



How Vietnam Was Lost

by John F. McManus

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Belmont, Massachusetts — The news out of South Vietnam is full of Communist advance and South Vietnamese defeat. Yet the word “defeat” does not fully describe what is happening, for there have been no major battles. The government forces have either unilaterally withdrawn or simply disintegrated—conditions which indicate the breaking of the will to resist, an absolutely fatal development in any combatant.

Along with the reports of the collapse, the press has been filled with a stream of photos depicting the pitiful attempts of men, women, and children to flee from the Reds. Each photo has served as a reminder of numerous snarling college students of the late 1960s who insisted that the Communists were “liberators” and that the Vietnamese people would choose Ho Chi Minh if given a chance to vote for him.

None of those college geniuses wanted to be reminded that, in 1954, over one million Vietnamese had abandoned their homes and livelihoods in order to escape from Communist rule. As hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese again vote with their feet today, we wonder whether any of the militants who cheered for the Reds realize now how wrong they were, or whether any of them even care.

What Went Wrong?

To all intents and purposes, South Vietnam is lost. But it was not lost in the past month, and it was not lost when Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon agreed to their shameful treaty. South Vietnam was lost when Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon insisted that victory was not the goal in Southeast Asia. The fate of South Vietnam, and of the rest of Southeast Asia, was further sealed when Congress and those same Presidents inaugurated and increased our nation’s aid to and trade with the Communist nations of Europe. For it was those tyrannies that supplied the Asian Reds then, and still supply them today.

Results of the Vietnam War

We attempted to tell those college audiences, and anyone else who would listen, that in addition to what had befallen the Vietnamese people, the Vietnam War had actually been a war waged on the American people by their own government. Because of the way it had been conducted, it had needlessly ruined our currency, demoralized our military, increased federal government power, divided our people, and weakened our nation psychologically—all goals of the enemies of the United States for decades.

Later on, we forecast that the “peace with honor” treaty of 1973, which left large portions of South Vietnam in the hands of the Communists and allowed the North to keep approximately 200,000



troops within South Vietnam's borders, would only lead to the collapse now being witnessed by the whole world.

Our Policy Must Be Changed

The war in Vietnam dragged on for years because it served the purposes of those on both sides who so arranged it. The current advance of the Communist forces, and the spreading demoralization of any opposition to world tyranny, should come as no surprise to anyone.

America's dual policy of appeasement and support of Communism everywhere has invited the tragedy now befalling South Vietnam. It has also contributed mightily to the accelerating demise of our own national stability and independence. If allowed to continue, such conduct can only lead to the total triumph of tyranny.

Unfortunately, there seems to be little reason to expect any change in the disastrous policies of the past few decades.