S© to the NEWS
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GAUVIN ON VIETNAM

In the final hours of the fall of South Vietnam, the news media printed and aired extensive wrap-up coverage on the entire tragedy in Southeast Asia. Somehow, however, our gigantic news gathering facilities failed to interview the man who is probably the most objective authority 011 what happened in Vietnam since the Paris Agreement was signed in 1973.

He is Michel Gauvin, now serving as Canada's Ambassador to Greece, but, more importantly, the first president of the International Commission of Control and Supervision set up to supervise enforcement of the Paris Agreement.

In a recent interview which was conspicuously not covered by the U.S. press, Ambassador Gauvin stated bluntly that "the seeds of the defeat of South Vietnam were sown in the Paris Agreement which was imposed on the South Vietnamese against their will and better judg ment.*n.*

He told it like it is **when** he described the violations of the Paris Agreement which began the very day it was signed in January 1973, and the refusal of the United States to do anything about those violations over a two-year period.

"The Ho Chi Minh trail was made into a two-lane highway. Roads were built for the sole purpose of moving troops and supplies rapidly. Ammunition dumps were established in South Vietnam for a final assault, while 170,000 North Vietnamese troops were introduced

(more)

into South Vietnam in addition to the 150,000 which the Paris Agree ment allowed to remain there.

"Economic aid was provided to North Vietnam not only from the Eastern bloc but also from the Western bloc. The U.S.S.R. and China competed during the last two years as to who would grant greater military support."

The final defeat of South Vietnam, according to Ambassador Gauvin, can be attributed to the "demoralization caused primarily by the failure of the United States to stand by its moral commitments." He predicted that this sorry tale of South Vietnamese disaster and American humiliation "cannot fail to have serious repercussions on the unity and cohesion as well as the determination of the allied nations to defend their common freedom."

If we are to prevent such unhappy consequences, the first step is for some of the U.S. news media to publicize Ambassador Gauvin's objective appraisal of how South Vietnam was lost to the free world.

Subsequent to the Gauvin interview, we learned that, prior to the Paris Agreement, President Nixon gave South Vietnam two solemn written commitments. The first, dated November 14, 1972, said that the United States would "react very strongly and rapidly to any violation of the [Paris] Agreement." The second, dated January 5, 1973, stated that we would "respond with full force should the settle ment be violated by North Vietnam."

The question is, why didn't the United States honor its commit ments to respond "rapidly" and "with full force" when North Vietnam violated the Paris Agreement throughout 1973 and 1974?

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