

# Peace Leader Says Clash with China Near

Fifth Estate Collective

1967

NEW YORK—Rev. James Bevel, national director of the Spring Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam, assailed President Johnson for turning a deaf ear to the growing anti-war sentiment in the United States.

Rev. Bevel rebuked the President in connection with the latest U.S. bombing raids close to the center of Hanoi. He said that Johnson was “power mad” and “in a futile attempt to cover up his own mistakes, the President is driving this country closer and closer to a nightmarish confrontation with Red China and nuclear catastrophe.”

The National Director of Spring Mobilization said that Johnson was ignoring the will of the people and said that his group would intensify a “massive nonviolent program of resistance to the war.”

Mr. Bevel said that he was disturbed that the President had not seen fit to reply to a telegram sent to the White House, advising Johnson that a delegation would be in Washington on May 17 to express their determination that the war be stopped immediately. A delegation representing the half million Americans who demonstrated against the war on April 15 in San Francisco and New York City; will knock on the White House door on May 17, even if Johnson still hasn't replied to the wire.

The date of May 17 was chosen for the confrontation because it is the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools. The date underscores the organization's emphasis on involving large numbers of black people in the peace movement by stressing the theme that the U.S. policy in Vietnam borders on the genocide of non-white people.

In replying to criticism by General William Westmoreland that anti-war groups were prolonging the war and are unpatriotic, Rev. Bevel said that “the concern registered by hundreds of thousands of Americans that the U.S. role in Vietnam is evil is in the highest tradition of free dissent as established in the U.S. Constitution. I ask General Westmoreland: Did the 500,000 Peace Marchers manufacture the napalm bombs that have maimed or killed Vietnamese women and children? Did we destroy villages and rice paddies leaving peasants without shelter or nourishment? Did we ‘accidentally’ bomb ‘the wrong villages’? Did we murder over half a million innocent Vietnamese citizens? Did we send over 10,000 American boys to their death, 50,000 to the jungles to be wounded, and 470,000 more to fight and perhaps die in a fruitless, illegal war?”

Rev. Bevel said that Westmoreland's statements this week “smacked of the days of McCarthyism” and reflected the administration's attempt to harass the peace movement via the House Un-American Activities Committee and the F.B.I. who harassed members of the Rosebud Sioux Indian tribe for participating in the April 15 Mobilization.

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