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"Group organized to support war in Vietnam"

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Two veterans of the war in Vietnam have organized a group at the University of Montana to support the war and the policies of the U.S. government in Asia.

Lance Bourquin, former Marine sergeant and Dan Rockwell, former Navy radarman, formed SAM, Support America, to "let the guys in Vietnam know there is something back home in the way of support instead of just dissension." Both are freshmen at UM.

The newly-organized group is drawing up a constitution and making plans to form chapters on other Montana college campuses and eventually throughout the nation. Thirty men and women have joined the group which is scheduled to get into full swing winter quarter.

The idea for the organization originated with Rockwell, a 21-year-old high school dropout from Simms, Montana who took correspondence courses during his sparetime in the Navy so he could pass the University entrance exam. Rockwell served aboard two destroyers, both of which shelled Vietnam. He was released from active duty August 30, 1967.

Rockwell contacted Bourquin, also a high school dropout, who graduated from Helena Senior High after his discharge in October of 1966. He formerly was from Miles City before joining the Marines in September of 1963. Bourquin, 22, was an infantry squad leader specializing in guerilla warfare in Vietnam and took part in about 200 patrols and ambushes against the Viet Cong.

Bourquin said the group believes "The people in America should have a greater fear of communism and understand the long-range consequences if the United States should pull out of the war." He explained the consequences would probably include a communist effort to take over the Philippine Islands, Japan, all of Southeast Asia and eventually, Australia.
Rockwell added "Australia--well, they're just like us so people should be afraid."

SAM was also organized to inform the public of the purposes of the war and of the reasons for staying in Vietnam. Bourquin and Rockwell feel groups in opposition to the war are receiving all the publicity and the other side should be presented.

Rockwell noted the importance of American medical aid and food supplies to the Vietnamese people. Bourquin said most Vietnamese are born in poverty and have very little chance to come out of it. "If we build them up and get them on their feet they can hold their own free elections. If they elect a Communist government in a free election, then we can pull out in good conscience," he added.

"The Vietnamese people are the important issue," Bourquin said. "Right now all they want is to be left alone in peace and safety, but if we pull out the communists will grind them down just as they have in China."

Rockwell said the ricelands of Southeast Asia were the first goal of Red China in its campaign of world conquest. The population of China is growing tremendously each year and China wants Asia's food.

"The United States," he said, "has its choice of standing up to China now or later. If they take Vietnam they'll want the rest of Asia and we'll have to stop them somewhere."

SAM is an informative, non-violent organization. Bourquin and Rockwell agree, violence definitely is not the answer to combat dissenting groups, nor are they depending on marches to voice the group's opinions. Their method is to inform through the public media.

The group believes the majority of people in the United States support the war. "Peace organizations are small groups of people with big voices," Rockwell said, "and SAM intends to become a big group of people with a big voice."