

The sudden, extreme, and completely unwarranted interpretation of the Republican policy staff report by some commentators, is to say the least, rather astonishing. I got no such impressions and came to no such conclusions. In a capsule, it is a complete, authentic, well-documented, historical report on our involvement in Vietnam; a recital of Republican positions in the past, and two basic questions concerning the Party commitments in the future. The questions do not suggest what position if any, the Party should take. The only suggestion is that the Party might agree to seek answers to the two questions of our national interest in Southeast Asia and how far to go in support of that interest.

It makes no suggestion that (1) We modify our support of the President (2) that we increase or diminish our troop strength (3) that we escalate or de-escalate the conduct of the war (4) that we retreat or withdraw (5) that we disavow our obligations under the SEATO Treaty (6) that we pressure Vietnam into a course of action which it might be reluctant to take.

The basic questions have been and are being raised in many quarters by many people and many organizations and are indeed a proper field of inquiry and exploration at any time.

There is an over-riding fact which the report does not dispute or ignore. It is the fact that we are in Vietnam, 400,000 strong, and that our peace efforts through many approaches, in the utmost good faith, have proved abortive. Nor does it hint that the position which the Republican Party should take, should be altered, regardless of what a further examination of our national interest or further involvement might disclose.

Preserving wholly the right of full and fair inquiry and criticism we reiterate our wholehearted support of the Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces. We reaffirm our position of standing four-square behind him and our field, air and sea commanders in Southeast Asia as, with our superb fighting men, they fight to win this struggle against Communist aggression.