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Shaking the Blood-Red Hand: Clinton Recognizes Hanoi's Barbaric Regime

As a Rhodes Scholar during the latter part of 1969, young Bill Clinton was devoting much of his time to dodging the draft and organizing anti-Vietnam War demonstrations both here and abroad. In a December 3, 1969 letter sent from England, he acknowledged: "I have written and spoken and marched against the war. One of the national organizers of the Vietnam Moratorium is a close friend of mine. After I left Arkansas last summer, I went to Washington to work in the national headquarters of the Moratorium, then to England to organize the Americans for demonstrations here Oct. 15 and Nov. 16."

Father Richard McSorley, a radical Jesuit priest, professor at Georgetown University, and one of Clinton's anti-war comrades, recounted in his 1977 book *Peace Eyes* how the demonstrations in Britain were initiated by a group of Americans who "had the support of British peace organizations," including the British Peace Council. McSorley described his own participation in an anti-war demonstration in front of the U.S. Embassy in London on November 15, 1969: "The next day I joined with about 500 other people for the interdenominational service Most of them were young, and many of them were Americans. As I was waiting for the ceremony to begin, Bill Clinton of Georgetown, then studying as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, came up and welcomed me. He was one of the organizers."

Strategy of Terror

Writing in THE NEW AMERICAN for February 22, 1993, Senior Editor William F. Jasper recounted: "The British Peace Council, with which 'organizer' Clinton was involved, is the British branch of the World Peace Council, a Soviet front directed by the KGB. These demonstrations were not merely 'anti-war,' they were anti-American, pro-Viet Cong, pro-Hanoi, and pro-Ho Chi Minh. They were used as propaganda by the communist and liberal media to undermine American morale."

At about the time that the future U.S. President was helping to organize these demonstrations, the North Vietnamese and their Viet Cong lackeys in the South were also engaging in demonstrations — of their incredibly ruthless brutality. In early 1970, Douglas Pike, a United States Information Agency officer, penned a monograph entitled *The Viet Cong Strategy of Terror*, excerpts from which were published by the *Washington Post* on May 15, 1970. Examples of Viet Cong strategy during 1969 included:

- March 13th: "Kon Sitiu and Kon Bobanh, two Montagnard villages in Kontum province, are raided by terrorists; 15 persons killed; 23 kidnapped, two of whom are later executed; three longhouses, a church and a school burned. A hamlet chief is beaten to death. Survivors say the communists' explanation is: 'We are teaching you not to cooperate with the government.'"



- August 13th: "Officials in Saigon report a total of 17 communist terror attacks on refugee centers in Quang Nam and Thua Thien provinces, leaving 23 persons dead, 75 injured and a large number of homes destroyed or damaged."
- August 26th: "A nine-month-old baby in his mother's arms is shot in the head by terrorists outside Hoa Phat, Quang Nam province; also found dead are three children between ages six and ten, an elderly man, a middle-aged man and a middle-aged woman, a total of seven, all shot at least once in the back of the head."
- October 27th: "Communists booby trap the body of a People's Self-Defense Force member whom they have killed. When relatives come to retrieve the body the subsequent explosion kills four of them."

Patient Gradualism

While it is fitting that President Clinton be the one to declare and implement the "normalization" of relations with Hanoi, it must be stated in fairness that it was his predecessor, George Bush, who first began greasing the diplomatic skids. Here, step by step, is the chronology of key events that culminated in Mr. Clinton's July 12th announcement that the U.S. was normalizing relations with its former enemy:

- April 29, 1992: President Bush eased the U.S. economic embargo, which had been in effect since 1964, by allowing sales for humanitarian projects. U.S. companies were permitted to open offices and sign contracts with Vietnam, though the contracts could not be honored until the embargo was lifted.
- July 2, 1993: President Clinton ended U.S. opposition to international aid to Vietnam. Hanoi had been unable to qualify for international bank loans due to its long-standing \$140 million debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In the wake of the President's policy turnabout, France, Japan, and other countries quickly loaned Vietnam the wherewithal to repay its IMF debt, which in turn cleared the way for the Asian Development Bank and World Bank to loan Hanoi \$76.5 million and \$228 million, respectively. As noted by *Facts on File* for November 18, 1993: "The U.S. government would be indirectly backing the loans, as it provided 19% of World Bank funds."
- August 18, 1993: President Clinton sent the first U.S. diplomats to be stationed in Vietnam since the end of the war. Their ostensible mission was to work with the Vietnamese government to locate information on U.S. POW/MIAs.
- September 13, 1993: President Clinton authorized American firms to bid on development projects in Vietnam that are financed with loans from international banks.
- February 3, 1994: President Clinton announced that the U.S. economic embargo would be lifted.
- January 28, 1995: The U.S. and Vietnam signed agreements settling old property claims and establishing liaison offices in each other's capitals.
- July 12, 1995: President Clinton extended diplomatic recognition.



Leaders With a Past

While many Vietnam veterans and the families of more than 2,000 servicemen still missing were appalled by the President's action, the Vietnamese hierarchy was delighted. Council of Ministers Chairman (Premier) Vo Kan Kiet made a rare television appearance to applaud the American President and designate economic cooperation as a priority for the new relationship.*

In the late 1960s, Kiet became a leading member of the Central Office in South Vietnam, the Politburo arm that ran the Viet Cong's terror campaign against civilians in the South. It was the Viet Cong's mission to soften up South Vietnam for eventual conquest by murdering thousands of village officials, schoolteachers, and health workers. It was standard VC procedure to assassinate village chiefs, then place their severed heads on poles so that the villagers would be terrorized into submission. Many such atrocities were planned and ordered under Vo Van Kiet's direction.

The chairman of Vietnam's State Council, President Le Duc Anh, was elected by the National Assembly on September 23, 1992. He was the only candidate. An old-time hard-liner, he was Vietnam's top general and, as Minister of Defense prior to becoming President, had controlled foreign policy, defense, and internal security for the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Earlier in the year, the National Assembly had approved a new constitution which reiterated that the CPV was still "the leading force of the state and society," and decreed that economic development would proceed "under a market mechanism and socialist-oriented state management." Which explains why *The Index of Economic Freedom* published by the Washington-based Heritage Foundation this year determined, among other things, that:

- "Vietnam suffers from a corrupt bureaucracy that creates very high barriers to imports. Many imports are confiscated by corrupt border officials."
- "Vietnam has a progressive income tax system with a top rate of 50 percent. The average income level is taxed at a rate of 40 percent. Taxation on foreign corporate profits is as high as 25 percent. However, since the economy is still essentially centrally planned and most of the businesses are owned by the government, the tax rates are actually much higher than those levels suggest."
- "The government still owns most of the means of production despite recent efforts to privatize. The government still maintains central planning and has yet to subject its economy to the basic principles of supply and demand."
- "The government is tolerating more private ownership of property. However, there is by and large no legal protection of private property in Vietnam."
- "The Vietnamese government is reducing some regulations, but it still remains a major barrier to entrepreneurship and the creation of new private businesses."

On a scale of one to five, with five indicating the least economic freedom, Heritage analysts Bryan T. Johnson and Thomas P. Sheehy ranked Vietnam 4.7, a level exceeded only by Cuba and North Korea. (Oddly, the Heritage Foundation nevertheless backs President Clinton's move to establish



diplomatic ties with Hanoi.)

Lighting the Way

The Secretary-General of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party apparatus, Do Muoi, was Premier from 1988 until his elevation to Party chief in 1991. He joined the Communist Party of IndoChina in 1939 and was, like Premier Kiet and President Anh, a cog in North Vietnam's war machine. On April 19, 1995, during the celebration of the 105th anniversary of the birth of Ho Chi Minh, Do Muoi said of the ruthless revolutionary leader who was President of North Vietnam from 1945 until his death in 1969: "His path and his career will always light the way for us to ... gain success on our way to socialism."

In 1946, after Ho Chi Minh established his troops in Hanoi, there were two indigenous Vietnamese sects in the area which, because they were also fervently anti-Communist, represented a potential threat to Ho's plans. So to clear the "path" and enhance his "career," he decided to have them exterminated. Since routine murder would not have had the desired terror impact on others, he opted instead to bury members of the two sects alive in fields, so that only their heads were above ground. He then had harrows driven back and forth across the fields, as one report later described it, to "scratch and tear and chop those living heads like so many small tree stumps as the harrows went over them."

After Vietnam was divided in 1954, with the North secured by Ho Chi Minh and his Red minions, the late humanitarian Dr. Thomas A. Dooley served in a staging area for the evacuation of persons in the North who preferred exile in the South to life under Communism. In his book *Deliver Us From Evil*, Dr. Dooley described some of his firsthand experiences with Communist-style indoctrination. In one instance, the Reds visited a village schoolhouse and took seven children and their teacher into the courtyard, where they were securely bound. Dr. Dooley reported:

In a voice loud enough for the other children still in the classroom to hear, the Viet Minh accused those children of treason. A patriot had informed the police that this teacher was holding classes secretly, at night, and that the subject of these classes was religion. They had even been reading the catechism.

The Viet Minh accused the seven of conspiring because they had listened to the teachings of this instructor. As a punishment they were to be deprived of their hearing. Never again would they be able to listen to the teachings of evil men.

Now two Viet Minh guards went to each child and one of them firmly grasped the head between his hands. The other then rammed a wooden chopstick into each ear. He jammed it in with all his force. The stick split the ear canal wide and tore the ear drum. The shrieking of the children was heard all over the village.

Both ears were stabbed in this fashion. The children screamed and wrestled and suffered horribly. Since their hands were tied behind them, they could not pull the wood out of their ears. They shook their heads and squirmed about, trying to make the sticks fall out. Finally they were able to dislodge them by scraping their heads against the ground.



Dr. Dooley related that the teacher's plight was worse than that inflicted on his students. So that the teacher would never be able to teach again, "One soldier held his head while another grasped the victim's tongue with a crude pair of pliers and pulled it far out. A third guard cut off the tip of the teacher's tongue with his bayonet. Blood spurted into the man's mouth and gushed from his nostrils onto the ground. He could not scream; blood ran into his throat. When the soldiers let him loose he fell to the ground vomiting blood; the scent of blood was all over the courtyard."

Fight Against Faith

Dr. Dooley soon discovered that a great number of the atrocities committed by the Viet Cong had religious implications. Priests were the most common objects of the Red terror, as in this incident described by Dr. Dooley:

We walked across the huge sprawling courtyard to the living quarters. In a back room there was an old man lying on straw on the floor. His head was matted with pus and there were eight large pus-filled swellings around his temples and forehead.

Even before I asked what happened, I knew the answer. This particular priest had also been punished for teaching "treason." His sentence was a Communist version of the crown of thorns, once forced on the Savior of whom he preached.

Eight nails had been driven into his head, three across the forehead, two in the back of the skull and three across the dome. The nails were large enough to embed themselves in the skull bone. When the unbelievable act was completed, the priest was left alone. He walked from his church to a neighboring hut, where a family jerked the nails from his head.

In yet another instance, Dr. Dooley treated a young man who had been "reeducated" by being hung by his thumbs: "During the course of the examination, while I was manipulating the left thumb, a piece of it actually broke off. There was no bleeding, no pain; there was just a chunk of his thumb that stayed in my hand. This dried piece of flesh, like that of a mummy, had crumbled away with the slightest pressure. The circulation had been cut off for so long — he said he had been left hanging for days — that permanent damage had been done, and all the cells and tissue had died distal to the point where his thumbs had been tied with cord."

And so it was, in one instance after another, as Dr. Dooley worked to heal the victims of what he called "the ghoulish thing which had conquered the Orient and with it nearly half of all mankind."

Terror on Display

Newsweek magazine for May 15, 1967 reported that "over the past decade the Viet Cong have murdered, mutilated and otherwise brutalized tens of thousands of Vietnamese civilians. And far from attempting to conceal their atrocities, the guerrillas have performed them in the most ostentatious fashion possible."

In one "typical act of terror" described by *Newsweek*, a Viet Cong execution squad "burst into the house of a village chief named Huynh Huu Be, informed him that he had been sentenced to death and dragged him outside for execution. His wife, who had been bathing their 6-year-old daughter,



ran out after the murder squad and flung herself in front of her husband, begging that his life be spared. She was shot first, then her husband. Meanwhile, Huynh's little girl had fled screaming behind a nearby bush. She was silenced with a short burst of automatic fire."

Another incident cited by *Newsweek* involved the town of Vinh Hanh, 90 miles southwest of Saigon, where "a Viet Cong official, flanked by two executioners, walked into a compound housing a group of canal workers. 'Someone has been informing on us,' said the guerrilla leader. Then, a wounded survivor recalls, the Viet Cong shouted angrily: 'You must all die to teach others a lesson.' Eighteen men, one woman and four small children were shot as they lay in their beds."

The *Newsweek* report concluded by noting that the purpose of the Viet Cong terror "is to frighten the ordinary people of Vietnam into complete submissiveness and to disrupt the normal processes of government." The Viet Cong at first "concentrated on village chiefs and notables," but eventually "social workers, schoolteachers and medical personnel — all those, in short, who might generate goodwill for the Saigon government" — were added to the target list. As a result, "Thousands of schools, hospitals and playgrounds have been closed down out of fear of the Viet Cong executioners." And the penalties for those suspected of harboring potential recruits, or withholding food and money from the Viet Cong, were severe. "Sometimes they chop off a finger or a hand, just as a warning. In other instances, they disembowel a man or impale him alive before the eyes of his fellow villagers."

Dak Son

In its December 15, 1967 issue, *Time* magazine described what it called the "worst atrocity yet committed in the Viet Nam war." Dak Son was a hamlet of some 2,000 Montagnard refugees about 75 miles northeast of Saigon. The Communists were intensely interested in Dak Son because the refugees had months earlier fled from life under the Viet Cong. Lest others get the same idea, the Communists decided to make an example of the Montagnards who, *Time* noted, "were completely unarmed..." On December 5, 1967, "a handful of Viet Cong crawled up to the wall-and-wire perimeter of the hamlet" and called for its inhabitants "to surrender and come out. When they got no takers, they withdrew," but returned and launched their attack around midnight, "pouring machine-gun, mortar and rocket fire into Dak Son."

The 600 Viet Cong assembled outside the hamlet "were armed with 60 flame-throwers. Yelling and screaming, they attacked the town, shooting countless streams of liquid fire that lit up the night and terrified by its very sight a people who had only recently discovered the use of matches." Most of the victims were women and children.

The Viet Cong "were not intent on a military victory but on the cold-blooded, monumental massacre of the helpless Montagnards." To that end, "long ugly belches of flame lashed out from every direction, garishly illuminating the refugee hamlet and searing and scorching everything in their path. The shrieking refugees still inside their houses were incinerated. Many of those who had time to get down into dogholes beneath the houses were asphyxiated. Spraying fire about in great whooshing arcs, the Viet Cong set everything afire: trees, fences, gardens, chickens, the



careful piles of grain from the annual harvest. Huts that somehow survived the holocaust were leveled with grenades. Then the hoses of fire were sprayed down inside the exposed burroughs. Later, the Communists incinerated a patch of the main town just for good measure.”

Only when they ran out of flame-thrower fuel did the Viet Cong resort to guns. “Forcing 160 of the survivors out of their dogholes,” *Time* continued, “they shot 60 of them to death on the spot. Then, finally abandoning the smoking ruins of Dak Son at dawn, they dragged away with them into the jungle another 100 of the survivors.”

Some survivors were left behind. Numb with horror, they “stumbled out to look for wives, children and friends. They held handkerchiefs and cabbage leaves to their faces to ward off the smell of burnt flesh that hung over everything. One by one the dogholes were emptied, giving up the fire-red, bloated, peeling remains of human beings. Charred children were locked in ghastly embrace, infants welded to their mother’s breasts. The victims were almost all women and children. The dead adults were covered with scorched mats and blankets salvaged from the ashes, the bodies of babies laid in bamboo baskets. One man lost 13 members of his family.”

Alan L. Davidson was at one time a sergeant of the Green Berets and senior medical adviser in War Zone D in Vietnam. Writing in *American Opinion* (a predecessor to *The New American*) for February 1968, he asserted: “Recently in Vietnam a brave and capable native Chief, trying to wrest his province from Communist hands, left his village to lead the three Vietnamese Ranger units under his command in an attack against the Viet Cong In his absence a Viet Cong force overran his village. They butchered his wife and scores of other villagers, and then kidnapped his eight-year-old son.

“That Chief, a friend of mine, returned like any other husband and father to find his wife dead, his only son gone, and his village bloody and burned to the ground Less than a week had passed when very early one morning ... the Viet Cong again attacked the camp. They ran between the huts and down the main road firing their weapons as they came. The V.C. rushed by the Chief’s house; bullets slapped the wall. My friend tumbled from his bed in his bare feet and ran toward the door, grabbing his weapon and moving to rally his men to a defense. As he bolted from the doorway of his home he stumbled and fell across a burlap sack. He jumped to his feet but the Viet Cong had gone as quickly as they had come. The Chief reached down and picked up the burlap bag. He opened it, and emptied its contents on the ground. There on the dirt road, in the flickering light of a burning hut, he looked down upon the dozen or so pieces of what had been his eight-year-old son.”

Finally, there is an incident involving the chief of a small hamlet near Da Nang, described by John Hubbell in the November 1968 *Reader’s Digest*: “All [residents of the hamlet] were herded before the home of their chief. While they and the chief’s pregnant wife and four children were forced to look on, the chief’s tongue was cut out. Then his genital organs were sliced off and sewn inside his bloody mouth. As he died, the V.C. went to work on his wife, slashing open her womb. Then, the nine-year-old son: a bamboo lance was rammed through one ear and out the other. Two more of the chief’s children were murdered the same way. The V.C. did not harm the five-year-old



daughter — not physically; they simply left her crying, holding her dead mother’s hand.”

* * *

Our government, and many others, continue to hunt down and prosecute suspected Nazi prison guards from the World War II era, some of whom are by now octogenarians. At the same time, they urge that we “forgive and forget” such atrocities as those we have described, and reward the accomplices of those who perpetrated them with lush diplomatic and economic concessions.

Few issues so clearly reveal the ethical degeneracy of modern-day internationalism.

* Hanoi had been desperately seeking improved ties with the U.S. since January 31, 1991, when the Soviet Union announced that Vietnam would henceforth have to pay for goods that it had previously received as handouts.