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Vietnam 10 Years Later

Belmont, Mass. — Over the past several months, a great deal of press attention was paid to the 10th anniversary of the fall of Saigon and the total Communist takeover of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Most often, the message given was that we should remember the men who fought and died there, but we should forgive and forget both those who so completely mismanaged America's effort and the murderous Red regime that 3.3 million Americans fought.

No One Held Accountable

Following on the totally indefensible precedent of the Korean "Police Action," the Vietnam War was never declared by Congress, and therefore victory was never established as the goal. Even worse, President Johnson stated in a July 23, 1966 speech that " . . . our diplomats are probing for a way to make an honorable peace desirable to the Communist leaders in Hanoi." How could an agreement desired by Communist terrorists ever be honorable? While those diplomats sought to please Hanoi, American men who were never allowed to win were dying by the thousands. Since no one was ever called to account for this fundamental violation of the U.S. Constitution, the potential for more undeclared, no-win wars remains.

After our forces suffered casualties of 58,000 killed and over 300,000 wounded, the hasty evacuation ordered by Washington did prove to be extremely desirable to the Communists. Not only did the Kissinger-Nixon agreement allow 200,000 North Vietnamese troops to remain in the South, but the huge military stockpiles our men were forced to leave behind were sufficient, according to the Associated Press, "to field an entire army, navy and air force." That equipment was instrumental in enabling the Reds to completely conquer South Vietnam and her neighbors. It should come as little surprise to learn that some of our tanks ended up in Cuba, and that our small arms were shipped to the Communists in Nicaragua.

Even more, U.S.-built airfields and port facilities in Vietnam are now being used by the Soviet Union to maintain a growing presence in Southeast Asia and the entire South Pacific. Concerned Australians recently noted with apprehension that their nation is within range of Soviet Backfire bombers based at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. And, in addition to equipment and facilities, America's leaders also left 2500 men unaccounted for.

Vets Still Suffering

Here at home, numerous Vietnam veterans still suffer psychological problems as a result of the war. Retired Marine Corps Major Jerry Wilson, a veteran of Vietnam combat, suggests a type of therapy yet untried. Recalling the "pro-Communist" politicians, draft dodgers, militant anti-war groups, Jane Fondas, and flag desecrators, he asked in a remarkable letter appearing in the May 8 *Edgefield (SC) Advertiser*: "Why haven't the American people brought these traitors to some



kind of accounting? One of these sub-species charged with treason would mean more to Vietnam vets than all of your damned walls, monuments, speeches and parades!"

Only a week before he wrote, Communist leader Mai Chi Tho, Chairman of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), was quoted by UPI acknowledging that "the anti-war movement helped us" defeat the United States. Major Wilson knows that only a relative few participated in such activity, but "a vast number of Americans sat on their butts and allowed it to happen."

Since the U.S. pullout, 2.5 million Cambodians have been slaughtered, and 650,000 boat people have fled Vietnam. American taxpayers continue to pay interest on the \$200 million poured into the war. And now, ten years down the road, the media that never focused on the truly substantive issues would have us forgive and forget. If we do as they wish, we will surely be dragged into a repeat performance.