



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO A GROUP OF GOVERNORS OF
SEVERAL STATES OF THE AMERICAN UNION**

Monday, 17 November 1969

We are truly honoured to receive the visit of this distinguished group of Governors of several States of the American Union. Be assured of Our heartfelt welcome, and of Our gratitude for your thoughtful kindness.

In your persons, We once again salute the United States of America, “a country so free, so strong, so industrious, so full of wonders . . . where a populous nation founds its very modern civilization upon the brotherhood of its citizens” (4 Oct. 1965). You and your people have been most generous in assisting less fortunate nations, “All of you, each in his own way, are the builders of a new world. We entreat Almighty God to enlighten your minds and strengthen your determination to alert public opinion, to involve the peoples of the world . . . to promote mutual assistance among peoples . . . to form a more effective world solidarity . . . to bring about the development of peoples and to save the peace . . . in order to achieve a responsible development of mankind, in which all men will have an opportunity to find their fulfilment” (*Populorum progressio*, Nos. 83-84).

We trust that the American people will never become discouraged in their efforts to aid the developing nations, and that they will resist the temptation to furnish such countries with armaments which menace human life and security. “Men cannot love one another with offensive arms in their hands” (U. N., 4 Oct. 1965). To supply needy peoples with armaments instead of food and medicine would indeed be to give them, instead of bread, a stone; instead of fish, a serpent (cf. *Mt.* 7, 9-10).

We are well aware of the many problems which confront you in the government of your own States, and We assure you of Our prayers that God may guide you and your legislators in finding solutions which envisage “the social and economic progress both of individuals and of the whole of

human society, and which respect and promote true human values” (*Humanae vitae*, No. 23).

Expressing Our best wishes for yourselves and your families, and for the peoples of your States and your Nation. We gladly invoke upon you and them divine guidance and strength, and abundant blessings of prosperity and peace.

It is with much interest that We observe the events taking place in your country during these days. We have pondered upon the wide-spread manifestation which requests an end of the war in Vietnam, which has now been going on for years, without any prospective solution on the military level, and is costing so much in expenditure of means, and above all of human lives. We feel We can say that no one desires more than We do, that that war, and every other war, should cease; and it is Our fervent wish that it may cease soon.

We note with satisfaction that this is also the resolve, newly affirmed recently, of your illustrious President, and We cannot but encourage him in this. Nonetheless, We also understand that the right mode of ending the conflict demands, in the present circumstances, a well-meditated and responsible procedure; not only to avoid neglecting international obligations, which honour, and the necessity of not betraying the confidence of one’s allies, require should be fulfilled; but also in order that the cause and the ideal proposed to your fellow-citizens, for which so many have made the sacrifice of their very lives, that is: helping a people which is weak and deserving of assistance, to defend their right to self-determination and to the free promotion of their peaceful development- that this cause and this ideal should not be denied.

We are confidently hopeful that all those who have a part in the Vietnam war may help make the negotiations now being held easier and speedier for each other.