} \subseteq \text{ are distinctively American; in substance, if not in detail, they embody the recommendations that have been made by such representative bodies as the Committee on International Economic Policy of the Carnegie Endowment, the Council on Foreign Relations, the National Planning Association, the National Foreign Trade Council, and the Committee on Economic Development. \(^3\)

While this statement was written in 1946, the relationship between these groups and the government has not been altered during the subsequent decades.

The ideological and institutional power relationships described above have developed over a long period of time and have resulted in a foreign policy, which, independent of who is implementing it at any particular moment, holds as its major long-term objective the maintenance of the conditions required for U.S. foreign economic expansion.

The major view which has arisen over the past few years to challenge this thesis has been the theory of the military-industrial complex. Baldly stated, this position asserts that U.S. intervention in foreign countries has been promoted by the cooperative efforts of a group of industrialists who profit from wars, and an increasingly



powerful military establishment which is motivated by a warrior ethic.

One damning flaw in the first half of the argument is that while a large number of powerful American corporations profit from the production of the instruments of war, this production has gone on over the past 15-20 years with or without active U.S. fighting. Thus profits have come from the production of war materials and not from the actual waging of war. In fact, the overwhelming majority of war materials produced have not been used. Furthermore, most of the firms involved in war production are among the largest corporations in the U.S. (i.e., A.T.&T., G.E., G.M., etc.), and therefore have a high stake in overall economic stability which is undermined when the country is involved in a war.

The second half of the military-industrial complex argument, which maintains that there is a strong military influence over foreign policy, fails to confront the reality of the military's position within the government. Since the Second World War, decisions about both the size and use of the military have been made, not by generals, but by the civilians who have occupied the top positions in the Defense Department. These men have normally been either corporate lawyers like James Forestal, John J. McCloy, and Clark Clifford, or corporate executives like Charles Wilson, Robert McNamara, and David Packard. It has been these men and other civilians, not the generals, who originated and perretuate the huge post war defense budgets.

Even decisions of a more specifically military character have been made by civilians. For example, the decision to send massive land troops into Vietnam was made by a group of civilians, overruling the protestations of the generals who did not want to fight a land war in Asia. The military has not been a formulator of U.S. foreign policy; rather it has been an instrument of that policy. It acts in defense of American economic objectives abroad.

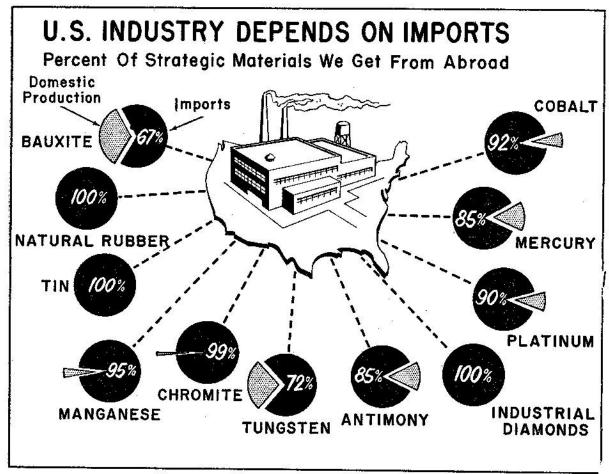
### Foreign Polcies Economic Base

There are three related economic needs which form the core of United States foreign economic objectives. These needs stem from both the problems of the domestic economy and the desire of the corporate elite for profit maximization. Of the three, perhaps the most commonly cited is the need for exports. While the quantity of exports may not constitute a very large percentage of GNP, their importance to certain critical industries make them qualitatively important to the whole of the economy. This is particularly true of the heavy capital goods (agricultural machinery, industrial

machinery, etc.), and new growth sectors (electronics, business machines, etc.), whose health and increased prosperity is essential if the economy is to avoid stagnation. In order to expand the quantity of these exports U.S. business has sought to keep an "open door" to the markets of the world.

The second qualitatively important economic need is raw materials. Modern industrial society demands a plentiful supply of many crucial materials. A large number of these either cannot be found in the United States or are so expensive that use of domestic supplies would be highly unprofi-

of U.S. foreign economic interests, have grown from \$11.8 billion in 1950 to \$54.6 billion in 1960 with an additional \$32 billion in other forms of provate holdings. There are two major reasons for this amazing growth in U.S. corporate investment abroad: the rising amount of surplus capital whice cannot be used profitably at home, and the extremely high rate of profit on foreign investments. The lowest average rate of profit on total investments abroad for any single year during this perwas II.5%, and the high was at least 19%.4 Both of these figures are considerably higher tha



Source: Department of State Bulletin (August 22, 1955), p. 304.

table. For example, the steel industry needs three main materials — manganese, tungsten, chromium — which cannot be obtained domestically at reasonable cost. Also of critical importance to other sectors of the economy are bauxite, tin, nickel, cobalt, etc. Supplies of these materials are mainly located in the underdeveloped countries (the third world).

While raw materials are probably the most important of U.S. economic interests in these areas, the poorer countries also provide many profitable investment opportunities. U.S. private direct foreign investments, the third major type

the normal rate of profit on domestic corporate investments.

# U.S. Economic Objectives the Pacific Basin

These economic needs -- exports, raw materials, investment opportunities -- form the basic long-term objectives of U.S. foreign policy. The purpose and goals of U.S. policy in any given area of the world depends on the potential of that region

to fulfill one or more of these needs. The Pacific Basin has been particularly rich in possibilities for U.S. corporations since the Second World War. With the defeat of Japan and the decline of Britain and France as contending powers, this entire area was left to the domination of U.S. capital.

Thailand and Indonesia are particularly important in providing profitable opportunities for U.S. investors, and in supplying many important raw materials. Thailand possesses vast and potentially rich reserves of oil, tin, and rubber. Most investment in Thailand comes in the form of U.S. owned extractive industries. Added profits are also coming from the numerous American banks which have moved to service these corporations? Another means used by corporations to extract huge profits from Thailand is to establish subsidiary production facilities in order to take advantage of the cheap labor. U.S. investment in Thailand increased from \$25 million in 1960 to about \$195 million by the end of 1968. But much more important than the current profits is the vast potential that this area provides for future corporate ventures.

A similar situation exists in Indonesia. Rich in supplies of rubber, copper, bauxite, platinum, zinc, tin, nickel, and oil, this country is also becoming a haven for U.S.-controlled extractive industries. By the middle of 1968 the Indonesian government had approved foreign investment projects totalling over \$300 million with a five-year goal of \$2.5 billion. Almost two-thirds of the planned investment is expected to be Americanowned. 8

Thailand and Indonesia are the two most important underdeveloped countries in that region. However, Japan is the key country in the entire Pacific Basin. Already it is the second largest market for U.S. exports in the world with the 1967 figure reaching over \$3 million. Furthermore, there is already much American investment in Japan and the promise of loosening legal restrictions makes the future even brighter.

While the United States has looked to both Japan and the other countries of Southeast Asia for meeting its economic needs, Japan itself is highly dependent on these Asian countries for raw materials, trade, and investment opportunities. Out of this joint U.S.—Japanese interest in maintaining control over the area, a nascent partnership in the fields of military commitment, aid, and investment ventures is rapidly developing. It is as a crucial junior partner in Asia that Japan assumes its major role in the United State's Pacific Basin strategy.

#### SOME BIG PLAYERS IN THE GLOBAL GAME

Сотрану	Total sales 196 (\$000)	Number of countries with 7 production facilities	Percent total assets abroad	Percent sales abroad	Percent net income abroad
General Motors	20,026,252	24	15#	14#	7#
Standard Oil (N.J.)	13,266,015	45*	56	. 68	52
Ford Motor	10,515,700	27#	40	36	9200
Chrysler	6,213,383	18	31#	. 21#†.	N.A.
Mobil Oil	5,771,776	38°	46	, N.A.: .	45
International Business Machines	5,345,291	14	34	30†	
Gulf Oil	4,202,121	48*	38	N.A	29
Du Pont (E.I.) de Nemours	3,102,033	16°	12	4	. N.A.
International Tel. & Tel					
Goodyear Tire & Rubber					
International Harvester	2,541,897	18≎	21#	17	10
Caterpillar Tractor					
Minnesofa Mining & Mfg	1,231,066	24	29	30	29
Singer					
Corn Products					
Anaconda					
Colgate-Palmolive					
National Cash Register					
Massey-Ferguson					
Heinz (H.J.)	690,863	15	55±	47	57
Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical	656,822	47 ,	32	. 33	33
Pfizer (Chas.)	637,776	32 ; , .	50	. 48	52
American Standard,				28	
Abbott Laboratories				26	26
U.S.M. Corp.	3.50				

<sup>\*</sup>Includes unconsolidated affiliates and manufacturing franchises.

Source: Fortune, (September I5, 1968) p. 105.

This complex set of economic interdependencies has determined the basic objectives of U.S. policy in the Pacific Basin. To maintain and increase profitable operations in the area, American corporations need social and political stability. However, preserving such stability has become a major problem, largely because American economic and political exploitations have sparked a number of indigenous revolutionary responses. These nationalist insurgencies are necessary in order to expel American business which is primarily responsible for the continued underdevelopment of these countries.

The control which U.S. corporations have over the natural resources of these countries is the most obvious form of this exploitation. Profits from the extraction of raw materials do not remain in the third world areas, but rather flow into the coffers of the parent, U.S.-based multinational firms. This process results in the

<sup>†</sup>Includes export sales from the U.S.

<sup>#</sup>Excludes Canada

<sup>‡</sup>Percent of net assets abroad

<sup>\*\*</sup>Ford's profits in the U.S. were substantially reduced by the auto strike.

removal of the most important potential source of development capital from these countries. Thus U.S. economic penetration into the third world hinders industrialization and reinforces the dependency of these countries on purchasing heavy industrial goods from the U.S. The local capital that does exist is eaten away by investment

"With its 100 million people and its 3,000 mile arc of islands containing the region's richest hoard of natural resources, Indonesia constitutes the greatest prize in the Southeast Asian area."—Richard Nixon—
in Foreign Affairs,
October, 1967

in American-dominated "joint" ventures which are directed toward corporate profits, not development.

The money which comes into the country through foreign aid also hinders development. One important factor is that this aid is almost always in the form of loans. The resultant debt structure forces these countries to use all of their available capital to repay the loans rather than using it for their own development. The "development" loans themselves are normally used either for the purchase of U.S. goods or for the building of infrastructure (transportation and communication systems). While the latter sounds like development, these facilities are only designed to directly service the corporations (i.e., transportation from mines and wells to ports).

The largest portion of U.S. aid goes toward strengthening the local military with arms and equipment. For U.S. economic policy in these areas perpetuates hunger, filth and squalor; and in response to these conditions rising indigenous national liberations are threatening American control. Such movements necessarily combine a program of economic nationalism and political self-determination as a means to allow the mass of the people in their countries to regain control over their collective futures. The most highly developed of these insugencies is the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (see 10-point program). 10

#### Fear of the Falling Dominos

Although the United States has few direct economic interests in Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia, American policymakers have long realized that if insurgents in one part of the Pacific Basin are successful in freeing themselves of U.S. control this example would very likely spread to the adjacent countries. The result would very probably be the expulsion of U.S. business from the whole of Southeast Asia.

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Source: U.S. Technical and Economic Assistance in the Far East. United States Mutual Security Agency, 1952.

It was feared that is one or more of the underdeveloped countries of Southeast Asia embarked on a nationalistic or socialistic form of development, they would naturally ally with China. Since the nations of Southeast Asia are natural trading partners the formulation of a socialist economic block of any of these countries with China would offer a viable and attractive alternative to international capitalism and would tend to pull Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, and the other countries of the region into its network. This understanding—the correctly conceived "domino theory"—was held as early as 1953 when Nixon, then vice-president, stated:

If Indo-China falls, Thailand is put in an almost impossible position. The same is true of Malaya with its rubber and tin. The same is true of Indonesia. If this whole part of Southeast Asia f If this whole part of Southeast Asia goes under Communist domination or Communist influence, Japan, who trades and must trade with this area in order to exist, must inevitably be oreinted towards the Communist regime." Il

The intervention in Vietnam was in large part an attempt to keep the dominoes from falling and to prevent this independent economic block from forming. It was also seen as a means of serving notice to the people of the third world that the United States was both willing and able to defeat any insurgency which might challenge U.S. hegemony in underdeveloped countries.

This decision to maintain a strong U.S. preence in South Vietnam has remained a constant hroughout the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon regimes. Despite Nixon's rhetoric of deescalation and the well-publicized troop withdrawils, the war in Indochina has been continually esalating since he took office. The level of ground combat in South Vietnam reached an all-time high n the summer of 1969 (later figures not available). While bombing north of the 17th parallel was haled in November of 1968, bombing of the south ncreased to a level where the average tonnage per nonth in this area alone now exceeds that dropped luring Johnson's administration when U.S. planes vere still heavily bombing both the north and the south, 12 Escalated destruction in Vietnam has been coupled with a drastic increase of the air var in Laos. The bombing there has risen from an everage of several thousnad sorties per month beore Nixon took office to an average of 20,000 per nonth since January, 1970. 13

The military objective of Nixon's strategy—a ecisive defeat of the National Liberation Front—s the same as Johnson's. During both administra-

tions this objective has been clearly demonstrated, not only on the battlefield, but also at the Paris Peace Talks where the U.S. has obdurately held to the position that serious negotiations cannot be started until the NLF disarms and leaves its own country.

Where Johnson and Nixon differ has been in the military strategy employed to achieve this end. Johnson's strategy was a combination of search and destroy missions and rural pacification. Both necessitated a tremendous number of troups and both failed because of the widespread support which the NLF has among the Vietnamese people.

Nixon's strategy has been one of forced urbanization and saturation bombing. The U.S. has been dropping such a heavy amount of bombs on the Vietnamese countryside that the agrarian population has been forced into a small number of urban centers where they can be controlled by a lesser number of American troops. This strategy has the advantage of enabling Nixon to escalate the war while at the same time soothing a distraught American public with the facade of deescalation through troop withdrawals. Thus, the recent invasion of Cambodia must be seen, not as a deviation from policy, but as a continuation and natural extension of the escalatory policy which Nixon has been following all along.



### The Logic of Intervention

The invasion of Cambodia was in fact predestined six weeks earlier when the CIA (or the Pentagon) instigated the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk and installed the right-wing Lon Nol regime. The major purpose of the coup was to establish a strongly anti-communist government in Cambodia which would subsequently launch military attacks against NLF and NV sanctuaries that have existed in Cambodia for a number of years.

Unfortunately for the U.S. position in South-east Asia, events since the coup have not pro-

"Thailand promises to be an excellent investment and sales area for Americans if the rebel insurgency can be contained."

> Chase Manhattan Bank, Economic Research Division, April 1,1969.

gressed as hoped. Sihanouk's ouster has unleashed a civil war in Cambodia which is seriously threatening the development of a stable pro-American Lon Nol government. An indigenous nationalist uprising of Cambodians, led by the Khmer Rouge, has already gained control over at least three key provinces and maintains partial control over five others. Even more threatening are guerilla forces throughout Southeast Asia which have organized into a lef-wing United Front of the Khmer Rouge (headed by Sihanouk), the NLF, North Vietnamese, and Pathet Lao.

While opposing forces from the left have been rapidly gaining popular support in Cambodia, Lon Nol's government has been crumbling from within. Much of his army has either defected or deserted and his only loyal base of support is the CIA-trained Khmer Serei. The possibility of an overthrow of Lon Nol, which most informed sources agreed was imminent, put Nixon in an extremely difficult situation. If he had not intervened in the deteriorating Cambodian situation, the indigenous Khmer Rouge would almost certain-Iv have taken control over the government. At that point the minimum military outcome would have been the solidification and expansion of Cambodia as a base for NLF and North Vietnamese troops. Even more dangerous was the distinct possibility that a communist Cambodian government would send its own troops and supplies to aid the Vietnamese in their fight against the United States.

Thus at the time Nixon decided to invade Cam-

bodia his options were very limited: either he could try to smash the Cambodian insurgency to preserve the pro-American Lon Nol government or he would have to face a probable communist takeover of Cambodia which would put the U.S. military position in Indochina in severe jeopardy. Since he has never contemplated total withdrawal, Nixon decided to make his stand before the U.S. position was further threatened.

He chose the course of escalation over that of withdrawl for the same reason that the United State originally intervened in Vietnam: to protect the lor term economic objectives of the U.S. corporations in southeast Asia. Some people feel that recent ex pressions of disapproval by a few isolated business men contradicts the above stated position. However the Business Council, an elite group which includes the heads of about 100 of the country's largest corporations, voted almost unanimous support of Nixon's move into Cambodia.

#### There Must be Some Way Out of Here

At this point it doesn't look like either Nixon or the powerful elite will extricate the U.S. from Southeast Asia. The American people now face the choice of a greatly prolonged war with its high costs in dollars and lives or finding some way to force U.S. interests to withdraw totally from the area.

One possible course of action which has been put forward centers on writing Congressmen or electing a large slate of doves in the fall. There is little in the recent past of the United States which suggests that this would be effective. In fact, the history of executive-congressional relations over the Vietnam question points out the impotence of Congress and thus the futility of looking to Congress as a force that can stop Nixon.

As delineated in the first part of this article, major national policy decisions are made almost and their counterparts in the leading American cor porations. Such policies are formulated in terms of the objective social, economic, and political needs of the broader society as they are perceived by those men who have the largest stake in the preservation of American society (the 100 largest corporations own 55% of the total net capital assets). Thus a significant change in the direction of most major United States policies can be effected—not by merely substituting one set of elected officials with another seemingly more "liberal" group-but through a radical transformation of the social and economic relationships which constitute the structures of wealth and power in America.

However, at this time a call for an immediate social revolution would be both futile and suicidal. While we must continue to build toward this long-term goal, we must also have a short-term strategy for forcing Nixon and the corporate elite to get out of Southeast Asia. Our potential power rests in our ability to make the domestic costs of continuing the war in Indochina so great that Nixon and the corporate elite will be forced to either reverse their policy in Southeast Asia or face growing chaos at home.

The first place where these costs can be raised is in the universities. The normal functioning of these institutions is essential to the continued growth and prosperity of the American system. By stopping all business as usual on the campus we are exerting a tremendous amount of pressure on the elite. This cost cannot be measured solely in terms of broken windows or dysfunctional institutions. It indicates a potentially greater loss. By demonstrating the growing alienation of youth and the willingness of youth to go outside of normal political channels to achieve their objectives, we are threatening the delicate social fabric which must function smoothly if American capitalism is to continue.

But we cannot limit our actions to the campuses. We must begin to broaden the active opposition to U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia to large sectors of industrial and lower-level white collar workers, as well as blacks, browns, and other third world people. It is these groups that pay the highest price for the war -- both in dollars and lives -- and it is they who occupy the strategic positions in the American economy upon which the power of the corporate elite rests.

The best way to begin is to transform the universities into permanent centers of the anti-war movement until the U.S. totally withdraws from Southeast Asia. These centers can be then used as a base of operations for expanding support and building alliances with broader sectors of the society. If such cooperation can begin to develop we should seek to expand the disruption of business as usual from the campuses and into the society at large. If this can be accomplished, it seems likely that the costs to the elite would be raised to such a point that they might be forced to change their policy.

By necessity this has been merely a sketch of a proposed course of action. More substance and detail can only be added through a process of assessment and reevaluation by all of those people who comprise the movement. But two things are certain: that we must make long-term commitments to building the anti-war movement and that this movement can no longer tolerate a strat-

egy based on opinions or beliefs. Rather we must determine our actions from a rigorous analysis of the overall political situation. To do otherwise is to insure our defeat and the continuation of an expanding genocidal war against the people of Southeast Asia.

—edited by Katherine Barkley and Mark Weiss, staff members of Pacific Studies Center.

#### Footnotes

- l. Computed from Gabriel Kolko's The Roots of American Foreign Policy, 1969. Table II, p. 20-21.
- 2. It was this group which convinced Johnson to reject the military's request for an extra 200,000 ground troops in Vietnam. For an illuminating description of this crucial decision see Townsend Hoopes' The Limits of Intervention, chapters 9-10.
- 3. Department of State, Why Lend to Britain, 1946. p. 7-8.
- 4. Kolko, Gabriel, The Roots of American Foreign Policy, p. 74-76.
- 5. See "The U.S. Military and Economic Invasion of Tahiland" in Pacific Studies Center's World Empire Telegram, Vol. 1, No. 1.
- 6. Daniel Wit, Thailand: Another Vietnam?, 1968. p. 80.
- 7. See "Indonesia: The Making of a Neo-Colony" in Pacific Studies Center's World Empire Telegram, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 6-15.
- 8. Ibid. p. 13.
- 9. Japan: Economic Yearbook 1968, p. 241.
- 10. Now available in Three Documents of the National Liberation Front, ed. by Gabriel Kolko, 1970.
- Il. Cited in Allan B. Cole's <u>Conflict in Indochina</u> and International Repercussions: A Documentary History, 1945-1955. p. 171.
- 12. Both facts from Kolko's introduction to Three

  Documents of the National Liberation Front,

  p. II.
- 13. Pacific Studies Center, "Operation Total Victory."

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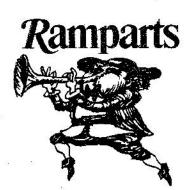
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