

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 18, 2025



Analysis: Vietnam

Reprinted with permission from *Review of the News*, December 30, 1965–January 5, 1966

Americans who are watching with wide-eyed amazement the sudden anti-Communist fervor of such anti-anti-Communists like Dean Rusk, Robert S. McNamara, and Lyndon Baines Johnson are entitled to ask why these men have chosen Vietnam as the place to make our ultimate, uncompromising stand against Communist aggression? Why have they committed American prestige and American fighting men to stopping Communism in Vietnam when we have permitted the Red cancer in Cuba to fester for six long years? Let's see what Lyndon Johnson has to say about it. We quote his remarks to the A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention on December 9, 1965:

Every day someone asks "Why are we in Vietnam?" . . .

We are there because, for all our shortcomings, for all our failings as a nation and a people, we remained fixed on the pursuit of freedom as a deep and moral obligation that will not let us go...

To defend that freedom—to permit its roots to deepen and grow without fear of external suppression—is our purpose in South Vietnam. Unchecked aggression against free and helpless people would be a grave threat to our own freedom—and an offense to our own conscience.

For some strange, inexplicable reason the lack of freedom in Cuba, Algeria, Russia, North Vietnam, and Red China has no effect on Lyndon Johnson's magnificent conscience. The six-year bloodbath going on ninety miles away from Miami under Soviet supervision is conveniently forgotten by our government which had the moral and practical commitment of the Monroe Doctrine to prevent such things from coming to pass in our hemisphere. The "deep and moral obligation that will not let us go" in South Vietnam, vanishes when it comes to a neighbor we were obliged to protect from Communism. The surrealistic horror of the Cuban situation is all the more highlighted by the moral indifference of a conditioned public which frolics and vacations within sight of the tortured island. If we are not concerned about the vast Communist concentration camp in the middle of the Caribbean, why are we sending American men to die in Vietnam?

Read this about Dean Rusk in the New York Times of December 8, 1965 and stop and think about it:

Secretary of State Dean Rusk said today that he saw virtually no room for a compromise with Communists in South Vietnam.

While emphasizing again that the United States did not intend to destroy the Communist governments of North Vietnam or Communist China, Mr. Rusk ruled out any political or territorial gain for Communists in South Vietnam as part of a peace settlement.

Please note that the Secretary of State did not reveal how it would be possible to prevent the Communists from taking over South Vietnam without destroying the Communist government of North Vietnam. Apparently, what Mr. Rusk wants is a sincere assurance from Ho Chi Minh that he will leave South Vietnam alone. Does he really expect to get it? The Communists already control vast areas in South Vietnam and know that the only force preventing them from taking over the rest of the country is the United States. But the Communists in the North seem to have few doubts that they can defeat the mightiest nation in the world. According to James Cameron, the British journalist who recently visited North Vietnam and whose dispatches were printed in the New York Times, the North Vietnamese Premier, Pham Van Dong, expressed his confidence as follows (December 11, 1965):

"When we say we are going to win this war you don't really believe it. You may think that we should, you may even want us to but you don't honestly think we can.

"And it does sound an almost impossible claim I agree. Sometimes when I get the reports from the South about

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 18, 2025



what the Liberation soldiers are doing there I have the greatest difficulty myself in believing them, they sound so exaggerated. I can only assure you that they are true. I am hardly likely to want to deceive myself.”

Even the North Vietnam military are convinced that they can win against the greatest power on earth. Cameron, in his New York Times dispatch of December 8, 1965, quotes a North Vietnamese lieutenant colonel as follows:

“We are well aware that the forces against us are stronger, and richer and infinitely more powerful. We have already had great losses, and I am afraid we shall have greater yet. The price of all this is horrible. But quite honestly, I do not see how we can lose.”

And, of course, Ho chi Minh, characterized by Cameron as “Asia’s No. 1 intellectual Marxist,” shares this same view. He told Cameron (New York Times December 11, 1965): “I’ve been a revolutionary a long time. Revolutionaries have to be optimistic.”

Of course a revolutionary like Ho chi Minh can be optimistic when he sees who the men are who are making our Vietnam policy. First, there is Dean Rusk, “our” Secretary of State, who was a Deputy Undersecretary of State when Mao Tse-tung was taking over mainland China. Rusk was one of those who sold the American people the line that Mao was an “agrarian reformer.” On January 14, 1950 Rusk addressed the World Affairs Council at the University of Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Bulletin of the next day reported that speech as follows:

The Revolution now raging in China springs from the same basic causes as the American Revolution, the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia was told today.

The statement came from Dean Rusk, Deputy Undersecretary of the United States Department of State....

“The upheaval in China is a revolution which, if we analyze it, we will see is prompted by the same things that prompted the British, French and American Revolutions,” Rusk said.

This, of course, was the same old Communist line mouthed by crypto-Communists in our government and the press about every Communist revolution. Dean Rusk, the Rhodes scholar, mouthed it also. Despite Rusk’s wrong guess about Mao Tse-tung, expressed six months before the outbreak of the Korean War, he was made Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs by Dean Acheson in time to formulate our disastrous Korean policy. To handle Chinese affairs, Rusk appointed Oliver E. Clubb, close associate of the pro-Red Institute of Pacific Relations (I.P.R.) crowd, who was subsequently dismissed from the State Department as a security risk. Although Rusk opposed the dismissal of Clubb, he strongly urged Truman to get rid of General MacArthur.

From 1952 to 1960 Rusk was President of the Rockefeller Foundation, which continued to extend financial support to the I.P.R. after it had been thoroughly exposed as an instrument of Communist policy. Then, in 1961, John F. Kennedy brought Rusk back to the State Department. It was under Rusk that Castro consolidated his hold over Cuba; Algeria, a N.A.T.O. territory, was handed over to the Communists; the anti-Communist government of Katanga was bombed out of existence; and almost every Communist viceroy expressing contempt for the United States was awarded “foreign aid.” It was also Dean Rusk who personally approved of the State Department loan to Lee Harvey Oswald—thus facilitating the assassin’s return to the United States—and then blatantly sabotaged the State Department’s Security Office by his removal of Otto F. Otepka. Thus, Mr. Rusk’s record in destroying Communism is hardly likely to cause Ho chi Minh sleepless nights. On the contrary, it is probably the cause of his optimism.

As for our present Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, he is none other than William Putnam Bundy, older brother of McGeorge Bundy and son-in-law of Dean Acheson. Bill Bundy is so much of an anti-Communist that he contributed \$400 to Alger Hiss’s defense fund while working for Allen Dulles in the C.I.A.—an indication of how well-schooled the upper echelon of the C.I.A. is in uncovering Soviet agents in our government. After ten years with the C.I.A., Bundy spent three years with McNamara in the Pentagon. Then, on February 29, 1964, he was shunted over to the State Department and put in charge of Far Eastern Affairs with the principle task of formulating our phony anti-Communist posture in Vietnam. Ho chi Minh is certainly not worried about Bill

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 18, 2025



Bundy. Any friend of Hiss is certainly a friend of Ho's.

Nor is Ho having sleepless nights over Robert S. McNamara, whose cuts in our military defense program have produced a chronic shortage in Vietnam of helicopters, barbed wire, medical syringes, bridging equipment, construction materials, white phosphorous rockets, field generators, power units, spare parts, and amphibious craft.

It is therefore not at all difficult to understand the optimism of Ho chi Minh and his associates who have had the assurance of Dean Rusk and President Johnson—on at least fifteen different occasions—that the United States has no intention of overthrowing the Red government in Hanoi.

As for the opening question of why our administrators in Washington have chosen Vietnam as the place to make our ultimate, uncompromising stand against Communist aggression, the answer is very simple. Under the conditions imposed by our own leaders, conditions which give the North Vietnamese the advantage in every way, our men cannot possibly win a military victory in South Vietnam. Therefore, our coming defeat and humiliation there will be used to convince all Asians—as well as others in the world—that the United States is really impotent in the face of irresistible Communism. Of course, there will be a great deal of “escalation” and many murdered Americans before the end of the road is reached, but Americans are always expendable, especially when making the world safe for “democracy.”

HOW OUR MEN MUST FIGHT

Ever since the Rusk-Johnson-McNamara clique decided that we had to “stop Communism” in Vietnam, our soldiers have had to fight under the most difficult conditions imposed by the enemy. In the first place, it is a little late—although not too late if the Administration really meant it—to start thinking of stopping Communism in Vietnam now. South Vietnam is simply one-quarter of what is left of old French Indo-China, with three-quarters—Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam—already under Communist control. In that one-quarter of former French Indo-China still not completely conquered by the Reds, at least one-third of the territory is effectively controlled by Communist guerrillas, another third is contested, and the last third is somewhat safely under the administration of the Saigon government. Despite this, Vietcong guerrillas manage to inflict damage on our forces right in the heart of Saigon and the surrounding area.

In other words, there is no front-line in South Vietnam. The front is everywhere—in the officers' mess, in the jungle, on the beach, in the mountains, in the rice paddies, at the airbases. In one day, for example, American soldiers will be engaged with the enemy in large and small operations 30 miles east of Saigon, 200 miles northeast of Saigon, and 400 miles north of Saigon. (None of the fighting is in North Vietnam!) On other days, the action will be as scattered and patternless. This is actually as the Communists planned it. When James Cameron, the British journalist, interviewed the North Vietnamese colonel in charge of Vietcong guerrilla forces in the South, he was told (New York Times, December 8, 1965):

“The new strategy of our people is: to insure troth a concentration of force and guerrilla tactics; to attack in the mountains, and also in the enemy's rear, and to attack in many places simultaneously. They are now occasionally contriving to do all three at once.”

Thus the Vietcong decide on what terms the war is to be fought. Our military men are aware of this as attested to by a story printed in the New York Times of December 13, 1965:

After nine months of action in Vietnam by American combat troops, whose number is steadily increasing, the United States is still in a defensive position, although a strong one, according to important military authorities....

These authorities suggest that the “first build-up” of American combat troops, decided upon by President Johnson last July, has not achieved the expected results because of some widely shared mistaken assumptions.

“We had an assumption that North Vietnam was not going to reinforce the Vietcong forces in South Vietnam, as it has done,” one officer said recently. He added that the introduction of at least nine North Vietnamese

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 18, 2025



regiments into the South had brought “an entirely new dimension to the War.”

In other words, McNamara and his whiz-kids had “miscalculated” again. He was so busy making plans to destroy S.A.C. because of the “reduced Soviet bomber threat” that he plum ignored the Soviet build-up in North Vietnam. All of a sudden North Vietnamese troops were appearing with large anti-aircraft machine guns, 20-mm. and 37-mm. anti-aircraft cannons, 120-mm. heavy mortars and light howitzers. Is it possible that our Soviet friends knew of McNamara’s escalation plans long before our own men knew of them and therefore were able to plan for them well in advance? According to James Cameron (New York Times, December 10, 1965):

At dusk the roads [in North Vietnam] become alive. The engines are started and the convoys grind away through the darkness behind the pin points of masked headlamps. There are miles of them, heavy Soviet-built trucks, anti-aircraft batteries, all deeply hurled under piles of branches and leaves....

There were a great number of Russians to be seen in Hanoi, but never one in uniform. If there were Soviet soldiers in North Vietnam, they escaped my view. The military aid is all of Soviet or East European origin—Czechoslovak small arms, for example

Very interesting. We were told by the mass media that the Russians were the good Communists and were not responsible for killing our men in Vietnam. The bad Communists in Peking were responsible for that. In addition our State Department urged us to sell wheat to the Russians —on credit—and buy glassware, ham, and Christmas tree ornaments from Czechoslovakia. And apparently this is only the beginning of the Soviet build-up in North Vietnam if we are to believe a story in the New York Herald Tribune of December 22, 1965, datelined Moscow:

The Soviet Union agreed yesterday to give North Vietnam more technical and economic aid....

It was the second Soviet-North Vietnamese aid agreement signed here in less than six months. a pact signed July 12 was announced as providing troth military and economic aid....

The Soviet military newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) said the military aid involved planes, rockets and guns.

All of which sounds very ominous. We also have McNamara to blame for the fantastic haste in which we were thrown into “escalation.” The results reveal such a lack of planning that one begins to wonder what the men in the Pentagon do from nine to five besides thinking of ways to disarm us. For example, no adequate reparation was made for the sudden large influx of men and materiel in Vietnam. We quote a New York Times report of December 12, 1965:

Shipping congestion, personnel replacements and shortages have become major problems in the Vietnam war....

In all South Vietnamese ports and coastal waters, there are hundreds of thousands of tons of cargo waiting to be unloaded. Some ships have waited for weeks—those with low priority for months.

In another New York Times article of December 12, 1965, Hanson W. Baldwin wrote about the effects the Pentagon’s unplanned haste had on our troops:

In the case of the First Cavalry, the problem has been accentuated by several factors: the haste with which the division was transferred from the United States and the speed with which it was thrown into battle before it completely debarked from the transports that brought it here; the high toll of malaria, and in some units moderate or fairly heavy combat casualties; the expiration of enlistments of several thousand men who were shipped here from the United States with the division with only 60, 90 or 120 days to serve.

Yes, believe it or not, soldiers with only two months left to serve were shipped to Vietnam, probably without warning, to catch a fast case of malaria or get killed before the week was up. And while our men are sent in this disorganized fashion into the Vietnamese death trap, and McNamara is busy dismantling military bases in the United States, the Communist build-up continues. Mr. Hanson Baldwin left little to the imagination in his chilling

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 18, 2025



dispatch of December 6, 1965 in the New York Times:

The nightmare of the Central Highlands is that a full North Vietnamese army corps—three divisions, perhaps with artillery support—may soon be operating in the Central Highlands, from Kontum to Pleiku and Pleime....

According to intelligence reports, verified by aerial observation and by prisoner-of-war interrogations, the trails and roads from North Vietnam through Laos to South Vietnam and Cambodia are clogged with streams of men and traffic....

“We never realized until recently that the enemy could reinforce so quickly and so greatly,” General Loc [of South Vietnam] said. “The enemy is reinforcing more quickly than we are.”

That figures! What with most of our stuff sitting in ships that can’t be unloaded, our men can console themselves with the knowledge that Averell Harriman has explained our position to the Shah of Persia and Soapy Williams has briefed Jomo Kenyatta, Mau-Mau President of Kenya, of our noble intentions in Vietnam. This should make everybody happy, including the mothers and fathers who will receive the telegrams.

Naturally, the North Vietnamese have plans for our boys. The same colonel interviewed by Mr. Cameron in Hanoi had this to say:

“Naturally, the United States forces have an enormous superiority in weapons and equipment; in no circumstances could we ever begin to match them in resources. But in the new phase of the struggle we, that is to say the Liberation forces, are putting a strong emphasis on what we in our language call “catch-and-grasp”—hand-to-hand fighting, you would say.

It is fair to say that in this sort of thing the Americans can always be defeated—they dislike it, and they are untrained for it. It is intensely disagreeable, and you have to have particularly good reason to be able to do it at all.”

And so the American draftee, fresh out of high school and with fuzz on his cheeks, and thoroughly indoctrinated in the United Nations gook of world brotherhood, will be expected by “brother” McNamara to grapple in hand-to-hand combat with Communist guerrillas. But never underestimate the resourcefulness of the American soldier — even with a liberal education—in his battle to outwit Ho chi Minh and Robert S. McNamara. Simply read the following dispatch from the New York Herald Tribune of December 13, 1965 and feel good:

Hatchets used like tomahawks replaced bayonets in the hands of some American soldiers yesterday in a hand-to-hand jungle fight.

A “hatchet squad” of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, routed a Vietcong unit after an encounter that was more like Indian fighting on the early American frontier than warfare in a nuclear age.

The Americans had bought the hatchets themselves, paying about \$1 each for them. They were honed to a razor edge, painted bract. In a jungle war, the soldiers say, bayonets get caught in the heavy undergrowth and are too unwieldy.

An interesting story which we hope Messrs. McNamara and Yarmolinsky haven’t read. Who knows, they might decide to ban hatchets in their zeal to disarm us. But are there any doubts that our men could win if they were permitted to win?