THE VIETNAM WAR is moving towards a new and even more dangerous stage. U Thant has warned that it may even be the beginning of a climacteric World War III. This warning underlines the urgency of a renewed wave of protest actions, in Australia and the world over. It raises to a new level the imperative need for joint action of the socialist countries, with an urgency that requires a massive increase in military and material aid to back the moral support already given by most of the world’s people.

Burning indignation, moral condemnation and even the worldwide protests have not yet been enough to stay the hand of the warmakers headed by Johnson. One can understand the anguished cries of conscience that call for a confrontation to stop the endless series of crimes that go further and further beyond limits only recently believed impossible by world opinion—napalm, mass bombing aimed at civilians first of all, mining of irrigation works and the open seas, torture, gas and chemical war.

Even sincere friends of the Vietnamese people are saying that they cannot win, that US imperialism will overwhelm them by technological barbarity and force of numbers. But this view is rejected by the Vietnamese, whose opinion has been stated to Tribune correspondent Malcolm Salmon in these words:

Some foreign friends tell us “The Americans are committing the crime of genocide but the Vietnamese are committing the crime of suicide”. We are grateful for their concern but they are wrong. We are confident that we can survive and win against all the Americans can do to our country, South and North.

The concern of Vietnam’s friends is understandable. There has never been such an apparently unequal war in all history. Not satisfied with using the full might of their own armed forces, the Americans are pressing willy-nilly into service all possible allies. Arrayed against 30 million Vietnamese is an unholy alliance of the United States, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines, not to mention the army of the puppet Ky regime. Taken together, the six allies have a population of nearly 300 million. Industrially, Australia by itself surpasses Vietnam.
Yet what is the reality of the war, after all? The Americans are not winning; this in itself is a colossal, humiliating defeat. The progress of the war is subject to increasing American censorship and biased reporting, a tacit admission of the reverses they are suffering. Every so often, a great operation is proclaimed with a fanfare of trumpets, only to fizzle out into silence. What has happened to Operation Attleboro, to the Mekong Delta pacification campaign, and a score of others? The operation in the North West, allegedly to forestall an invasion from the North, has failed, with heavy American casualties and heavy losses by the puppet army, unreported as usual. In the midst of this operation, the US base at Bien Hoa is once again attacked by guerillas—and Bien Hoa is supposed to be in a pacified area, long occupied by the elite US Marines!

People's war is the invincible force against which all the might of US imperialism crashes in futile fury. This people's war increasingly receives powerful reinforcement in the form of advanced arms from the USSR and other socialist countries. Vietnamese pilots are training at Soviet airbases, learning to fly MiG121's, so feared by US pilots. More and more SAM missiles are shooting down more and more US planes. US plane losses already run into thousands, and these losses will grow.

Westmoreland and other generals now call for more and more troops, more planes, more bombings, a wider and dirtier war, a total war that demands also suppression of domestic opposition. This is not a sign of strength or looming victory, but a sign of desperation and feared debacle.

Far from suppressing opposition in America, the threatened debacle of US aggression is continually propelling new forces into at least conditional opposition. Governor Romney, contender for the Republican nomination for the Presidency, seems to be exploring the possibility of a political coup like Eisenhower produced in 1954, promising peace in Korea. J. K. Galbraith, former US ambassador to India, recently accused some of President Johnson's advisers of trying to bail out their past reputations at the cost of genuine peace efforts in Vietnam . . . (those) who have staked everything on the possibilities of a military solution. (Australian, 12/5/67.)

This type of criticism, whatever its motivation, reveals both the crisis of US policy and its blatant, brazen immorality. If it is indeed true that Vietnam policy is influenced by domestic political considerations, the incredibly sordid immorality of the US aggression has plumbed new depths of depravity.
This moral crisis of the capitalist West broadcasts corruption from its centre in Washington. The socialist Harold Wilson, according to two writers in the London Sunday Telegraph, has struck a bargain with Johnson. George Ball, former US Under-Secretary of State, is reported as saying:

Any British Prime Minister can have what he needs in support of the pound and of East of Suez defence. But Wilson can have more—he supported the President on Vietnam and this gives him a pretty good bank balance over here. (Australian, 10/5/67.)

This certainly casts a new phosphorescence of corruption on the Menzies-Holt deal with Johnson. Holt’s complete cynicism recently found expression in his defence of US bombing of civilians in Vietnam. He said:

It is unfortunate that civilian casualties are an accompaniment of war... But it can be fairly claimed that efforts have been made, so far as humanly practicable, to avoid causing damage to the property and harm to the life and limb of civilians in this Vietnamese campaign. (Hansard, p. 2031.)

Mr. Holt casts himself in the role of the Pharisee in the parable of the Good Samaritan, with one difference. The Pharisee only walked on the other side of the road to avoid the man injured by robbers. Mr. Holt washes his hands of responsibility for actions he not only condones but also helps to perpetuate.

What hypocrisy, what cynicism, is displayed here, when even the censored Australian television shows films of villages deliberately burnt, civilians bashed and children blasted with napalm!

The agony of Vietnam is incredibly more painful because the war is waged precisely against a whole people. To the Americans and their allies, all Vietnamese are enemies, and the bombings in the North are specifically to deter alleged intervention and, hideously, to raise the morale of the South.

Australians who oppose the war in Vietnam, on whatever grounds, have the clear duty to step up their actions, exposing all the cynical immorality of the justifications for this most unjust and horrible war of our time.

Whether the motivation for opposition comes from morality, religious or humanist pacifism, or working class internationalism or from considerations of Australia’s place and destiny vis-a-vis Asia, the duty is clear.
AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN POLICY and official morality were again revealed in dubious light with the Government's attitude to the Greek military coup. With indecent haste, the Government recognised this military-fascist regime, washed its hands of any responsibility for its citizens of Greek origin, with Australian passports, who had visited Greece for Easter.

This in face of spontaneous protests by thousands of Greek immigrants, indeed the whole community except for the wealthy Royalist-fascist fringe, and from Australian unionists, democrats and the Opposition. This despite clear evidence that this was a brutal military-fascist coup, undertaken only weeks before an election that would clearly have resulted in victory for a democratic coalition, and following a series of governments without mandate concocted by Constantine and his reactionary group.

The full extent of the repression, and the danger of an Indonesian-type massacre are withheld from Australians. Over 100,000 Greeks are on the sinister islands of exile, or crammed into mainland jails, schools and even theatres commandeered by the military. The military junta has ordered its troops to shoot on sight anyone even reading the posters and leaflets that have appeared overnight throughout Greece. They banned the celebration of the Orthodox Easter, permitted even under nazi occupation.

The military-fascist dictatorship is shaky and fearful, for it rules against the popular will and depends only upon violence. Great danger exists precisely because it may unleash a bloodbath; tremendous possibilities exist for democratic victory because the coup has clarified the deep and vicious anti-popular character of the military clique, the monarchy and the small minority of wealthy men in whose interests these reactionary forces act.

An immediate, vigorous and broad movement in Australia is needed, swelling world efforts to save the lives of thousands and prevent Greece returning to fascist rule.

Military dictatorship is a menacing feature of world politics. With the active support, connivance and even direction of the Central Intelligence Agency, army dictatorships exist everywhere the West has influence. From South Vietnam, where the CIA had Diem murdered and the military installed, to Latin America, Africa and now Greece, military dictatorship is the rule rather than the exception.

When the full story of the Greek coup is written, it will show, in sinister detail, the already clear outline of CIA involvement.