

Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

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When Are We Going To Win; And Why Not?

by Martin Dies

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Congressman Martin Dies of Texas served seven years as Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the historic Dies Committee.

The “Liberals” have again committed another in their long series of serious and hideous “blunders” in dealing with the Communists. They have us neckdeep in a brutal war which we dare not quit and which they refuse to permit our military men to win. It is one of those tragic situations brought about by chronic and stubborn “Liberal” blindness to the nature and modus operandi of the International Communist Conspiracy.

Step by step our leaders allowed this nation to be sucked into the Vietnam quagmire. It happened so gradually that the American public never realized until quite recently that the United States was involved in a major war without allies and without substantial aid from the recipients of our prodigal bounties. Suddenly our people have awakened to the realization that we have a tiger by the tail. What we were only recently told was a “brushfire” has suddenly blazed into a full-grown war. Our “Liberal” leaders, like the Communists, have drawn us inch by inch into the reptile, insect, and disease-infected country of Vietnam where our enemies cannot be distinguished from our friends.

There are those of us who remember how it happened.

There are those of us who remember that it was the American “Liberals” who armed Communist Ho chi Minh against the French, and then refused so much as the use of our air bases to preserve the key French fortress at Dien Bien Phu even after Ho had exhausted his reserve troops in frontal assaults there. It was the American “Liberals” who insisted that Ho was only an “agrarian reformer” and urged the French to surrender North Vietnam to him. It was the American “Liberals” who demanded that the French get out of all Indo-China, leaving it virtually unprotected from Communist invasion and subversion from the North. It was the American “Liberals” who involved us with one unpopular regime in South Vietnam after another, actually urging the elimination of insurgent anti-Communist forces in the country. It was the American “Liberals” who first committed our troops to war in Vietnam with World War II vintage equipment. It is the American “Liberals” who have refused to let our military men turn loose the technology which they require to win this war. It is the American “Liberals” who even now refuse to bomb the enemy’s industrial output at Hanoi and who insist that the Communists’ major depot and port facility at Haiphong must be left intact to supply the means with which American boys are being butchered.

Yes, there are those of us who remember, and who watch and protest, and who are sickened and amazed. Now, in the midst of this horror which the “Liberals” have brought us, we are treated to the spectacle of the “Liberals” falling out among themselves. Robert Kennedy is one of the “Liberal” mavericks. He says he thinks we ought to admit the Communists to a coalition government so that we can pull out of Vietnam with some face saving. This, of course, is a repetition of the tragic mistake our “Liberals” made when they sought to compel the Government of Chiang Kai-shek to accept the Communists as partners in the government of China. It is the same mistake that was made in Laos when our “Liberals” cut off arms supplies to the anti-Communist Laotians and insisted on the coalition with the Communists—with the result that Laos is now used as a Vietcong base from which the Communists raid and kill our men in Vietnam.

No reasonable man believes that a coalition government with the Communists could continue in South Vietnam for very long. The pressure from neighboring China and other Communist countries would bring about the expulsion of the non-Communist members of the Government, and in a short time South Vietnam would be completely in the hands of the Reds. When this happens, all the blood that Americans have shed in Vietnam, the

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lives that have been lost and the billions expended, will have been in vain.

The alternative we are offered by those “Liberals” who disagree with Senator Kennedy is to fight a defensive war against the Vietcong and to strictly limit our operations, “in order to avoid aggression from China.” The trouble with this plan is that it does not hold out any prospect for conclusion within the foreseeable future. As General MacArthur said, “There is no substitute in war for victory.” Nothing will suit the Communists better than to deplete our manpower and natural resources by involving us in inconclusive wars. All of us know what happened to France as a result of her war in Algeria and Indo-China. France lost the flower of her youth and drained her resources, only to be eventually sold out in both Algeria and Indo-China by American “Liberals” supporting her own men of the Left.

It is obvious that our “Liberal” leaders have blundered into one of the most difficult situations which has ever confronted this nation when even Senator Robert Kennedy realizes that some solution must be found. His cure, however, is worse than the disease. In effect, Senator Kennedy would have us promise North Vietnam and China that South Vietnam would become another Communist puppet. Senator Kennedy is too well informed to believe for a moment that there can ever be a successful coalition government such as he proposes. What he is doing is to offer a face-saving plan that will permit us to withdraw from a very difficult and costly situation. What the Senator overlooks is that his proposal would fool no one: The world has already experienced the failures of coalition governments with the Communists. Simply put, Robert Kennedy is proposing surrender. His “Liberal” opponents, on the other hand, propose that we send American boys to die in Vietnam for the next ten years or more.

From what I have said, the reader may conclude that there is no escape from this folly. I think there is, but our poll-taking and time-serving leaders will not dare risk their political futures by the adoption of the program necessary to victory. They and many of our pampered citizenry are not prepared to pay even the price of courage for a victory which will be conclusive.

I

Before a realistic and effective plan can be adopted, our people must be told the truth about Vietnam. We stumbled into that mess during the war, and particularly after Korea. But our “Liberals” refused to work with the French, and the French officers resented our attacks on colonialism—which they saw as a political appeal to racial minorities in the United States. After the Geneva agreements, France withdrew and the United States stepped in without considering the far-reaching consequences of our rash action and without securing commitments from our allies. At first our assistance was modest and nonmilitary, but every year our involvement has become steadily greater. The process was so insidious that the American people never realized what their leaders were committing them to until it was too late to back out.

During this period of involvement the “Liberals” were assuring us that our participation would never go beyond limited non-military assistance. Because they do not consider the Communists a danger, it never occurred to them that the Communists were drawing us into a trap. Our “Liberals” were, in fact, leading us into a war which would be costly and bloody, and which we would have to wage upon the enemy’s terms and under conditions most favorable to the Vietcong. If our “Liberal” leaders had profited from the experiences of the past, and if they had taken the time to study Communist strategy and objectives, they would have moved warily. Before any involvement they would have insisted that our allies also participate. And, above all, they would have known that it is never wise to permit the foe to choose the time and terrain for battle.

Of course all that I have said in the preceding paragraph is water over the dam. The important question now is what can we do to bring this costly war to a victorious conclusion within a reasonable time. The present plan is for a “limited war” which will go on indefinitely, and which will certainly continue to deplete our manpower and resources. It is the very kind of war which Moscow and China want. With a population of 700 million people, China can send “volunteers” to fight in Vietnam for years without any serious shortage of warriors—and this is what she will do when it becomes necessary.

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The Johnson plan for “limited war” cannot win even if it eventually leads to a negotiated peace. Any peace plan agreeable to the Communists will be a Communist victory. Neither can the Administration wage war and at the same time carry on all of its domestic programs for expanded welfare. War is a deadly-serious business which requires the concentration and mobilization of all our technology and resources if the war is to be won. We cannot deprive our men dying in Vietnam of the technology to end the war in order to buy votes for political hacks at home. The Administration cannot play politics at home and wage a victorious war in Vietnam. Every citizen has to get into the war effort to insure success. The war effort must be supported with sound money and credit, and a strong and healthy economy.

We are in this war and we must win it decisively and quickly. If we let it drag on indecisively the Communists will simply involve us in similar wars in other quarters of the globe until all of our eligible youth is scattered throughout the world, fighting and dying, while the Soviet Union sits on the sidelines and awaits her time to strike.

It is too late for the “Liberals” to draw back. They should have foreseen the consequences of their Vietnam policy long ago. It was they who got us in this dilemma. Now all of us must put everything we have into a victorious war effort to rescue our country from the trap into which the “Liberals” have led us.

What shall we do? There is but one answer. It is not pleasant or easy. It will not be popular with cowards. We must destroy Hanoi and the whole of North Vietnam if necessary. Admittedly this is a calculated risk; China may enter the war. It is a small risk, however, because China is no match for our superior fighting forces and advanced instruments of war. The Chinese economy is in shambles, Formosa awaits only our permission to invade, famine stalks the mainland. It is not likely that China will risk herself under such circumstances. If we destroy North Vietnam, “volunteers” from China will serve no purpose. Only full-scale armed intervention by China could then be of any aid to the Communists. It is not likely that this will happen — the Chinese economy simply couldn't support it— but there is always a risk. This is a risk we must take because our Government's policies have left us no satisfactory alternative.

The swift and determined destruction of North Vietnam will slow Communist aggression in the East for many years. It will be a lesson which the Communists will understand and not forget, and it will give us time to clean our own house and re-examine our policies and leadership.

If we drag this war on for years, on the other hand, it will embolden the Communists to start similar wars elsewhere. Once the Communists are convinced that America will continue surrendering to their demands in Southeast Asia they will not be deterred from further acts of aggression. Who will deny, for example, that had we won the war in Korea we would not now be involved in the swamps of Vietnam against the same enemy? If, by the same token, we concentrate our might on North Vietnam and punish her for her arrogance and gangsterism, it will set Communism in Asia back twenty years and, beyond doubt, it will save thousands of American lives.

There come times in the history of nations when boldness and calculated risks are necessary to survival. As Shakespeare said, “Whatever you dream or dare, begin it . . . for courage hath magic power in it.”

II

There is a very good chance that, when China is convinced by our actions that we mean business, she will herself halt the aggressions of North Vietnam. We will never be able to choose a more opportune moment. True, it may mean sacrifices. There will be a few less luxuries and perhaps more taxes, but we must do our duty. We must stop Communism now—so that there will be peace for our children. It is wrong to drag this war on and postpone the showdown to the next generation. By that time the Communists will be much better prepared, and the outcome will be less certain.

President Johnson and Senator Kennedy want to postpone the decision as long as they can. They argue that time is working to our advantage. They say that the Communists are changing and that as they become more prosperous they will be less inclined to risk their prosperity and power in war. This is some more wishful thinking

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on the part of our “Liberals.”

The Communists will never abandon their objective of world conquest as long as they are Communists—because this goal supplies them with the motivation, the fanaticism, so essential to the success and preservation of their movement. It gives direction and purpose to their cult. It is the moving and dynamic and terrible force behind their dogmas. It is their excuse for present failures and their compensation for current sacrifices and denials.

What we need in the United States above everything else is realism. We have been living in the dream world created by artificial and temporary expediency. We persist in believing what we want to believe. We have become so accustomed to a soft life that we demand it even in the face of a major war. We even think we can win that war without any serious interference with our welfare schemes. Somehow we must come to the realization that this is the hour of momentous decision for ourselves and our children.

Freedom and independence have always exacted a high price in sacrifice, suffering, denial, and courage. There never has been, and there never will be, an easy way for people to keep their freedom.

We cannot win this war until there is a great awakening. Only the truth will keep us free. We must know our enemy; we must know that our enemy is Communism. To those who say that waging a war to win is too dangerous, my answer is that waging a war to lose is insane. By vacillating we are merely postponing the day of reckoning, and in doing so we are weakening ourselves for the final test.

Those who have consistently voted into power the men who are responsible for our policies have no right to now complain of the natural and inevitable effect of such policies, and even they must recognize that further surrender to the Communists is treason. As for President Johnson, he must face up to the fact that he cannot please everyone. He will find that waging a war at home against poverty, and pacifying conflicting domestic political interests, is quite different from conducting a successful war in the jungles and swamps of Southeast Asia. Through consensus reached by compromises, at the expense of our offspring, it is probably possible to keep our people narcotized at home—but in this all-out war with the International Communist Conspiracy there is no such thing as compromise except on the Communists’ terms. They are in the Cold and Hot War to conquer the Earth. Nothing less than complete victory will satisfy them.

III

As usual the “Liberals” are more than a decade late in debating the wisdom and propriety of our presence in Vietnam. The time for that debate has long since passed. After the French withdrew from Indo-China, Lieutenant General John O’Daniel started in 1954 to reorganize the Vietnamese army, trimming it from 250,000 to 150,000 men equipped for conventional war. O’Daniel’s successor, Lieutenant General Samuel Williams, sought to rebuild the divisions to full strength. Under General Paul D. Harkins the Vietnamese army and the U.S. advisory group continued building up. By 1962 we had 9,865 men there, and at the end of 1963 we had 16,575 men in battle in Vietnam as helicopter pilots and “advisors.” By the end of 1964 we had increased our contingency in Vietnam to 23,000 and at the end of 1965 our commitment grew to 200,000 men.

During all of this development there were no televised or publicized Hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There was no serious debate upon the wisdom of our actions and plans. That was the time for Senators Kennedy and Morse and the others to speak their convictions, if they had any, and to voice their objections, if any, to our policy. They did not do so. Now they come to us, to Americans who have lost sons and daughters and husbands and fathers because of “Liberal” folly — and they ask that we surrender to Communist demands. There was a day when the word for such an action was treason.

Statesmanship is foresight. Everyone has hindsight, but nations can only be governed wisely and successfully by leaders with foresight. The Senators who are now quarreling about our Vietnam policy are exercising hindsight. What they are saying should have been said long ago. Now it is academic. The Rubicon has been crossed and the die is cast. Our honor is pledged, our integrity and the future of freedom is at stake. It was Stephen Decatur

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who said, "May my country always be right in her intercourse with foreign nations; but right or wrong, my country."

This does not mean that we should not learn from our mistakes. In the last thirty years our government has made enough mistakes in her dealings with Communist countries to have taught us time and again that we cannot do business with Communists and must always expect betrayal and broken promises. Lord, if we had only learned from those mistakes!

The cause of our dilemma is the fatal attachment of American "Liberals" for Communism. It grew out of the United Front where so many American "Liberals" were infected with the virus of Marxism. It was their training school, and while it helped them to win elections at home, it blinded them to the objectives, techniques, and strategy of the International Communist Conspiracy. The domestic economy thus far has been able to survive the waste the "Liberals" have foisted on us, because this country has behind it more than a hundred years of honest toil, thrift, and ingenuity. But there is a limit to everything. In International affairs, too, we have survived "Liberal" sell-outs — though half the world lives in Communist chains because of them. But the time has come when further appeasement can mean only an eventual Communist dictatorship over the whole of the globe.

When the "Liberals" came to us and said Chiang Kai-shek was ruthless and corrupt and Mao Tse-tung was a great "agrarian reformer," we lost China. When they came to us and said the same about "agrarian reform" and "coalition government" and our "allies the Communists," we lost Eastern Europe. Other "agrarian reformers" whose virtues they sold to America have been Fidel Castro, Achmed S. Sukarno, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Romulo Betancourt, Jacobo Arbenz, Ahmed Ben Bella, and a dozen others—who turned out to be Communists. The "Liberals" involved us in a war in Korea and then refused to let us win it; now they have us in such a war in Vietnam. They tell us that we must surrender there or fight a holding action for years. They consider Americans so sodden with corruption that few will demand victory.

Meanwhile, America listens to the kooks, beatniks, Communists, and cowards—we listen because they are forever on our radios and televisions, and smiling from the front pages of our newspapers, to demand further sellout to the Communists. We listen because the ruling "Liberals" control our communications and tell us what they want us to think. And we listen in vain for a sane voice reminding the American people that our "Liberal" leaders have sent our sons to fight and die in a cause which those "Liberals" are themselves foredooming to failure. We listen in vain for a single voice of national leadership which so much as proposes victory in Vietnam. We listen in vain for a call to national courage and honor and offensive. We listen in vain for a Douglas MacArthur to remind America that "There is no substitute in war for victory." Maybe I'm just an old fashioned American, but I'd like to ask just one "Liberal" politician: "When are we going to win the war in Vietnam, and why not?"