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REFLECTIONS ON VIETNAM: ON REVISIONISM AND LESSONS YET TO BE LEARNED

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by

PAUL M. KATTENBURG

More than ten years have now passed since we withdrew our forces from Vietnam, and many feel that new "Vietnams" are again looming on the horizon. In what follows I look first at the meaning of our Vietnam experience as perceived at the time and in the more standard interpretations, as well as in the revisionist so-called "new scholarship" now emerging. I relate some impressions gleaned during my recent return to the area after an absence of some eight and a half years. Second, I try to examine what has been called the Vietnam Syndrome in American foreign policy, and how that syndrome seems to have affected our policy between the collapse of Vietnam in 1975 and the present. Finally, I attempt to gauge the broader meaning of the term Vietnam in world politics as a whole, for it is evident that the Vietnam phenomenon is by no means something the United States alone is forced to consider, but has much broader implications for world affairs.

The new scholarship on America's Vietnam War, in the pithy words of Melvin Maddocks, "calls Vietnam . . . a war that might have been won if only we had thrown a little more fire in the lake, one more time."[1] The more conservative of the revisionist works blame our failure variously on insufficient use of military power, on our overzealous pressure for democratic reforms in South Vietnam (particularly those leading to the fall of President Diem in 1963), and on inaccurate reporting and media bias which allegedly turned domestic opinion against the war.[2] These revisionists also allege that our failure in Vietnam had disastrous international consequences.

The more "pragmatic revisionist" works[3] allege, variously, that there are no lessons to be learned from the Vietnam War; that a different mix of means (particularly less reliance on excessive military power and more on socioeconomic reform) might have brought a different result; that although the war may have been a mistake and the manner in which it was fought counterproductive, it was not therefore immoral or unjustified, even in its later stages; and especially that the terrible events in Indochina since the communist victories there provide a retrospective justification for the war.

Much of the so-called new scholarship thrashes dead horses. It is no really great discovery, for example, that the National Liberation Front (NLF) enjoyed only a modicum of autonomy in the South or that almost all of the important strategic and political decisions on the communist side during the war were made by the Politburo and its dependencies in Hanoi. Among those of us in the US policymaking community who opposed some of the major decisions of the mid-1960s, such as the policy of graduated escalation of bombing against North Vietnam ("Rolling Thunder") or the direct entry of US combat forces, no one I can recall had any

illusions on that score. Also, only a few rather insignificant and largely discredited figures in the anti-war movement seemed to believe in the exemplary virtues of Hanoi or in the overwhelming popularity of the Viet Cong. On this last point, however, one must retain a measure of skepticism: popular sympathies of the masses in Vietnam, especially in the countryside, were well and appropriately dissimulated during the war, as they most likely are and have to be again today.

Those who argued against graduated escalation, against the deepening of our involvement in 1965-66, against invading Cambodia and broadening the war under the guise of ending it in 1969-72, and in favor of immediate negotiations based on a willingness to accept coalition government even at the strong risk of eventual communist control in all Vietnam, those who argued these views during that long, seemingly endless period were arguing not only that it was morally wrong to destroy a country in order to save it from itself but also that it would not work. "You can't fight something with nothing" is the way Stanley Hoffman put it in his letter to the editor responding to Fox Butterfield's 13 February 1983 cover story in *The New York Times Magazine* on "The New Vietnam Scholarship."[4] There was never, in South Vietnam, at least after Diem, a genuine political counter to the nationalistic communism of the Hanoi-led revolutionary forces, North or South. At best, the Republic of Vietnam must be considered to have been an empty quasi-administrative structure dominated by an untrustworthy and generally inept military.

Nor did any of the war's more sophisticated or knowledgeable opponents believe that Tet 1968 had been a great victory for the communists, although to this day it seems virtually impossible to convey to some Americans—particularly in the military and possessing a genuine and apparently very American difficulty in apprehending the meaning of the term "political objective"—that if certain political objectives were accomplished it hardly matters whether the means used to achieve them were "successful" in any traditional military sense. The revisionism of some of the "new Vietnam scholars" regarding Tet reveals continued and obdurate ignorance of both the purposes and tactics of revolutionary war.

What the new scholarship on Vietnam has been doing for the most part, as Hoffman says, is to refute the myths of some of the more deluded, romantic, or ideological wings of the anti-war movement. In so doing, it presents and argues some new myths of its own: that an electronic barrier in the middle of Vietnam might have stopped communist resupply, for example; or that B-52 air strikes were really "surgical" (I invite those who so argue to fly over the crater-dotted Kampuchean countryside!); or that because elements of the peace movement such as Senator Eugene McCarthy were perhaps less effective in changing US policies than at first believed, one therefore can deflate the notion that US public opinion opposed the war after 1968 or neglect the extraordinary rise of congressional skepticism about the war and its eventually strong dissent from it. That certainly did reflect American popular sentiment, and it lies at the root of today's vastly increased congressional power in foreign affairs.

There is a specific issue, however, on which the new scholarship has valuable

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views, and that is on the question of whether the US military was falsely blamed for some of the decision-making and whether it took what may be called a bum rap for the war. One "new scholar," Colonel Harry G. Summers, an instructor at the US Army War College, in fact blames our military in Vietnam in his *On Strategy* for all manner of sins in its conduct of the war—failures in essence stemming from ignoring classic, Clausewitzian, doctrines of war—for which I think they can indeed be blamed, though not in my view held responsible. A point which is stressed in my *Vietnam Trauma*, and with which I believe most military revisionists including Summers would agree, is that all the *key* decisions relating to the American war in Vietnam were made by the civilian national security managers. These "civilian militarists" had no trouble keeping the military out of their charmed so-called national security decision-making circle—a circle in which the military had long since invited the civilians to play the key role because of their own abdication of military-political responsibility in favor of single-minded concentration on the technocratic aspects of war. It is encouraging to hear some military and retired military leaders today speaking out loudly on the political conditions and circumstances that they consider prerequisite to US military intervention anywhere.

All this leads us to some key aspects of our Vietnam involvement, issues which lie at the source of our failure and made it inevitable, so to speak. One of the most significant of these was the open-ended nature of our effort, its lack of a clear objective or clear terminal point, and its basically negative character: to prevent the loss of South Vietnam to communism without much thought or analysis about any of the many factors implied in that statement. What was this communism in terms of its specific nature and of its link with nationalism; what was South Vietnam in terms of an entity with genuine, legitimate political existence and will; who was to prevent this "loss," and if this was the South Vietnamese, how did they envisage the war's objective and who truly represented them?

These unanswered questions played a vital role in conferring to our effort its aptly named character of a stalemate machine, a term originally coined by Daniel Ellsberg: each President involved refusing to do what was necessary to move beyond the stalemate, and doing just enough to prevent a loss which each felt would have intolerable domestic political consequences. In the end, therefore, the real objective of our war in Vietnam was to keep any American president from being tarred domestically with the brush of having lost another round to communism. This should be clearly realized when the allegedly frightful consequences of Marxist-Leninist victories in other situations are presented to the American public today.

Among the many aspects that made Vietnam such a frustrating and unsuccessful experience for the United States, some of the more salient included the disproportionality of means and ends and the moral dilemmas this gave rise to, particularly in the later (so-called disengagement) stages of the war; the apparent absence of politics and diplomacy from the arsenal of American instruments of foreign policy, a point which still seems to be plaguing us in Central America (and other areas) today; and our single-minded civilian as well as military concentration on technocratic approaches, such as input-output models of nation-building and counterinsurgency, war by statistical body counts, so-called internal defense plans resting on static pacification methodologies, etc.—*in toto*, a sort of systems theory approach to politics which is, God help us, being revived on government contracts even today in obscure corners of certain schools of business administration and in certain remote institutions of the US military.

This rather mindless concentration during the American Vietnam War on what may be called "effective motivation"—that is on how to do it and do it better, rather than on what it is that should be done and why—this sort of mechanical emphasis on action, served us very poorly. Combined with the

stalemate-machine approach, it gave the United States "winning without winning" and "losing without losing," an undecipherable mix of programmatic approaches; unbridled technocracy and managerialism; and the triumph of systems analysis and business-school theories over politics, diplomacy, *and* strategy.

VIETNAM TODAY

The new revisionism on Vietnam also engages in the dubious business of judging the past from the present. Vietnam was then, as it remains today, a highly nationalistic, proud, and independent country; its communist leadership won out, as David Marr very correctly pointed out at a revisionist-sponsored conference held in January 1983,[5] because from the start it was draped in the mantle and championed the cause of nationalism; and no matter the trials and tribulations of the present, there is little doubt that the Vietnamese overwhelmingly wanted the victory of the revolution and the defeat of the imperialists. If they were today given a free chance to change the war's verdict, even given all that has happened, I doubt most sincerely that they would reverse it. For one thing, the North has just gone on living much as it had ever since 1954: levels of want and poverty are just so high that a lack of amelioration is barely noticed; outright starvation has thus far been avoided, and in fact a slight improvement in agricultural production (if in nothing else) has taken place.

As to the South, although hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese and urban bourgeois Vietnamese were no doubt severely hurt by the change of regime, with many thousands who worked for the previous government unfortunately still left in so-called reeducation camps even today, it must be recalled that there was and is an overwhelmingly larger number of rural Vietnamese, village and small-town dwellers, who have not (at least not yet) suffered grievously in the redistributive changes that have slowly taken place. Recall also that the bulk of the ethnic Chinese, in both North and South, who wanted to leave were encouraged to do so, constituting by far the greatest number of the boat people of the late 1970s and early 1980s of whom we heard so much. As collectivization slowly spreads to the South, and the bourgeois incentive systems are progressively eliminated from the economy, more and more Vietnamese are likely, as the saying goes, to "vote with their feet" for freedom. But in many instances what is sought is not so much freedom as we know it, but escape from the hardships and deprivations of the austere economy being established under Vietnam's brand of socialism.

One should not and, indeed, cannot minimize the current problems of poverty, backwardness, and continued hardships faced by the Vietnamese, and which have been aggravated so severely since 1979 by the continuing security threat perceived as coming from the Chinese, leading to the outbreak of serious hostilities on at least two occasions over the past four years.[6] In a continuation of the United States' evident incapacity to understand and communicate with this Vietnamese people, something that has apparently plagued us since immediately after World War II, we hold exactly the reverse perceptions of the current political-military situation from theirs. Whereas we see their invasion of Kampuchea in January 1979 as aggressive expansionism and their continued military occupation there as threatening Thailand, they on the other hand feel that they had no real choice, given the inescapable trap built for them by the Chinese through the Pol Pot regime to "bleed them" in Kampuchea; and they feel that Thailand, with China's active backing and connivance, is threatening them by way of the Pol Pot and related dissident Kampuchean forces which Thailand and China (backed by ASEAN and the United States) support on the Thai-Kampuchean border. The Vietnamese see this as necessitating their continued occupation of Kampuchea. They know Chinese hostility first-hand: twice in four years they have been invaded along their northern frontier, and the sense of threat and fear in Hanoi is enormous. In their view, the United States is being

naively taken in by China; they regard our current Southeast Asia policy as, in their words, "made in Beijing."[7]

The essential point here is that, ill-prepared as they are to engage in still another war with still another great power after so many years of war already against so many great enemies (Japanese, French, Americans, and now Chinese), the Vietnamese are indeed once again prepared to suffer and shoulder the burdens of what they regard as the inevitable cost of maintaining their independence. This in my view underscores the extraordinary determination and commitment to independence, the nationalism, of the Vietnamese. If we doubt today, as some of the revisionists do, that they really had their hearts in it in the 1960s and early 1970s, ignoring some of the most incredible experiences of mankind (such as the survival of certain personnel in tunnels for literally decades)[8] then how can we possibly explain their behavior in still resisting the Chinese today? I believe it can be stated, as the Vietnamese themselves are the first to admit, that they are far better warriors than economic managers; but in no sense does this justify a belief that they are imperialistic in Kampuchea by choice or joy, or that the Soviets, whose aid is barely adequate, called the shots that pushed them into this adventure. In conversations with Americans, they readily concede the priority needs of domestic construction and of concentrating on the alleviation of a poverty-stricken economy that only peace can bring. They are not in Kampuchea by choice and profess their eagerness for peace. But it is obvious, to them at least, that the security threat is real; and obvious too that the present only confirms a proper judgment of the past, that is, that Vietnam fought then and fights now for its conception of freedom with extraordinary persistence and determination.

A final point raised by the new scholarship is the question, could we have won? Contrary to what may perhaps be surmised from Butterfield's article on the new scholarship, winning in my view was not the essential point that Colonel Summers stressed in his book, particularly given the inflexible limiting parameters under which the war was fought, both under Johnson and Nixon. In this, Summers is quite at odds with General Westmoreland, who seems to view it all as a question of more willpower and more wherewithal. Summers' point was rather that in the absence of clear objectives, a clear strategy, and honest support from Congress for understood military purposes, we should not even have tried. Summers rightly suggests that poor policy squanders military power, to which we may add the corollary that a prime objective of diplomacy, properly employed, must be to harness military power for important purposes, purposes palpably and directly related to the security of the United States.

In this regard, despite recent revisionist efforts to make it appear as if the domino theory had addressed itself to Laos and Cambodia, which have now both fallen under effective Vietnamese control, the fact was and is that Eisenhower and Dulles, when they invented dominoes way back in 1953, were thinking not about these, then not even independent countries and always in the recent past parts of Indochina, but about the rest of the Southeast Asian countries. The latter, the real dominoes, did not fall after 1975 or even after Vietnam seized Kampuchea in 1979. Take Singapore as an example. During the Vietnam War, no one more than the sycophantic leader of the Republic of Singapore, Lee Kwang Yu, implored LBJ to stay in Vietnam in order to keep his country free of the communist menace. And, since the communist victory in Vietnam, no country in Southeast Asia has fared better than the Republic of Singapore, one of the world's great success stories, and still under Lee's leadership. Perhaps the true domino in this instance was the United States, which became the victim of the so-called Vietnam Syndrome immediately after its Vietnam withdrawal.

THE VIETNAM SYNDROME IN US FOREIGN POLICY

Let us turn then to the question of the so-called Vietnam Syndrome, which led us, it is said, away from world engagement and into a

headlong retreat from power, as a result of which we allegedly grew weak and pusillanimous as the Soviets grew strong, confronting us with challenges at every turn. We should first try to get as straight as possible what really did happen during the heyday of our so-called Vietnam Syndrome, after the 1975 fall of South Vietnam.

There is, in my view, little doubt that we were pusillanimous during the hostage crisis in Iran, for which error I think we are paying a large price in terms of the unwarranted bellicosity into which American popular reaction to US weakness has permitted the Reagan Administration to indulge. There is little doubt also that the Soviet Union did use the 1970s to catch up, more rapidly than it might otherwise have, particularly in certain areas of nuclear weaponry, and largely because the United States (not being particularly fearful during this period) allowed it to do so. Detente, fundamentally premised on a tripolar rather than on the tight bipolar outlook that had prevailed previously, opened the way for the significant arms control agreements (and, more broadly, conflict management and disarmament measures) that were reached in the 1970s.

Regrettably, this process came to a halt with the refusal of the Senate to ratify SALT II, or perhaps more properly stated, the refusal of President Carter to politick the treaty through the Senate after his pollsters had informed him, subsequent to his return from the Vienna Summit with Brezhnev in late spring 1979, that strongly nationalistic and anti-Soviet currents pulsating through US public opinion and reverberating in Congress cast doubt on the political wisdom of fighting for the treaty in a pre-election year. Virulent American nationalism, which was exacerbated further and finally brought to fever pitch by the Iran hostage crisis beginning in late 1979, was essentially hyped up by the media and by groups like the Committee on the Present Danger which had been, from the very beginning of the Carter Administration, unwilling and unprepared to live with a policy of detente in US-Soviet relations.

Debatable though this is, subsequent events have, in my view, shown that these groups tended to exaggerate the degree of influence that the Soviets or Soviet surrogates had acquired over areas like Angola, Mozambique, South Yemen, or in the Horn of Africa—or at least that they grossly overstated the significance of such influence. Even if, as these elements suggested, Soviet influence exercised through surrogates increased in these areas (which also include Vietnam and Kampuchea) during that period, it is equally true that Soviet influence suffered dramatic reversals during the same period in other areas that are probably intrinsically more important to the United States—such as Egypt, the Middle East generally, Eastern Europe and specifically Poland, and in Western Europe after the Russians invaded Afghanistan.

As far as public opinion in Western Europe is concerned, it certainly did not turn anti-US to the extent that it has since the Reagan Administration took office because of any alleged Vietnam Syndrome of a less-interventionist US foreign policy. Quite to the contrary, it is the excessive reengagement of the Reagan Administration in the eyes of the Europeans, its confrontational attitude in such regions as Central America, its stridency in Southwest Asia earlier and in the Near East later, its unwillingness for a long time to come forward with any really constructive arms control proposals, and its revival of nuclear war-fighting fears by way of advocating changes in fundamental, long-held, and virtually universally accepted nuclear deterrence doctrine that have perceptibly weakened the world and specifically the European position of the United States—not the so-called Vietnam Syndrome.

Despite a probably healthy, if heavily overdone reemphasis on defense expenditures, the imprudent, rash manner in which the United States has tended to act internationally and tried to shed the Vietnam Syndrome, far more than that syndrome itself, has since 1981 given reasons for concern. Among such reasons are the following:

- Despite the restraints that a much higher degree of congressional involvement imposes on our foreign policy, we again tend quite unselectively and unilaterally to be too far "up front" in too many world crises, whether in Europe, the Middle East, Central America, Africa, or even East Asia.
- As a result, we may again be led into situations in which we are viewed by wide segments of world opinion to be lined up on what appears to be the morally wrong side. The side seen as the less worthy, or as morally wrong, by the principal actors on the ground in given situations is likely, as in Vietnam, to be the side that loses in the end, no matter how strongly it is supported by outsiders.
- Placing so much emphasis in our defense buildup on additional nuclear capability may have the unintended effect of reducing both our domestic and our international military credibility, since in the end our budgets are still insufficient to reflect our *real* military needs (almost all in the conventional area). Moreover, our nuclear gamesmanship leads to excessive responses, both at home and abroad, such as demands for unilateral nuclear disarmament measures that may well run counter to our best strategic interests, but which are fanned by the irrational peace movements which irrational nuclear bellicosity inevitably brings forth.

Finally, in regard to the Vietnam Syndrome, one might add that it seems to have lasted for only a very short time in US foreign policy. It seems to have broken the ongoing foreign policy consensus only for the short period 1969 to 1979 or so, when continuity in confrontational containment of the Soviets resumed—the break point possibly occurring when Secretary of State Vance resigned his office. Historical determinists would argue that continuity of this type in US foreign policy was foreordained, but others might be permitted to believe in the capacity of statesmen to influence events and affect history. There are those who are patiently awaiting that statesman, in American political life, who will be able to persuade us that selective engagement in foreign affairs, premised on clear perceptions of where our interests and values lie and on honest acceptance of limitations on our power, is not a sign of weakness or lost virility but of maturity and wisdom.

VIETNAM IN WORLD POLITICS

Looking finally at the meaning of the Vietnam experience from the even broader vantage point of world politics as a whole, an essential aspect of that experience seems to have been the demonstration of the limits imposed on US power by the slowly changing configuration of world politics in the 1960s and 1970s. Among principal factors contributing to this evolution we may list: the advent of substantial nuclear equivalence between the superpowers; the Sino-Soviet conflict and the ensuing Western perception of polycentrism in the so-called communist bloc, which in turn requires a more complex analysis of world affairs than the rather crude white-versus-black, good-versus-evil American perception during the high Cold War; the slow reemergence in world politics of Eastern as well as Western Europe, both able to interpose constraints on the complete freedom of maneuver of the superpowers, even in their contiguous zones, and along with this the resurgence of Japan and of other middle powers possessed of latitude to maneuver between the giants; and finally the rise of third world demands, of the North-South gap, and especially of increasingly less tolerable socioeconomic-political circumstances in third world societies where the rising expectations of the masses clash head-on with the entrenched rule of traditional oligarchies of wealth and power.

Under these circumstances, neither the Soviet Union, hemmed-in by the same factors, nor the United States has complete freedom of action and especially not the freedom to act unilaterally, even in what we may regard as the contiguous zone of greatest interest to each superpower. It does little good to say that the Soviet Union, which has thus seen itself constrained in Poland, has contradicted this proposition by intervening headlong in Afghanistan; look rather at the

resistance encountered by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and which provides perhaps the supreme example of the larger meaning of Vietnam: that a militantly aroused people which mobilizes in defense of its shared values can hold even the greatest powers at bay no matter how apparently remote or insignificant it may seem on world maps of power.

Ultimately, the great "lesson of Vietnam" is that given these constraints on the great and superpowers in late-20th-century world politics, policymakers in these powers must strive infinitely hard to become issue-specific and not tie their fate to globalistic notions of interlinkage which fail to judge consequences of local developments in local, issue-specific terms. As I have suggested elsewhere,

> Turning this to present dilemmas in any of the numerous crises the US faces almost daily in international affairs, the US should not regard involvement here or there as bad because it was bad, or wrong, in Vietnam. That is what history now seems to prescribe; and if statesmen are allowed to take the easy course, they will. The right questions to ask are: Who is engaged in this conflict and what strengths and forces do they represent? What is the justice of this issue as seen by the people who are themselves most directly involved? What are the actual situations in all their local perplexities? Once answers to these questions are obtained, one can then ask: What are our interests, if any, and why? What are our capabilities and the limits to them in affecting this issue? What is sufficiently clearly right to such an overwhelming number of Americans that there can be no question later on if much larger sacrifices are called for?[9]

Such judgments will have to be made in the light of an ever-fluid international conjuncture, of ever-shifting value patterns, shifting as generations and institutions evolve, and as a function of changing leadership; they must not be made in some frozen perception of the national interest. Our national interest is not today, any more than previously, concerned with arranging regions of the world in some static geopolitical pattern, founded on the armed means of the last great war that the United States or others fought. It has everything to do instead with domestic values and with accurate perceptions reflecting them, with a view of security as absence of fear, and with the use of analysis and of diplomacy as means of adaptation in a rapidly changing world of ever-fluctuating moods.

Applying these general principles to a specific situation like that in Central America today, Vietnam would seem inescapably to teach several lessons. First, we should not tie our security and future to generically weak and repudiated regimes, as already suggested above. The side we support in every given instance should be the right side, that is, the morally acceptable one in consonance with US dedication to the advancement of human rights. In this regard, the side favoring private enterprise is not always necessarily right because it advocates a form of freedom, not if that form leads in practice to results as oppressive as those reached by the Marxist-Leninists.

Second, we should not fear mechanically imagined consequences. For example, rather than reasoning in dominoes, we need to ask specifically, not rhetorically, what would be the consequences to us (and also to Mexico) of a series of Marxist-Leninist regimes in Central America? Would these consequences be better or worse than those of a continuation of the prevailing explosive socioeconomic situations there, leading to potentially uncontrollable instability and the almost inevitable intervention of foreign powers in the region?

Third, we are not omnipotent or up to every task and should not undertake those we are not certain we can conclude successfully: technoprogrammatic approaches to war, as in the calamitous resurrection today of so-called internal defense plans for third world countries from the dusty shelves of the Pentagon, are likely to squander our military power in impossible tasks.

Fourth, we should always strive first to give diplomacy a chance, precisely in order to

conserve military power. What deals can we make, or can be made for us, that square with our moral standards and basic values? What fluidity, what novel elements, can be introduced by diplomacy and dialogue in these difficult situations? The essence of the deal we should seek in Central America must be that we would accept living with any type of regime that a country there establishes internally, even if such a regime is odious in our eyes (as the Marxist-Leninist regime in Cuba has been for the 20-plus years that we have coexisted with it); and in return we would exact conditions which would guarantee prevention of the establishment of new Soviet or Cuban military bases or positions in the region. If this means a Marxist regime in Salvador, or the continuation of the Sandinists in power in Nicaragua, so be it, provided they do not allow Soviet bases aimed at the United States or Mexico and remain genuinely nonaligned. We started out by assuming that an extension of Soviet or Cuban influence would be the automatic outcome in both countries, and in the process of acting upon that assumption, we tended of course (as in Vietnam over a period going all the way back to the end of World War II) to make it come true. This is known in foreign policy as a "self-fulfilling prophecy," and is a fateful pitfall to be avoided.

A policy automatically upholding the status quo without consideration of its local merits, such as we followed in Vietnam, stems from misperceived notions of the national interest like the Domino Theory, or mechanistic conceptions of interlinkage such as that our power must be "credible" everywhere or it is "incredible" anywhere; or it stems from good-versus-evil casts of world politics in which we as well as our enemies construct ideological Frankensteins who then tend to devour us. The deemphasis of ideology in world politics is long overdue. It is not social revolutionary change that we must fear, even change openly directed at Marxist-Leninist goals, or above all change itself. What we must fear, and defeat, is our incapacity to adapt to change, whether desirable or inevitable change, to recognize it, and to move with it. This, if we cannot correct it, will in the end lead us into newer, larger, and worse Vietnams.

NOTES

1. Melvin Maddocks, "Appraising Some Reappraisals of Vietnam," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 28 February 1983, p. 22.
2. For example, W. Scott Thompson and Donald D. Frizzell, eds., *The Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Crane, Russak, 1977); Denis Warner, *Certain Victory* (Mission, Kans.: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1977); BDM Corporation, *Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam* (Washington: BDM Corp., 1981).
3. The term was coined by Jerome Slater in an unpublished paper on "Misconceptions About the Vietnam War" (SUNY, Buffalo, 1983). Works he cites as belonging in this category include those by Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978); Leslie Gelb and Richard K. Betts, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked* (Washington: Brookings, 1978); Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era* (New York: Free Press, 1977); Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1982); and even my own *Vietnam Trauma* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, paper 1982) although it strongly denounces the continuation of the war after 1968 as immoral.
4. "Letters," *The New York Times Magazine*, 20 March 1983, p. 110.
5. *Some Lessons and Non-Lessons of Vietnam Ten Years After the Paris Peace Accords* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1983).
6. See my " 'So Many Enemies': The View From Hanoi," *Indochina Issues*, No. 38, Washington, Center for International Policy, Indochina Project, June 1983.
7. P. M. Kattenburg, "Living With Hanoi," *Foreign Policy*, No. 53 (Winter 1983-84).
8. See J. P. Harrison, *The Endless War: Fifty Years of Struggle in Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 1982).
9. Kattenburg, *Vietnam Trauma*, pp. 320ff.