

WHY MUST OUR MEN DIE AND KILL — IN

1. ARE WE SERVING HUMANITY?

Our napalm incinerates whole families. Our chemicals poison their crops. Our grenades are tossed into tunnels full of children. Our Saigon allies decapitate prisoners and show their heads as trophies. Some are thrown alive from helicopters. Suspected enemy sympathizers are tortured, and entire villages razed, down to the last cooking pot and the last scrawny hen, because, as an American officer put it, "Terror is the only way we can win." N.Y. Times 10/17/65

It is true, as General Sherman said a century ago, that all war is Hell. But our war in Vietnam is peculiarly dirty and cruel, in its involvement of civilians, its one-sidedness in the combatants' military and industrial potential, and its lack of convincing objectives and motivation. When the world's mightiest nation, with complete control of air and sea, with immense weapons superiority, can defeat an under-developed country one-seventh its size only through terror (if at all), one is forced to conclude that the adversary has the active support of a decisive proportion of the people in the invaded country. The inference has, indeed, been corroborated repeatedly by American sources in Vietnam. We are waging in large measure a war against the Vietnamese people. This is why a strategy of terror is practically inevitable.

Senator Young of Ohio states that the CIA hires agents to commit atrocities and leave "evidence" pointing to the Viet Cong. Former Master Sergeant Donald Duncan of the U.S. Special Forces describes to the New York Times how the green beret troops are trained in torture techniques, and says of his duty in Vietnam, "The whole thing was a lie."

Such are the reasons why 2700 American religious leaders wrote an open letter to the President pleading, "In the Name of God, Stop It!" This is why, when Pope Paul says, "Re-examine your stand," he is addressing us too.

What gives us the right to tell a mother on the other side of the world that her child is "better dead than red"?

2. ARE WE DEFENDING DEMOCRACY?

The Geneva Armistice Agreement of 1954 promised elections within 24 months for all of Vietnam. As non-belligerents we did not sign the document, but we gave our word to abide by it. Yet when Ngo Dinh Diem refused even to discuss elections with North Vietnam, we backed him. Why? Because, as President Eisenhower admitted, in free elections at least 80% of the Vietnamese would have voted for their national hero, Ho Chi Minh.

Our protegee Diem (Johnson called him "the Churchill of Asia") ruthlessly suppressed all opposition. When our government could no longer prop up his tyranny, it encouraged a coup that led to rule by a string of military non-entities. The latest of these, Nguyen Cao Ky, brags that he has only one hero in history — Adolf Hitler. This is the man who rated a VIP welcome in Hawaii! For him U.S. conscripts are expected to risk their lives.

Freedom in South Vietnam is a fiction. The people there, thanks largely to us, lost their big chance to make a choice.

In 1965 Johnson's own fact-finder, Professor Henry Kissinger, discovered in Saigon rampant graft, aversion to reform, ruinous inflation, and among the ruling class a "loathing for the peasants." Such are the fruits of our eleven-year "experiment in democracy."

As Ambassador Kennon made clear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is absurd to expect playboy Ky to change this. Ky and his coterie are Diem all over again.

3. ARE OUR ACTIONS LEGAL?

Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter reads, "All members shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." When the United States Senate ratified this splendid expression of "man's last, best hope," it became the Supreme Law of the Land. Yet in Vietnam we have made a scrap of paper of this solemn treaty.

To our violation of U.N. Charter and Geneva Accords we have added violation of our own Constitution, which assigns to Congress alone the power to declare war. We have been cynically maneuvered, step by small step, into what Walter Lippmann calls a "surreptitious war," to the point where emotions vanquish reason, truth flies out the window, dissent becomes "disloyalty," and too often our elected representatives in Congress deteriorate into rubber stamps for the Executive Branch.

4. WHAT 'COMMITMENT' TO SOUTH VIETNAM?

It is a myth that we are either morally or legally bound to give Saigon military aid on anything approaching the present scale. No such promise was ever openly discussed or clearly stated. Only last Fall President Eisenhower declared that all he promised Diem was economic aid. President Kennedy repeatedly stressed that Americans were in Vietnam as advisors only, and that the war would have to be settled by the Vietnamese themselves. In any case not one of the Saigon regimes has ever produced any of the reforms originally demanded as a condition for our help.

It is not honest for us to speak of a commitment to a country whose "government" has changed hands by force as many as eight times in eighteen months, in a veritable comic opera of military shenanigans, a "government" which was our invention in the first place and which owes its day-to-day survival to our naked power alone.

Finally, we can have no legal commitment to a country which legally does not exist. THERE IS NO SUCH NATION AS SOUTH VIETNAM. Under the Geneva Accords the 17th parallel was to be a temporary military demarcation line and "should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary."

5. ARE WE FIGHTING FOREIGN AGGRESSORS?

The only foreign troops in Vietnam are Americans, together with mercenaries and token forces from a few satellites and allies. THERE ARE NO CHINESE OR RUSSIAN COMBAT TROOPS IN VIETNAM.

It is wrong to think of "aggression from the North" for several reasons.

First, to think of Vietnam as two countries contradicts a thousand-year cultural heritage as one people. How can Vietnamese "invade" their own country?

Second, it is wrong to think of the fighting in terms of North versus South, much less Vietnamese versus Viet Cong. The VC are not only Vietnamese, but they are mainly Southerners. Our own State Department's White Paper (1963) could show only eight VC prisoners who were born in the North. Furthermore, it could show only 2 1/4% of VC arms as being of Communist origin. These basic facts have been established beyond argument from many American sources, including statements by Generals Harkins, Westmoreland, and Stilwell. The few thousand North Vietnamese troops in the South today—a mere trickle compared to our huge force—were largely sent after we began to bomb the North.

Our "foes" then are not foreign aggressors. They are 250,000 guerrilla fighters who control two-thirds of what we call "South Vietnam," and according to Senator George McGovern "their leadership embraces a broad cross-section including many non-Communists."

"I am firmly of the belief that no amount of American military assistance in Indo-China can conquer an enemy that is everywhere, and at the same time nowhere, an 'enemy of the people' which has the sympathy and covert support of the people." John F. Kennedy, 1954

Many are the same men, or sons of the men, who in dogged pursuit of their independence fought the French, then the Japanese, then the French again, and finally home-grown dictatorships utterly dependent on American backing, for a period of over thirty years. It is no wonder they have the solid support of millions of their countrymen.

6. CAN WE POSSIBLY 'WIN'?

General James Gavin warns against escalation and says China may be forced to throw her 700 million people into the war. Pro-administration military analyst Hanson Baldwin says Vietnam alone could absorb ONE MIL-

VIETNAM?

LIEN AMERICAN TROOPS.

Senator Mansfield reported that despite enormous American escalation the Viet Cong made a net gain of many thousands of troops in 1965, which trend will almost certainly continue, and that we actually lost territory.

Unless we are ready for nuclear genocide—which could easily become nuclear suicide—we must face the fact that, as Senator McGovern says, "A military victory for our side is impossible."

Why should we believe that government "experts," with a record of eleven years of mistakes in Vietnam (like the prediction that bombing the North would solve everything), are any less wrong about the chances of success for massive ground war? President Kennedy listened to the experts in the CIA and State Department, and after the Bay of Pigs said, "How could I have been so stupid?"

Three successive administrations in Washington share the blame for landing us in this predicament. They all pursued a policy based on false premises and nurtured on incompetence and deception.

They never learned that we cannot win people by slaughtering their kinsmen and laying waste their country. An American officer, viewing the charred remains of a bombed-out village, remarked with greater wisdom, "We have just recruited a hundred men for the VC."

7. IS OUR SECURITY THREATENED?

Since it is a little difficult to imagine the Viet Cong invading Waikiki, what is the underlying fear which in the eyes of good friends of America in such places as London and Tokyo has made us a bit "barmy"? It is what Mr. Johnson calls the threat of "Chinese domination over all of Asia." Secretary Rusk, who was 100 per cent wrong ten years ago about the USSR running the show in China, is similarly obsessed today with the notion that China wants to "take over" Southeast Asia. These are gross distortions of Chinese foreign policy. Communist China has neither seized nor threatened any territory for which she cannot advance a plausible claim on historic grounds; this includes Formosa and Tibet. Her many thousands of miles of common border with weak states like Pakistan, Burma, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Nepal are peaceful, and respect for them is guaranteed by firm treaties. In the Indian border incidents it is a matter of record that China had appealed to New Delhi for many months to negotiate, without success; and none other than General Maxwell Taylor testified in Congress that it was the Indian troops who advanced, into the disputed territory first. UPI 4/17/63

"I think things will change in China, as they changed in Russia. . . . A new generation of Chinese leaders will come . . . the counsels of patience and restraint have been more effective . . . than the counsels of violence . . ." Diplomat George Kennon, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

8. WHAT IS THE REAL CHALLENGE?

The challenge is not China or Communist aggression. The challenge is social revolution, springing from man's perfectly legitimate determination to overcome poverty and oppression. When Peking leaders encourage "wars of liberation," they are not threatening to make war themselves, but lending mostly verbal and moral support to indigenous uprisings in colonial and under-developed countries.

The more we undercut people's hopes of peaceful access to justice and progress, by sponsoring any degenerate military dictatorship that spouts an anti-Communist line, the more sure we can be of an eventual day of violent reckoning. Why must our overheated imaginations picture every angry, tattered peasant as a threat to our security? Our ancestors fought a violent and bloody revolution for their vision of a better life. Washington and Jefferson would have been hanged as despised rebels if the respectable Establishment of their day had beaten them. Why must their descendants so often end up on the side against the people?

"(Massive military involvement by U. S. ground troops) would mean that we had become a colonial power, and . . . everyone knows colonialism is dead." Henry Cabot Lodge. 1964

General Edward Lansdale, one of our top strategists in Vietnam, said that the rebels there "have set loose a revolutionary idea," and ideas never have been, and never will be, "contained" by bullets and barbed wire.

That is the trouble with the "Domino Theory." Revolution does not travel mechanically from border to border, nor is it spread by outside military aggression. It arises spontaneously at scattered points on the globe, and takes different forms according to local conditions. Thus Burma and Cambodia, on China's doorstep, remain non-revolutionary, while Cuba, across the world, goes Communist. This is why drawing lines of military "containment" is futile and irrelevant. We must accept the idea that some countries will go Communist voluntarily and that we can still deal with them peacefully and productively. We might still make of Vietnam a friend like Tito's Yugoslavia.

9. WHAT ARE WE HEADED FOR, AT HOME?

Tomorrow Brazil may erupt, next year Africa. Are we really prepared for a world full of Vietnams? At the cost of scores of thousands of our best young lives? If we choose this road, we may as well write off the "Great Society," as a hollow mockery, its chances of survival as flimsy as our chances of salvaging a trace of democracy and civil liberties.

A small foretaste only, of the deception that will be increasingly practiced on the American people, is the Administration's concealment of numerous peace initiatives from Hanoi, and its false insistence that Hanoi demanded American withdrawal before talks could begin. But these, after all, are the politicians who campaigned on a peace platform and right after elections entered on a program so militaristic and aggressive that it won its loudest applause from the extremist right-wing Republicans.

It is doubtful that our leaders' ability to manipulate news and to manipulate the American public will prove up to the task of controlling stark economic forces. We are already spending some 30 million dollars a day in Vietnam. At this rate inflation, tax increases, and severe domestic skimping are virtually inevitable.

Mariner Eccles, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, warns grimly of "economic ruin," and urges, "under no circumstances escalate."

"I cannot conceive of a greater tragedy for America than to get heavily involved in an all-out war (in Southeast Asia)." Dwight Eisenhower, 1954

10. WHAT ABOUT LBJ'S 'PEACE OFFENSIVE'?

Recent moves of the Administration seem to be concessions to its critics at home and abroad. Thus, whereas the President for a long time opposed negotiations, he lately affects a desire for "unconditional" negotiations. He gives the appearance of yielding, by denying any desire to keep troops or bases in Vietnam, by agreeing to use the Geneva Accords as the basis for talks, by pretending willingness to negotiate with anyone, anywhere, anytime, and by taking the issue to the U.N.

Unfortunately, what the right hand giveth, the left hand taketh away. The Administration nullifies each and every one of its apparent concessions:

- It builds huge bases obviously meant to last many years.
- It insists, in clear violation of the Geneva Accords, that the "independence" of South Vietnam must be guaranteed, and that U.S. troops will remain as long as the security of the Saigon government is deemed—by us—to be in doubt.
- It refuses to negotiate with the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong), which is the real adversary, or to concede them a rightful place in a coalition government.
- It goes to the U.N. after resuming raids on the North, and long after any real chance for the U.N. to succeed had faded.

Above all, while talking peace, the Johnson Administration has strenuously and persistently enlarged the scope and the intensity of its military aggression.

As long as these policies and practices continue, our much vaunted "unconditional" negotiations will remain a farce and a bluff, regardless of how many special emissaries scurry to unlikely corners of the earth.

HOW CAN WE END THIS

We believe that a number of concrete proposals are so clearly implied in this text as not to require elaboration. In this class are appropriate recognition of the Viet Cong, as advocated by Senator Kennedy, and dropping the fetish of an independent South.

The main thing is to mount a CREDIBLE peace effort instead of widening the war; and to clarify objectives and terms, for the benefit not only of the Vietnamese but of the American people. This calls for frank recognition that our present Vietnam policy is IMMORAL, ILLEGAL, AND DANGEROUS TO OUR NATIONAL INTEREST.

We do not minimize the psychological barrier to this achievement. We hear much about how difficult it is to get out of Vietnam. Of course. It is always harder to follow the path of moral courage. A wise American jurist,

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WRITE OR WIRE OUR SENATORS TO SUPPORT MORSE,

CRUEL AND SENSELESS WAR?

Senior Judge Henry Edgerton, of the U. S. Court of Appeals, recently said that "staying in Vietnam is unthinkable." He went on to add that not to admit a mistake is no less an act of moral cowardice in a nation than in an individual.

What we have to decide is in reality simple—whether saving thousands of Vietnamese and American lives is not more important than saving face for a few politicians.

Some of us think this country is big enough to survive a mistake, and even big enough to survive admitting a mistake. The world learned, too late—at Nuremberg—what to expect of a nation obsessed by delusions of omnipotence and self-righteousness. The world expects far better of the United States.

TO STOP THE WAR IN VIETNAM

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