

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

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It's Treason! Aid and Comfort to the Viet Cong

by Wallis W. Wood

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Week after week, in city after city across the continent, proposals that we abandon South Vietnam are being greeted in a circus atmosphere with the trumpeting of tin horns, the rain of confetti, and prolonged applause. The cheers are for Robert F. Kennedy and Eugene J. McCarthy—both U.S. Senators; both seeking their Party's nomination for President of the United States; and, both campaigning on what is being rhapsodized by the best press agency that money can buy as a platform of "peace."

No one could want peace more than the half-million servicemen facing death every day in Vietnam. No one is more aware of the terrible price of war than the soldier who has stood by dozens of pairs of empty boots at a battlefield memorial service and listened to the thin tears that a bugle makes over the dead, knowing that some buddy is being sent home to his wife and children and mother in the plastic lining of a military coffin. No one is more aware of the awful hell of this war than the G.I. who daily sees and hears and endures the death of another comrade . . . awaiting his turn, even expecting that tomorrow he may himself be among the statistics, a number cited on page thirty-seven of the *Times*—where a bored America tabulates her dead.

But, no one is more opposed to a Communist takeover of South Vietnam than our soldiers who have seen firsthand what it would mean.

While our Press greets every new call for "negotiations" and a "Coalition Government" with massive publicity, the grave warnings of our fighting men go unreported. The following, from a New Jersey soldier somewhere on a battlefield south of Khe Sanh, is typical of thousands of such letters which "Liberal" editors consider better left ignored. *The people who advocate this have never seen the fear in the people's eyes when someone mentions Viet Cong. The people who say we shouldn't help, have probably never seen their town invaded by Communists. They've never seen their Mayor disemboweled, and his wife raped in the middle of the town by 25 Communists, then about 15 townspeople forced to do the same. These protesters are not people who are the only survivors in their family after the V.C. took all the rest and slowly and painfully killed them in front of their own eyes. I doubt that any of these protesters have ever come home to find their expectant wife nailed to the ground by a bamboo stake driven through her belly. Sure, "pull us out" they say, and then Charlie will come in and do even worse than that. I never thought Americans were so selfish and stupid.*

Pretty unsophisticated for the taste of a Eugene McCarthy, maybe. Too "emotional" for a Bobby Kennedy, perhaps. But, you see, the facts are unsophisticated and emotional—like terror.

"Pull us out . . . and then Charlie will come in," he wrote. Another soldier had learned from personal experience a lesson that for fifty years has been confirmed again and again; the lesson that any coalition with the Communists can only be the first step on a path that leads inexorably to total Communist control. The formula is always the same: cooperate, consolidate, and then purge what opposition remains. You want to know about a Coalition Government with the Communists? Ask the people who tried it: the people of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia....

Ask *them* about your Coalition Governments, Senators.

As always before, the Communists in Vietnam fully endorse demands for Coalition Government. And they are preparing for its establishment even now, by systematically assassinating those civilians who might lead effective opposition to their ultimate control. An official report from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon reveals that during the Communists' brief occupation of Hue in February, they moved immediately to slaughter the entire leadership of the city—some four hundred leaders, including their wives and children.

Vietnam War

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As the official report notes: "The NVA [North Vietnamese Army] and the VC [Vietcong] had the names and addresses of the people they wanted to get, and they had their own order of priorities for the ones they wanted to kill. Their victims were mainly police, political leaders, government and local civil servants—anyone who worked for the Americans and anybody who was known for his active support of the Government."

During the past year, some twelve thousand South Vietnamese civilians have been victims of the Vietcong's political terrorism. Nearly six thousand prominent civilians have been assassinated, three thousand *known* kidnapped, and three thousand more have disappeared without a trace. Last year alone, more than two thousand village Chiefs and Elders were shot, beheaded, or eviscerated in the streets of their communities by the Vietcong—more than fifteen thousand such local officials have been assassinated by the Communists in Vietnam since 1958. Coalition Government, Senator McCarthy? Negotiations, Senator Kennedy? And then what?

Marine Corps Captain Brook M. Shadburne tells what the Vietcong's terror policies mean in terms of human suffering: *One-half mile south of our Marble Mountain Air Facility "hero" base at DaNang, there is a tiny village typical of so many, many thousands in the area. Within the last year, it has "lost" two Mayors. The first was kidnapped. The second was killed along with his family. The present one had his young son's fingers all broken by the VC, and finger nails pulled out one by one—he is still Mayor. Today there was a three-year-old girl in the hospital, daughter of an ex-town Chief. The Chief and his wife were beaten and killed in view of the child and then the little girl was beaten beyond recognition with rifle butts and left for dead. She is disfigured but still alive in our hospital. Three years old! How can we educate during the day? How can we expect a stable government where we only own the day and in the night the VC come in with a new Russian sub-machine gun to cast their own brand of veto to any local election? They extract their rice tax, grab the youth for recruits and by day—who is to know, they wear black P.J.'s and straw hats like everyone else. We can't win hearts! Let's win a war!*

Six weeks after he penned the comments above in a letter to his family, the Communists killed Captain Shadburne. It was near the DaNang about which he wrote, during an emergency medical evacuation. The helicopter he was piloting landed on a 250-pound bomb planted in the landing field during the night by the Vietcong to whom Robert Kennedy says he would send his blood; the Vietcong which brutalizes children as a *political tactic*; the Vietcong which on December sixth, at Dak Son, coldly turned flame-throwers on more than 250 women and children; the Vietcong with whom Senator Kennedy, President Johnson, Richard Nixon, Senator McCarthy, Vice President Humphrey, Senator Percy, and Secretary Rusk say they would have us "negotiate."

You know very well what Captain Shadburne would say about that. But then, Shadburne is dead isn't he? And our politicians, safe and comfortable in Washington, have never faced the animals who will inevitably control any Coalition Government in South Vietnam. Perhaps they do not realize that the incredible bestiality of today will be as nothing to what will follow . . . when they succeed. It was no politician, but a young soldier with the First Infantry Division in Vietnam, who said simply: "I would rather die tomorrow than live to see that day."

For what would the Johnsons and Rusks, the Kennedys and McCarthys, die? For negotiations, gentlemen? For a Coalition Government? Our men in Vietnam would like to know.

I

Many Americans who fear a negotiated betrayal of the people of South Vietnam took new hope on March 18, 1968 when President Johnson declared: "The time has come when your President must ask you to join in a total national effort to win the war...." More knowledgeable Americans know his words, as when he compares himself to Abraham Lincoln, were meant only for political consumption; they are aware that no such "total effort" is permitted United States forces in Vietnam. They know that General William Westmoreland, then American Commander in South Vietnam, accurately described the Johnson policy when he told the National Press Club last November: "We are fighting a *limited* war with *limited* objectives and with *limited* means...."

Last year, in an article for *American Opinion* ("[Vietnam — While Brave Men Die](#)," June 1967), we charged that

Vietnam War

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Date: January 13, 2025



American servicemen were being killed fighting a war they are not allowed to win. We demonstrated that North Vietnam was totally dependent on other Communist countries, and particularly the Soviet Union, for the equipment and supplies that it needs to wage this war. And we offered page upon page of evidence proving that much, if not most, of this assistance was made possible by the official policy of the Johnson Administration which calls for even greater trade with these very Communist regimes.

The past year has brought only tragic acknowledgment that our charges were, if anything, understated.

In August of 1967, the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee conducted extensive Hearings concerning the handicaps and restrictions that have been placed on U.S. servicemen in Vietnam. Because of the propaganda campaign demanding a halt in the bombing of the Communist North—a campaign initiated by the Communists themselves and promoted by much of the Press—the major topic of this inquiry was, in the words of the Subcommittee, “the fragmentation of our air might by *overly restrictive controls, limitations, and the doctrine of ‘gradualism.’*” The Hearings revealed that although the bombing of North Vietnam was authorized in February of 1965, by the end of that year the Johnson Administration had refused permission to strike *every single one* of those targets which the Joint Chiefs of Staff had listed as “militarily significant,” and which they had sought permission to destroy.

The next year, 1966, the Joint Chiefs of Staff prepared another list of 242 installations in North Vietnam that were vital to the Communists’ war effort. And, during that year, American pilots flew a total of 106,000 combat sorties against the Hanoi regime. Virtually every mission received widespread publicity through this country’s “Liberal” news media. Defense Department officials pointed to the more than two thousand sorties being flown every week against North Vietnam as evidence of a new determination to “hurt the enemy.” And, many Americans whose concern was beginning to overcome their complacency were convinced that at last we were moving to *win*.

The truth was revealed later. *Less than one percent* of those sorties were flown against the vital targets on the list of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By the end of 1966, on orders from Washington, only twenty-two of the 242 key strategic installations had been struck. More than 220 of these targets—more than 220 of the major installations which enabled the Communists to continue killing American soldiers in the field—remained in operation, immune from attack . . . on direct orders from the Johnson Administration.

In its Summary Report, the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee noted: *The long delay in approving targets in North Vietnam has almost certainly contributed to our aircraft and pilot losses since it gave the North Vietnamese the time to build up formidable air defenses. Moreover, the long delay enabled the enemy to prepare for a response to the anticipated loss of installations, such as petroleum storage, by dispersal of facilities and building reserve stocks.*

Finally, in mid-summer of 1967—long after the Communists had prepared for such attacks—our pilots were allowed to bomb a few more of those targets recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This was two years after the first air raids against North Vietnam, six years after American troops were committed in large numbers to South Vietnam, and eleven years after the first U.S. soldier was slain by the Vietcong.

Then-Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara assured the Senators that all but a few of the targets chosen by the Joint Chiefs were now authorized for attack—according to McNamara, only fifty-seven had *not* been approved. But military leaders were quick to dispute McNamara’s claims. Even with the new clearances, Admiral Ulysses S. Grant Sharp, Commander in Chief of our Pacific forces, testified that there was “no significant departure from the broad restraints under which we have long operated.” General John P. McConnell, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, revealed: “There are many valuable targets remaining unstruck.” And Marine Corps Commandant General Wallace M. Greene told the Senators: “The key targets have not even yet been hit.”

More recently, the popular monthly *Science & Mechanics* featured in its issue for March of 1968 a highly important article based on extensive interviews with a score of top-ranking military leaders. The piece was by

Vietnam War

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Lloyd Malfan, an accurate, responsible, and internationally respected journalist. Here are the conclusions of these leaders:*The war against North Vietnam can be irrevocably won in six weeks the remaining Vietcong guerrillas in the South could be conquered within six months {the war} may go on for another five, ten or more years—if it continues to be fought as at present We are fighting a war in a weak-sister manner that is unprecedented throughout the history of military science.*

Author Mallan makes it clear that he is merely reporting the views of the military authorities he interviewed:*The foregoing time-estimates for victory in Vietnam are based on serious, lengthy discussions with some of the most experienced and astute military strategists in this country. Not one of these military authorities knew in advance what the others had told me. Yet every one of them was in strict agreement with every other one. They were also unanimous in their confidence that neither Russia nor Red China would dare step in physically to confront us—if we did what we have to do for victory.*

And, who were these military leaders *unanimously* protesting that our fighting men are being hobbled and needlessly sacrificed in a war that could be won, conventionally, in six weeks? They were: General Nathan F. Twining, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, former Chief of Naval Operations; General George H. Decker, former Army Chief of Staff; General Frederick H. Smith Jr., former Vice Chief of Staff, Air Force; General Thomas S. Power, former Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command; Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, former Vice Chief of Staff, Air Force; Lieutenant General Arthur G. Trudeau, former Army Chief of Research and Development; and a General and a Brigadier General in the U.S. Army, still on active duty, whose names were for obvious reasons not disclosed. That kind of unanimity from men like these is not a matter of politics: It amounts to the nearest thing one can imagine to a military certainty. The war *can* be won, and in six weeks. It's not being won because the Commander in Chief, President Lyndon Johnson, will not *permit* the military to win it.

So serious has the matter become that in November of 1967 a special House Armed Services Subcommittee released a Report accusing the Defense Department of conduct that "borders on criminal negligence." It received scant attention in the "Liberal" news media and was simply ignored by the Administration. But the report cannot be ignored by any American whose son or brother, sweetheart or friend, faces death in Vietnam. "For it shows conclusively," as nationally syndicated columnist Ralph de Toledano explained, that the "Defense Department has been *deliberately* issuing faulty equipment to the troops in Vietnam."

The Congressional Report confirms charges that an "excessive malfunction rate" of the new M-16 rifle has been responsible for the deaths of uncounted numbers of American servicemen. A primary reason for the malfunctions, the Subcommittee disclosed, was the frequent shortage of cleaning equipment. One of the stories which the Report verified concerned a young Corporal in Vietnam. His platoon had been issued the new M-16 rifle *and but one cleaning rod*. The Corporal was shot and killed during a Vietcong attack, as he raced from one member of his platoon to another, carrying the only cleaning rod they had been issued.

Of special interest to the dead Corporal's parents, no doubt, is the fact that rifle cleaning materials are listed among the four hundred items that President Johnson declared to be no longer "strategic" when, in October of 1966, *he cleared them for unlimited, unlicensed export to the countries of the Communist bloc* supplying them to the Vietcong. Yes, when it comes to supplying the Communists, there are no shortages. But there are now thousands of Americans who have received letters from sons or husbands or brothers in Vietnam, requesting arms, ammunition, holsters, rifle cleaning compounds, and other equipment in short supply in Vietnam.

Every year, for the past seven years, the number of American servicemen sent to Vietnam has increased. More than 515,000 U.S. troops are now there facing an enemy to whose arsenal America sends aid and trade at the insistence of our President. The evidence is overwhelming that the Johnson Administration will not supply our soldiers adequately or use them effectively. Yet the latest reports from Washington indicate that as many as 210,000 more American fighting men may be ordered to the jungles and swamps of Southeast Asia before the end of the year.

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 13, 2025



While Congress has yet to declare war, and no nation has declared war on us, this country is most certainly at war. With monthly expenditures at \$2.5 billion, a figure which is rising every week, it is already the third most costly war in all our nation's history. Congressman Donald W. Riegle Jr. has estimated that, in terms of military expenditures, the United States is now paying \$234,000 for every fatality our military has been permitted to visit upon the enemy. The cost in suffering and death to our own sons now amounts to 140,000 casualties —boys, really, from Iowa City and Ft. Wayne, San Diego and Brooklyn . . . young men with wives and babies, mothers and fathers; decent kids who only a year or so ago played football for the local high school and worked Saturdays at the supermarket.

More than twenty thousand Americans have already died fighting in this war that a consensus of our best military minds says could be won in six weeks—if Mr. Johnson would but *permit* the military to win it. Another 120,000 of our sons have been maimed and wounded; many hideously crippled and mutilated. More than five hundred U.S. servicemen are now being killed every week in Vietnam. An additional two thousand U.S. troops suffer serious wounds every seven days. And, even if the current rate of casualties does not increase, American losses in 1968 will be equal to the total for the previous seven years of fighting. (In 1967, 9,353 Americans were killed by the Communists in Vietnam; a figure thirty percent greater than our total losses for the previous six years combined.)

The rising if incredible toll is due almost entirely to the huge increases in weapons and supplies which the Soviet Union and its satellites have given the Hanoi regime in recent months. By mid-1967, the Soviets had sent almost \$2 billion in military aid. Other Communist satellites contributed an additional \$1 billion in war material. And, on September 23, 1967, the Kremlin announced it was delivering still more supplies to “the heroic Vietnamese people who are waging a war against imperialism.”

The communiqué, issued at the conclusion of talks between Soviet rulers and North Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Le than Ngli, promised additional “aircraft, anti-aircraft guns, round-to-air missiles, artillery pieces, small arms, ammunition, and also equipment, vehicles, products and other goods....”

Yet, the Johnson Administration has steadfastly ignored all evidence of Soviet participation in this war and has even tried to prevent the American public from learning about it. Fourteen months ago, Congressman Glenard P. Lipscomb revealed that “The Administration has clamped a tight lid on information showing just how much and what type of aid is being sent to Hanoi by the Communist bloc.”

Administration censorship continues to this day. Congressional testimony by representatives of the military is carefully reviewed by the Defense Department to ensure deletion of every description of the flow of war materials to Hanoi.* Officials coming to testify from the Departments of State, Commerce, and the Treasury do their best to ignore the matter entirely.

No subject today commands as much attention in the Press as Vietnam; yet, the amount of misinformation is staggering. Every policy and every program is continually hashed and rehashed— *except* any suggestion that we stop supporting the Communists, or any proposal that we let the military go ahead and win the war. These alternatives are met with a stony silence, occasionally with double-talk, almost never with honesty. The airwaves, the press, even the streets, are filled with fervent discussion of a rigged debate: Should we withdraw now, or support the Administration *and stay in for years*? Should we surrender South Vietnam to the Communists today, or more gradually through ‘negotiations’ leading to a “Coalition Government”?

Is it so hard to believe it was planned that way?

II

For much of the past three months I have been trying to bridge the official credibility gap that lies about the whole subject of Vietnam like a moat and a mire. I have met with, talked to, or corresponded with officials of the Departments of Defense, State, and Commerce; with Senators and Representatives and their aides and assistants; and, with leaders of Big Business profiting from trade with the Communists, and those who refuse to

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 13, 2025



participate in it. I wanted to learn: How extensive is U.S. aid and trade with the Soviet bloc? What specific items are involved? Who is promoting it, and why? Which firms are profiting from it? And, finally, what are the prospects of stopping it?

Those answers which could be had are far from encouraging.

First, our exports to the Soviet bloc— whose supplies keep the Vietcong in the field—are extensive, currently averaging nearly \$4 million a week in commodities alone. Worse, no dollar value can even be placed on the more than four hundred applications for technical data approved by the Johnson Administration for delivery to the Communists over the past two years. The Communists obviously place a high priority on things like our latest plans for construction of a cold-strip rolling mill, a steel-strip galvanizing line, fifteen chemical plants; our newest technical data on radar devices, petroleum refining, automotive brakes, aircraft communications and naval navigation . . . all cleared for shipment to the arsenal of the Vietcong killing our soldiers in the field.

The State Department's answer to my anxious inquiries about such trade was to maintain—in March of 1968, a month in which some two thousand Americans were killed in Vietnam with military hardware supplied by the nations of Eastern Europe—that “trade with Eastern Europe offers real benefits to us. The most important gain it can bring is the opportunity to influence, and to encourage, the changes that are taking place in that area.”

There are twenty thousand Americans who would be very glad to be able to debate the Administration's claims that the Communist bloc is changing: They are the twenty thousand American soldiers killed in Vietnam by an enemy whose troops are armed, supplied, and trained by the Communist nations to whom our President is promoting the shipment of American goods.

The myth of “mellowing” Communists has been totally and thoroughly debunked—in Vietnam today, in the Middle East last year, and behind the Iron Curtain every day. It has, in fact, been debunked wherever it has been honestly and seriously studied. For example, a Report to the Senate on *Rebellion In Russia's Europe: Fact and Fiction*, issued in 1965 by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, contained the following warning:

... the allegedly liberal trend among the satellite regimes—featuring relaxations in local tyrannies and a hot search for Western trade, know-how, equipment, and credits—may be exactly the opposite of the anti-Soviet turn it is represented to be. There are grounds for believing that the trend is not only Moscow-approved but even Moscow-invented. {Emphasis in original.}

Among the ploys favored by the Johnson Administration is its frequent but futile effort to distinguish between the “peaceful, non-strategic goods” which it sends to the Communists, and the “strategic goods” which cannot be exported. Military leaders know that, in war, *all* goods are strategic. And our President has acknowledged that “This is war.” In a speech before the National Convention of the American Legion in August of 1967, Senator Karl Mundt noted: *After Congress had established a forbidden list of hundreds of items which nobody in America could ship to any communist country sending supplies to the enemy, President Lyndon Johnson, on October 12, 1966, by Executive Order—in defiance of the expressed intentions and desires of Congress—opened up for unlimited and unlicensed shipment over 400 items of supplies to Russia and her satellites in Europe.*

Included among the Johnson Administration's “non-strategic” shipments to the Soviet Union have been: \$268,975 of polyvinyl butyral, an interlayer in bullet-proof glass; \$2,387,000 of chemical wood pulp, a primary source of nitrocellulose, an important ingredient for solid rocket fuels; and \$482,250 of diethylene glycol, which is used to manufacture explosives and liquid rocket propellants.

Items now cleared by President Johnson for unlimited, unlicensed export to the arsenal of the Vietcong include: Diesel fuel, iron ore, scrap iron, aluminum, synthetic rubber, ground and marine radar, lubricating oils and greases, and airborne navigation equipment.**

Try to rationalize that away, if you can. I can't.

Last month I went directly to the Commerce Department to try to learn how *it* could justify such shipments to the

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 13, 2025



countries helping Communists to kill American soldiers. I spent three and one-half hours in the Department of Commerce with Mr. Aaron Tollin, Acting Director of Policy Planning for East-West Trade, and one of his assistants, Mr. Don Cook. Seated at a mahogany conference table in Mr. Tollin's spacious office, I listened patiently as he described the committees and commissions, aides and assistants, who are reviewing every item and every blueprint before permission is granted to send them to the Communists. Finally, I asked him how we could know that what we were sending the Reds was not winding up in the backs of American boys in Vietnam. Could he establish that the metals, machines, chemicals, computers, rubber, and oil we are sending are not used by the Communists in their war effort in Vietnam?

He could not. The best he could do was to assure me that the Commerce Department's export controls are under constant review, that intelligence reports "are being studied," and that if any item is put to "strategic" use by the Communists, further shipments will promptly be denied. When I asked how many of the four hundred key items cleared for shipment to the enemy had been put back on a "restricted" list since October 1966, his answer was "none."

The Commerce Department's most recent *Quarterly Report on Export Control* (released on February 14, 1968) is no doubt correct when it notes that U.S. firms sent Communist Romania 55.5 million in hides in 1966, while American businessmen supplied the Soviet Union with 5500,000 worth of our best steel. But that same Quarterly Report also states: *Eastern European countries continued throughout the reporting period to show the greatest interest in the acquisition of technical data relating to petroleum refining, chemicals and petrochemicals, and metalworking machinery and processes.*

All are now cleared for provision to the Communists.

Both Tollin and his aide claimed on several occasions that, in dollar volume, *most* of our shipments consist of food and clothing. The Acting Director of Policy Planning even asked: "Would you refuse to feed people who are starving?" Can any American, I answered, justify sending food or clothes to the men and women who make the arms and ammunition which have enabled the Vietcong to kill twenty-thousand young Americans and wound 120,000 more? When I suggested that, "If they really need food, let them produce wheat, not weapons," both men looked more than a little uncomfortable. Finally, Tollin countered: "Well, what you're saying is that you believe these shipments are morally wrong, isn't that it?"

"You're damn right," I said.

"We can't make moral judgments," responded the Acting Director of Policy Planning with a wave of his hand. "You must understand," Aaron Tollin explained, "we don't set policy—we just carry out orders. President Johnson's orders."

Mr. Tollin would not dispute the fact that the Soviet Union and its satellites continue to supply eighty percent of the weapons which North Vietnam must have to continue the war. He simply presented the Administration's view that this does not show enough of an "aggressive hostility toward the United States" to justify stopping trade.

The death last year in Vietnam of ten thousand Americans was not enough "aggressive hostility," I guess. One doubts very much if the killing of an additional twenty thousand this year will have any more effect.

Of course, the Johnson Administration is capable of taking a strong and forthright stand regarding trade; the following policy statement is unequivocal:... *the general policy is to deny applications for such items as petroleum and petroleum products, rubber and its manufactures, chemicals, explosives, iron and steel products, nonferrous metals, machinery and transport equipment (except agricultural equipment) electrical power and other electrical machinery and parts, automotive vehicles and parts, aircraft and parts, and other items that would make a significant contribution to the . . . economy.*

These sanctions will, however, be of no assurance to Americans concerned about their sons in Vietnam. Every

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 13, 2025



item in the above list has been approved for shipment to the Communists. The statement, you see, applies not to a Communist regime supplying the Vietcong, but to anti-Communist Rhodesia—a nation which has offered to send troops to help us fight the Vietcong.

III

How important a role have American businessmen played in promoting trade with the Communists? A very large one, I'm afraid. As Lenin once boasted: "If the capitalists are about to be hanged they will compete with one another over who will sell the rope." Scores of our business leaders are in the bidding. The names of specific firms selling to the Communists, descriptions of items sold, and details on financing are almost impossible to uncover. The Department of Commerce has denied this information to Congress, and I fared no better with Tollin when I asked him for a list of U.S. firms trading with our Communist enemies. The Department of State, however, has gone a step beyond secrecy. In a pamphlet entitled *Private Boycotts versus the National Interest*, it has openly denounced Americans who criticize trade with those supplying the Vietcong. And, in November of 1966, speaking on nationwide television, Ambassador Averell Harriman labeled opponents of trade with the Communists as "bigoted, pig-headed people who don't know what's going on in the world..."

As you must imagine, the profiteers are themselves most defensive and most reticent to disclose details of their dealings with Communist regimes. Still, according to the various trade journals and business publications, the following firms have concluded at least one major business deal with one or more nations in the Communist bloc: Simmons Machine Tool Corporation, General Electric Company (through a French affiliate), Dow Chemical Company, E. J. Longyear Company, Deere & Company, Honeywell Incorporated, Donaldson Company, and Universal Oil Products. There are many others.

I wrote to all of the above asking for details. Of those listed, the only firm that replied to my letter asking for more information about its contracts with the Communists was Deere & Company; and Chairman William A. Hewitt carefully avoided the matter of the volume and type of his firm's sales to the Reds. Of the seventy-five major corporations I queried, only Ford Motor Company Caterpillar Tractor Company, National Cash Register Company, and I.B.M. World Trade Corporation directly acknowledged selling equipment to the Communist bloc. In every case, the explanation was essentially the same: the Johnson Administration had not only approved their efforts but encouraged them. I.B.M. Vice President D. R. McKay answered:

IBM looks to the U.S. government for direction and guidance in this area.... So far as this trade concerns the Vietnam war, it is inconceivable to us that our government, which is directing so much of this nation's energy toward settling the Vietnam situation {sic!}, would approve the shipment of goods which could in any way assist the aggressors.

Henry Ford II, Chairman of the Board of Ford Motor Company, even admitted that there was danger in Ford's selling goods to the Communists: *I am sure the Soviet Union still look upon international trade as an instrument for achieving political as well as economic goals. . .*

But he went on to say he favored East-West trade and to use the same reasoning offered by the State Department to justify trading with the Communist regimes supplying the equipment to kill more than five hundred American servicemen every week: *Nevertheless, I believe that changes in the world situation and within the Communist world call for the revision of some U.S. trade policies. The Communist countries no longer form a united bloc, subservient to Russia....*

One would like to ask Mr. Ford to name a single Communist nation which *is not* supporting the Vietcong's war against American troops in Vietnam. From the vantage point of an eighteen-year-old soldier in Vietnam, Mr. Ford, that Communist bloc supplying the enemy looks awfully damned united.

L. L. Morgan, Executive Vice President of Caterpillar, went so far as to say: "We agree most heartily that expansion of East-West trade is clearly in our national interest.... " Mr. Morgan even sent me a copy of a speech, by Caterpillar Chairman William Blackie, entitled: "Peaceful Engagement: A Progression From Cold-War

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 13, 2025



Containment.” ‡ Perhaps he will make copies available to the mothers, orphans, wives, and sweethearts of the twenty thousand young Americans who have been killed in Vietnam with equipment from the Communist countries with which he insists we must *expand* trade. No doubt a copy of Mr. Blackie’s speech will help them to understand that trade is more important than a few lives. C. V. Truax, Director of Public Relations for National Cash Register, in his reply for Chairman Robert S. Oelman, ignored Vietnam entirely. But he did explain how his firm got started in its trade with the Communist regimes of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia:

At the request of the United States Department of Commerce, NCR has displayed business machines at international trade fairs in several Eastern European countries in recent years, and a number of sales—chiefly of cash registers and accounting machines—have resulted.

According to an article in *Ford Engineering* for May of 1967, Dow Chairman Carl Gerstacker is another Big Businessman who not only suggests that “an expansion of trade with Communist nations is ‘highly desirable.’ He also goes a step further and hints that Communist nations should be allowed to bid on government projects in the U.S.” Robert C. Swain, Executive Vice President of American Cyanamid, agrees. “It is possible,” he beamed to a business conference three years ago, “we will see a Soviet-owned and operated plant on U.S. soil. It is also possible that the next generation of business leaders in the United States will be choosing sites in the Soviet Union for their plant operations.”

If that does happen, two of the chief financiers may well be Cyrus S. Eaton, the notorious Soviet apologist and wealthy industrialist, and the billionaire Governor of New York, Nelson A. Rockefeller. A year ago, Tower International (a banking firm run by Cyrus Eaton Jr. and specializing in trade with the Communist bloc) and the International Basic Economy Corporation (a Rockefeller-owned firm with substantial investments behind the Iron Curtain) joined forces to promote even more trade with the Reds. The two firms have built, or are making plans to build, behind the Iron Curtain: two synthetic rubber plants, nearly a dozen hotels, a \$50 million aluminum producing plant, a *nuclear power plant*, a glass factory, and three breweries.

Only one of the seventy-five Big Businessmen I questioned came out flatly against selling to the Communists. Mr. W. F. Rockwell Jr., Chairman of the Board of North American Rockwell Corporation, replied: “I don’t agree that trade is feasible, as long as we are faced with fighting the Communist-bloc countries.... I dislike losing business to foreign countries; however, at the same time, I hesitate selling materials to any country which eventually might prove to be instrumental in killing our U.S. troops.”

Another important businessman who responded declined to discuss any aspect of East-West trade, but explained why: “In view of the fact that our company is a major Government contractor, I am sure you will understand and appreciate our position.”

Of course, the list of American businesses now promoting such trade reads like a Who’s Who of Industry. Many of this country’s most successful and influential corporate leaders apparently believe, as *Boston Globe* financial correspondent Joseph R. Slevin reported last May, that “they are riding a small wave of the future [*sic!*] . . . that there is money to be made by trading with the Russians and they are stepping up their efforts to sell goods to Moscow.”

The Honorable Ezra Taft Benson, former Secretary of Agriculture and one of this nation’s most able statesmen, was more direct: *Some businessmen who are either exceptionally unintelligent or extraordinarily unscrupulous are now proffering their merchandise and service to the Kremlin masters, who at this very moment are aiding and supporting our enemies in Vietnam. In the waiting rooms of the Kremlin, American businessmen dream of personal gains and profits while thousands of American boys in Vietnam are slain by Communist bullets made in the U.S.S.R. A shameless spectacle that is indicative of our incredible confusion and moral decay!*

Dr. Benson has placed his finger precisely on the problem.

IV

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 13, 2025



Clearly, if the criminal folly of aiding the very arsenal of the Communist troops killing our sons is to be stopped —and, God help us, it *must* be stopped —Americans will have to do it themselves. The place to put a stop to it is in Washington, D.C. But the men there who could halt it, won't; and those who want it stopped, can't.

Many men in Congress are horrified that the United States is assisting our Communist enemies: Men like Strom Thurmond and Karl Mundt, Glenard Lipscomb and John Ashbrook, H. R. Gross and James B. Utt have spoken out, again and again.

Senator Peter H. Dominick has been among the most unequivocal: *Administration pressures on Congress for trade expansion with the Communist-controlled countries of Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union, multiply day by day. It is indeed ironic and disheartening to hear many of our own industrialists parrot these suggestions at the very time when our men in Vietnam are being killed by Soviet weapons.*

The able Senator Frank J. Lausche has added his powerful voice also: *We are now indulging in the same evil practices of selling material to the Communist countries that we indulged in prior to World War II, when we sold scrap iron, which was a "non-strategic material," to Japan.*

Yet, on August 1, 1967, Congressman Delbert L. Latta introduced a resolution calling for the creation of a Select House Committee to make a complete investigation of all aid, direct or indirect, to our Communist enemies. Eight months later, it has yet to be voted out of the House Rules Committee!

What are the prospects that legislation stopping aid to the Communist arsenal of the Vietcong will be passed this year? Senator Strom Thurmond told me they are not very good. His voice shook with fury and indignation as we spoke together in Washington recently. He is a strong man, but he nearly wept as he discussed the sacrifice of American lives in Vietnam today. And, Senator Thurmond could offer only one hope. He saw only one way to force the politicians to change their policies. We must, he said, "get more—many more—good Americans here in Washington. We are not strong enough today."

No one I talked with on Capitol Hill disputed the Senator. All agreed that the only way to get better policies is to replace politicians with statesmen — men like Thurmond, Mundt, Lipscomb, Ashbrook, Gross, Utt.... Men who know that the highly touted art of compromise is but an euphemism for technical dexterity in the prostitute; men who believe that patriotism is a virtue and that America comes first. And, of course, there is only one way this can be accomplished: by the most massive educational campaign our nation has ever seen. It will not be done until enough good Americans start right in their communities, going precinct-by-precinct, street-by-street, house-by-house, to alert their neighbors. Let's face it: Americans who do nothing to help stop the flow of our industrial might to the arsenal of an enemy killing their own sons are simply accessories to murder— and that's just what it is when you tie the hands of your military while supplying the enemy with the trade he needs to continue the war. The Constitution says that "giving aid and comfort" to the enemy is treason. Treason and murder is what Vietnam—a war our best military minds say they could win in six weeks—is all about.

Treason.

And murder.

The job is not to change public opinion. We don't have to convince anyone that aiding the enemy is wrong —all we have to do is tell them it's being done. The massive trade that the Communists receive from this country, and the conspiracy of silence that protects it, will shock thoughtful Americans into action—*then they have the facts*. And that's up to you. Remember, as Wyoming's Senator Clifford P. Hansen has warned: *American servicemen are dying this minute in Vietnam, killed by weapons which are the direct result of the various forms of trade that we have fostered and encouraged with Communist satellite countries.*

Is it still possible to stop it? A good start has already been made. In the past twelve months, more than 800,000 signatures have been collected on petitions urging Congress to "stop, promptly and completely, giving aid in any form, directly or indirectly, to our Communist enemies." The petition drive, originally launched by members of

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The John Birch Society, has grown far beyond its early base.

In the past twelve months, hundreds of local committees called TRAIN—To Restore American Independence Now—have been formed in communities all across America. Committee members are enlisting scores of their friends and neighbors in a campaign to support our servicemen, demand victory in Vietnam, halt all aid to our Communist enemies, and restore traditional American principles to America's foreign policy. The TRAIN Committees[§] are sponsoring petition drives, letter-writing workshops, study clubs, discussion groups, film showings, speaking engagements, and a dozen other activities in this cause. You should be helping.

What can one person do? You can echo the resolve of Mrs. Helen Egri in New York City. Her only son, Sergeant P. Egri, was nearly killed in Vietnam when a Soviet-made mortar exploded within a few feet of his foxhole. His buddy, standing next to him, was killed instantly—and so horribly that, in a note accompanying the coffin, the Army recommended a closed-casket service.

"I honestly feel that our government has betrayed us," Mrs. Egri says. And Helen Egri doesn't leave it there. She has herself become a soldier in a new type of war, laboring day and night in the TRAIN effort to warn other Americans that their own sons may be sacrificed in this war we are not allowed to win, while the Johnson Administration insists on trade with the very arsenal of the Vietcong.

"God was gracious to my boy, Bill," Mrs. Egri told me recently: "He lived." But that Soviet mortar—propelled, perhaps, by American chemicals; forged, perhaps, of American metals—left young Sergeant Egri with five major wounds, blew off his left leg, severed three fingers, and crippled both of his hands. Yes, he lived. But, you see, Bill Egri was a concert pianist.

What can one person do? You can try to match the determination of Lieutenant Colonel Wilbur Outlaw of North Carolina. He is a twenty-five-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force. His only son, Bill, is now a helicopter pilot in South Vietnam, and in the past nine months has been shot down once and strafed several times. In a recent letter to his family from Vietnam, he urged: *Tell those damn fools back home that there is a war going on over here and they'd better start doing something about it, either by signing those petitions or by getting the powers that be (which is probably impossible) to start fighting a war instead of playing Mickey Mouse games. I feel sure that every one else over here is as tired as I am of being shot at and knowing they can't do anything about it most of the time.*

As Bill's father told me: "I spent twenty-five years trying to defend my country; now I'm going to spend the rest of my life trying to save it." He retired from the Air Force to accept, a position as Coordinator for The John Birch Society.

What can you do? You can help protect the lives of your fellow Americans—the 500,000 super-patriots fighting Communism in Vietnam. You can get to work with TRAIN, or on your own, to help stop this treasonous aid and trade with the enemy—and insist on the removal of the restrictions on our military. If not? Well, if not mister, go back to sleep. But don't call yourself an American.

* * *

*See, for example, Admiral Sharp's testimony before the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee on August 10, 1967.

**For a complete list of the four hundred items see *Congressional Record*, March 10, 1967, pp. S3543-S3547.

‡ Back on February 24, 1965, Blackie appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to argue for expanding trade with the Communists. When asked by Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright what he felt was "the principal stumbling block to increasing trade between the United States and the Soviet Union," Mr. Blackie replied: "I think the biggest obstacle might be public opinion." And Fulbright commented: ". . . I think you and your colleagues performed a great service going over there [the Soviet Union]. We have to rely on you to influence the public opinion you were talking about." Blackie is doing his best—while brave men die.

Vietnam War

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[§] For more information about TRAIN, and free copy of the petition to Congress, write to TRAIN. Belmont, Massachusetts 02178.