

Vietnam War

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Worth Repeating

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In this writer's opinion, we should never have become involved in Vietnam at all. But, regardless of how we got there, or who put us there, we are too deeply involved today to have any honorable way out except through victory. It should be our determination not to escalate this war, nor to prolong it, nor to muddle through it, but *to win it*.

— ROBERT WELCH (1967)

Founder of the John Birch Society

The only reason American soldiers are bleeding and dying in Vietnam today is because our leaders have tied their hands behind their backs. The only reason we haven't had victory in Vietnam is because our leaders have done everything possible to avoid it.

This last bombing halt is the sorriest thing I ever saw. I can't see any difference in this bombing halt than any of the others. The Communists have used every lull to resupply their troops and get ready for increased activity. Every time our fighting men have hit them hard, the politicians give them a chance to recover. And this only leads to increased casualties for our own troops.

— GEN. CURTIS E. LEMAY (1968)

Former Air Force Chief of Staff

I played a lot of football in my day. You are in there to win the game, so you don't ever tell the opposing team when you are going to try a pass or make an end run. But this is exactly what we *are* doing in Vietnam. We even tell Ho that we have no intention of destroying either his economy or government. Therefore he *knows* that there are vitally important targets we cannot destroy.

— GEN. NATHAN F. TWINING (1968)

Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

At no time in the entire history of warfare has a war been won through minor escalations. Yet this is what we are doing in Vietnam — using minor escalations. So the enemy *must* feel that he can hold out. His reasoning goes: "We're not being hit as badly as we thought we would be. We can hold out this way long enough for the peace-doves in the United States to prevail."...

Then there's the matter of body counts. I believe this was Mr. McNamara's idea — to release counts on the number of enemy dead versus our own dead. But body counts don't mean a thing — they're barbaric to begin with — because you don't *want* to kill people: you want to paralyze an enemy to the point where he is *convinced* that he *must* lose if he continues the war.

We are not doing this today in Vietnam. And as a result, our own people are becoming discouraged, tired, disinterested and disenchanting.

— ADM. ARLEIGH A. BURKE (1968)

Former Chief of Naval Operations

We have never won the war in Korea — because of our methods. We are not winning in Vietnam for the same reason. If we are going to fight a war — we should fight it.

— GEN. GEORGE H. DECKER (1968)

Former Army Chief of Staff

The worst thing you can do in a war is to fight it piecemeal — because then you encourage the enemy to keep

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going. And we're piecemealing the whole thing right now. I think we're winning, but very slowly. The enemy can't take all that pounding day after day and not be somewhat discouraged. But air power — and any other power — is not being used properly in North Vietnam. We're piecemealing it.

— GEN. THOMAS S. POWER (1968)

Former Commander in Chief
Strategic Air Command

The war could continue for years if it is carried on at the present rate. We allow the North Vietnamese to get used to our bombing each time before we step it up. Then they get used to the step-up. And so it will go for a long, long time. Using this approach, at the very beginning we lost the element-of-surprise advantage that is vital to winning a war. That war would have been over in less than a year — if we fought it correctly at the beginning.

— GEN. FREDERIC H. SMITH JR. (1968)

Former Air Force Vice Chief of Staff

Surprise, perhaps the greatest of the principles of war (confirmed by the Arab-Israeli conflict), was deliberately sacrificed when our leaders revealed our strategy and tactics to the enemy. For example, they told the enemy that he need not fear invasion of North Vietnam. Whether or not we ever intended to invade the North, we should have employed every ruse known to the military art to convince Ho Chi Minh that invasion was imminent.

* * *

The enemy was told also that we would not bomb populated areas, heavy industry, canals, dams and other critical targets — and thus sanctuaries were established by us along the Chinese border and around Haiphong and Hanoi. This permitted the enemy to concentrate anti-aircraft defenses around the North Vietnamese targets that our Air Force was permitted to attack — greatly increasing our casualties. Missiles, oil and ammunition were permitted to enter Haiphong harbor unmolested and without protest.

— GEN. IRA C. EAKER (1968)

Former Air Force Vice Chief of Staff

Two years ago, we could have quickly defeated Hanoi. When you decide to apply force — as we have decided to do — then you must apply it at once and on as massive a scale as possible.

But the way we're doing it is like someone suffering from a long illness that gradually gets worse. The gradual development allows the victim to become accustomed to more and more pain — so he learns to bear it. While if he were in an accident and broke a leg, or suffered an even worse, more abrupt shock, his tendency would be to give up In warfare, the element of surprised shock is vitally important. And we have not used that element in Vietnam.

— GENERAL ARTHUR G. TRUDEAU (1968)

Former Army Chief of Research
and Development

What we're doing now violates every principle of warfare that we in the military have ever known. For comparison take the Israeli-Arab affair. Israel got there "firstest with the mostest" — and the war was over in six days. That's because they went all-out.

You can't win wars necessarily by killing people. You've got to *overwhelm* the enemy. And when you overwhelm him, you kill fewer people than you do by picking at him day after day — as we do now.

— GEN. GILBERT L. MEYERS (1968)

Former Deputy Commander
Seventh Air Force in Vietnam

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The faster you move in a war, the fewer casualties there are, and the sooner the fighting is over. This war could be won in less than three months, but not the way it is being fought now.

— GEN. PAUL D. HARKINS (1968)

Former Commanding General
of U.S. forces in Vietnam

[T]he effects of the Vietnam War are: bankrupt our currency, destroy our military, increase government, destroy the will to resist, accelerate moral decline, and divide our people [T]he war in Vietnam is, in reality, a war on the American people by the American government. The only beneficiary is the oligarchy of *Insiders* who wish to rule us and the world.

What then are we to do about Vietnam? Continuing the never-ending, no-win slaughter is abhorrent to all, except the Conspiracy. There are then two alternatives — pull out, or win. To those who advocate “cut and run,” I simply remind them that this is exactly what we did in Korea. We didn’t win in Korea, and because we didn’t, we’re in Vietnam today

And so, the only remaining alternative is victory. Why not victory? Does this mean dropping a nuclear bomb on every village and hamlet in Vietnam? No, of course not. Dozens of military men have stated that the war in Vietnam could be won in a few months if only they were allowed to seek victory.

— JOHN F. MCMANUS (1971)

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