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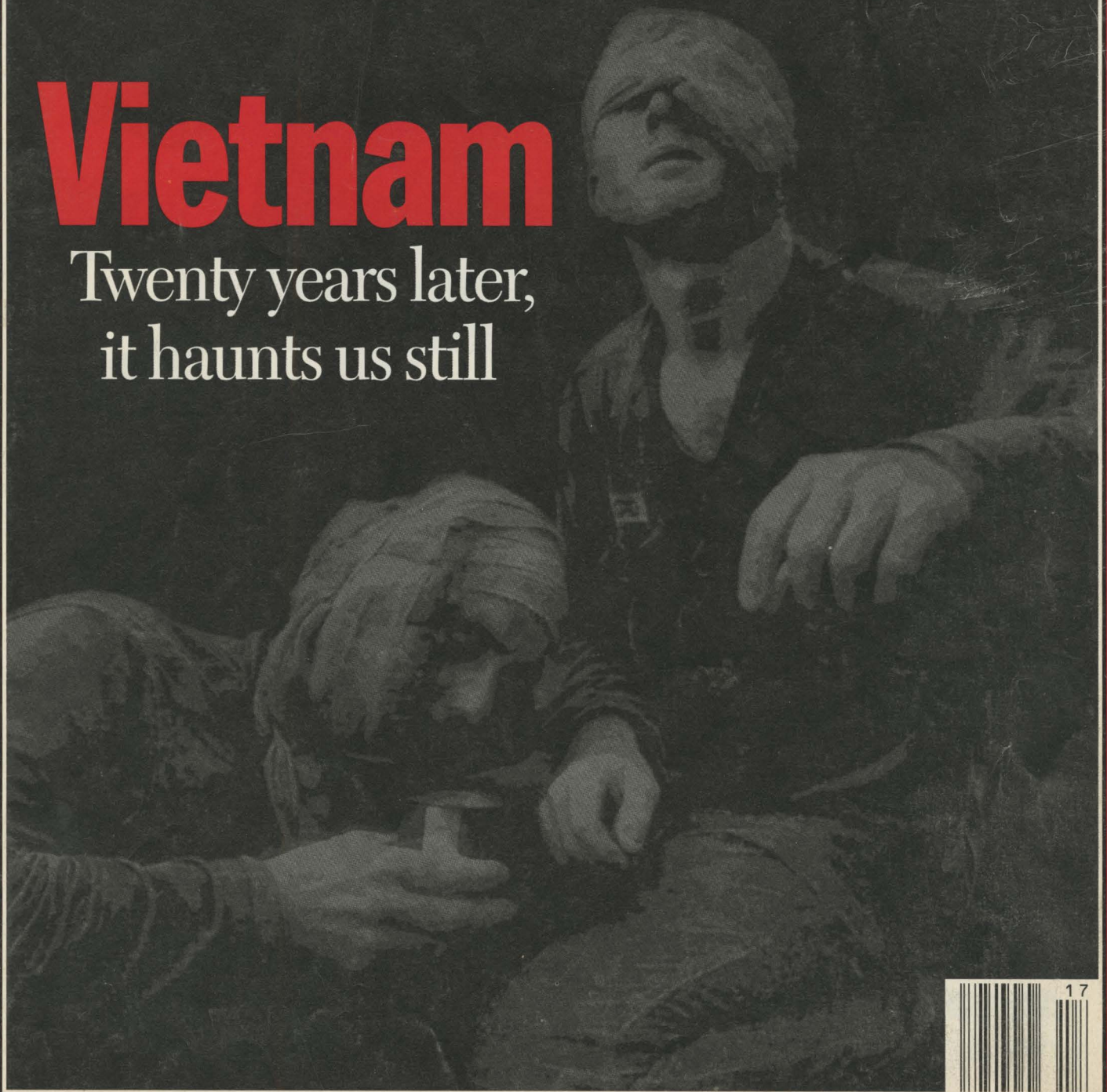
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Vietnam

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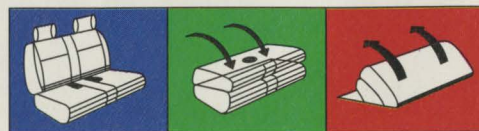
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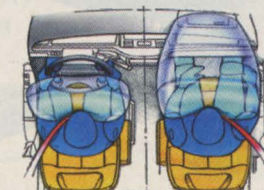
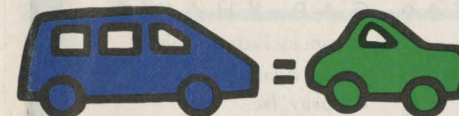
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APRIL 24, 1995

TIME

VOL. 145 No. 17

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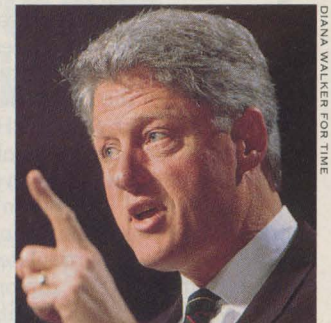
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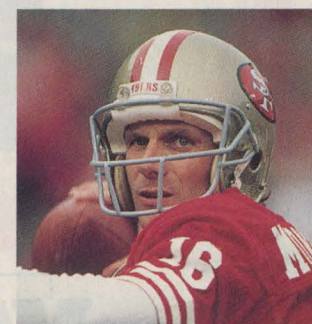
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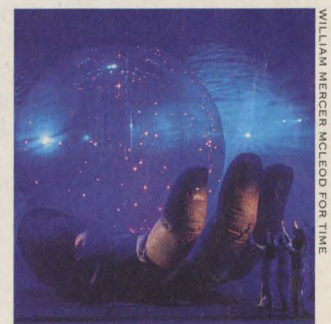
Politics: Clinton tries to organize a re-election team



COVER: 20 years after the fall of Saigon, war's agony remains



Sport: Say it ain't so—Joe Montana calls it quits



Show Business: Vegas glitz rises to a whole new level

TO OUR READERS

FRANK GIBNEY'S FIRST VISION OF Vietnam was postapocalyptic. "The ghosts of the war were everywhere," he recalls of his trip in March 1984. "The piles of Huey chopper parts at Tan Son Nhut airport, the musty bar of the Caravelle Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi rats scurried through the hotel; the water was cold." There was an air of huddled secrecy. "You couldn't get a straight answer out of anyone. The people who could articulate the state of affairs were diplomats, themselves grasping at bits of information."

Today Gibney is TIME's Hanoi bureau chief, heading the first official bureau of an American news-magazine to reopen in Vietnam since the war ended. The country, he discovers, is still caught up in an epic struggle, but this time a kind of *Paradise Regained*. "You have to strain to find the war now," he says. "And it's beside the point." Everywhere, the economy is booming, and, says Gibney, "everyone wants a piece of Vietnam's future." Even legendary war hero General Vo Nguyen Giap, now in his 80s,

who used to talk of nothing but the war, is snapping up books about development. "Vietnam," Giap told Gibney, "will be one of the key topics of the 21st century."

In this century, however, the war re-

fight forever and not win—certainly until my son, then six, reached draft age. Let's hope nothing ever tears us apart this way again." The Vietnamese too, Gibney notes, "are beginning to re-evaluate the terrible losses of the war."

Born in New York City and raised in Japan, Gibney has been in Asia since the early '80s, covering the region for *Newsweek* until last year. Last week he was filing reports on Vietnam to our offices in New York as he lay on his bed, suffering from a couple of herniated disks. (To work on his computer, Gibney "had weights and pulleys rigged up.") The fact that he roams from a base in Vietnam, says Gibney, typifies today's mercurial, surprising Asia. "Five years ago, the story here was coups and authoritarianism. Now it is business. It's all new, and it's great to have a front-row seat." Even from flat on his back.



A COUNTRY REBORN: Gibney, right rear, with village officials near Pleiku in Vietnam's Central Highlands

mains a living memory, in both Vietnam and America. Senior writer George Church, who put together this issue's history of the last days of the war—as recalled by its survivors—remembers a personal dilemma. "Originally, I was a strong hawk," he says. "But the 1968 Tet offensive convinced me that we could

Elizabeth Valk Long
President



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Sensible solutions #9

Put the national interest first

For the past eight weeks we've been suggesting some areas of legislation for the 104th Congress to consider for debate as it tries to move the country forward.

We've called for passage of a presidential line-item veto, for civil justice tort reform, for the use of risk assessment/cost benefit analysis in the regulatory arena, the reduction of government spending and excessive regulatory costs, and for adjustments to the Alternative Minimum Tax, among other things.

These are major issues affecting the nation's ability to control government spending and to enable American companies to compete more effectively in today's global markets.

Some progress has been made, particularly in the House of Representatives. But much more needs to be done.

It's time to get it done.

We know there will always be partisan politics—after all, nobody has all the right answers. But that doesn't mean there has to be knee-jerk reactionary politics.

Nobody can deny that our elected representatives have an obligation to represent the people of their home states and districts. But they are also members of a national governing body and, thus, have an obligation to the country as a whole, as well.

An easy task to balance the two? Hardly, but these are the men and women who fought for the right to do it—who said they could do it better than the other candidates. The electorate believed them and voted for them. And now they have the chance to prove they can do the job.

There are many voices raised in Washington—including ours, as we testify for or against particular pieces of legislation. That's what the democratic process is all about, and Congress should hear the different viewpoints. But at the end of the day, Congress and the Administration ultimately need to take the broad view and act for the nation first.

If the most recent election told us anything it was that the American people were trying to deliver a message against "business as usual" in Washington. They were hoping to get a Congress that would take seriously its role as lawmakers and enact the legislation to get us moving again. And, of course, there was also the hope that the Administration would not stand in the way of legislation designed to benefit the nation as a whole.

Now, the rosy promises of earlier days of cooperation between the administrative and legislative branches appear to have wilted in the heat of politics as usual. It's time to put aside the rancor and return to a more conciliatory tone. It's time for Congress and the Administration to start working in tandem on the key issues confronting us all. It's time to pull together in the national interest.

This message is the last in a series. If you would like copies of the entire series, please call 1-800-481-1919.

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