SOME FACTS ABOUT THE ANTI-VIETNAM CAMPAIGN

Statement by the Hon. Malcolm Fraser

Malcolm Fraser, Federal Member for Wannon stated that over recent months there has been a widespread campaign in Australia and in the United States to weaken our resolution in support of South Vietnam. Those who undertake this campaign have little interest in the truth and use falsified propaganda.

Unfortunately, he said, it is very often difficult for well-meaning people to distinguish between the true and the false and thus it is quite possible for well-meaning people to lend their support, unwittingly, to these efforts. He then went on to cite one or two instances.

Recently there was a widespread distribution of an American journal called "Ramparts". An Australian edition was published which was not identical to the American edition. On page 15 there is a picture of a Vietnamese child allegedly the victim of American military action. This picture was not in the American edition. The photograph was actually taken by a free-lance photographer called Horst Faas. It is a photograph of a 12 year old girl. The original picture was issued by the American Information Service and it was, in fact, a picture of a girl who had been orphaned by Viet Cong action in 1965 in an area in which there had been no United States activity. During the same attack 400 Vietnamese were killed, including scores of women and children. The photograph was originally published in "Life" Magazine with a proper inscription to it. Another photograph was also used in the magazine which had originally been taken by a photographer, George Szabo, in Saigon in March 1966. This was a picture of two orphan children in an orphanage in Saigon. The Viet Cong had thrown a hand grenade into a bus in which one of the children was riding with his parents, both of whom were killed. Here again the editors of "Ramparts" have alleged that these children have been wounded as the result of American action.

Mr. Fraser said that although this is typical of the falsehood which is involved in much of this propaganda, it is not restricted to this field. A short while ago a correspondent for the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation went to North Vietnam to gain evidence to be used at Mock Trials for alleged war crimes. The trials, held in Stockholm, found the United States, Australia, South Korea and New Zealand guilty of aggression. The report made by this correspondent was published in the reputable English journal, "The Economist". The magazine, however, made it quite plain that it wasn't one of its own correspondents but rather a correspondent for the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation who had written the report. The article alleged that American bombing of the North had done a great deal to damage
Health Services and destroy hospitals. Mr. Fraser said that he knew for a fact that the Americans go out of their way to avoid civilian targets and casualties. Recently the article was quoted by a Member of the House of Representatives and he claimed that the article was reputable because it had appeared in the "Economist" and had been prepared by an "Economist" reporter. He didn't mention, as the "Economist" did, that it wasn't an "Economist" reporter, that the report was not compiled specifically for the "Economist" but for the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

Mr. Fraser then went on to say that these are just two instances of the manner in which people can be misled. The extent of the misunderstanding indicates the success of the general Communist plan to confuse the public mind about the Vietnam commitment. They hope that our resolution will weaken and that our determination will fail. The sooner they realise that there is no chance of success in this, the sooner there will be a possibility of peace in Vietnam.