express their own opinion, I am sure that hundreds of thousands of soldiers that fought in Korea, and fought in World War II, were not exactly enthusiastic about some of the things that were done in their units and so on.

But I don't think—I think when you get down to low-level—you are going to get those kinds of things, and people can say that if they like. It is just like a conscientious objector in some cases. But, on the other hand, at the top, you have the option of supporting or resigning. In the political system, you can bet your bottom dollar if you resign—and I have thought about that—they will put somebody in your place that never will oppose them on anything. You are not going to get replaced by somebody that will succeed in preventing the action that you are concerned about.

Mr. STRATTON. General Lavelle tried that for a little while. I think it was the same sort of thing you were talking about. He wanted to knock out some substantial targets and he went ahead and knocked them out, but he wasn't supposed to.

Admiral MOORER. I think General Lavelle, he was tied up with this protective reaction rule, where he said in effect we are going to get attacks from this point anyway, so we will attack them first, which makes a lot of military sense. But his problem was a little different, Mr. Stratton, in the sense that when he reported—when they started the sorties, they did not point this out. This was not put in the report. And I think that was what General Ryan found fault with Lavelle. There wasn't a military man in the world who didn't think what he had done was exactly right. But he in effect did not turn in an accurate report, and that is where he got into trouble.

Mr. MCDONALD. Just one final point. In your discussions with the Secretary of Defense during your time as Chief of Naval Operations or Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or in your discussions with the President, was it ever clearly stated to you, at least where it was clear in your mind, as to what the objective in Vietnam was, or was that a wavering target?

Admiral MOORER. No, I think you probably described it properly. It was a wavering target. Of course, it was a spillover from the old containment policy, to stop the Soviets, or the Communists, rather, from spreading in areas of strategic importance to the United States and subjugating human rights, and so on, in the process.

But, no, there was never a clear-cut statement of national objectives in that war. And I think that the young soldiers, the people that really suffered in that war, were the young lieutenants and captains that had the combat troops in that heavy foliage, up forward. They were being rotated every year, so they never had any unit fix, and they never got to know each other. The young lieutenants who were expected to mold these people together into a fighting unit—I think they had the most difficult assignment of any military man in the history of our country.

Mr. MCDONALD. Thank you, Admiral.

Mr. NICHOLS. Mr. Lally.

Mr. LALLY. Only one question, sir. To pursue Mr. Ray's question about the reliance of the Secretaries upon the civilian staffs rather than the Joint Chiefs, last year witnesses, primarily former Secre-