



AIR  
UNIVERSITY

# review

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1983

*Linebacker*



## reflections

*. . . Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.*

Inaugural Address of  
President John F. Kennedy  
20 January 1961<sup>1</sup>

*North Vietnam has gone over the brink and so have we. We have the power to destroy his war-making capacity. The only question is whether we have the will to use that power. What distinguishes me from Johnson is that I have the will in spades.*

President Richard M. Nixon<sup>2</sup>

*I have the consolation to reflect that during the period of my administration not a drop of the blood of a single citizen was shed by the sword of war.*

Diary of President James Earl Carter  
20 January 1981<sup>3</sup>

Successful political leaders must be masters of context, framing their utterances within the demands of time and place. This is part of the art of politics, and rightly so. After all, leaders must understand the historical context inhabited by those whom they aspire to lead if they are to succeed. These quotations, uttered or written by presidents at the beginning, middle, and end of a tumultuous time and covering two decades of American history, say as much about their respective eras as they do about the politicians who authored them.

J.F.G.

### Notes

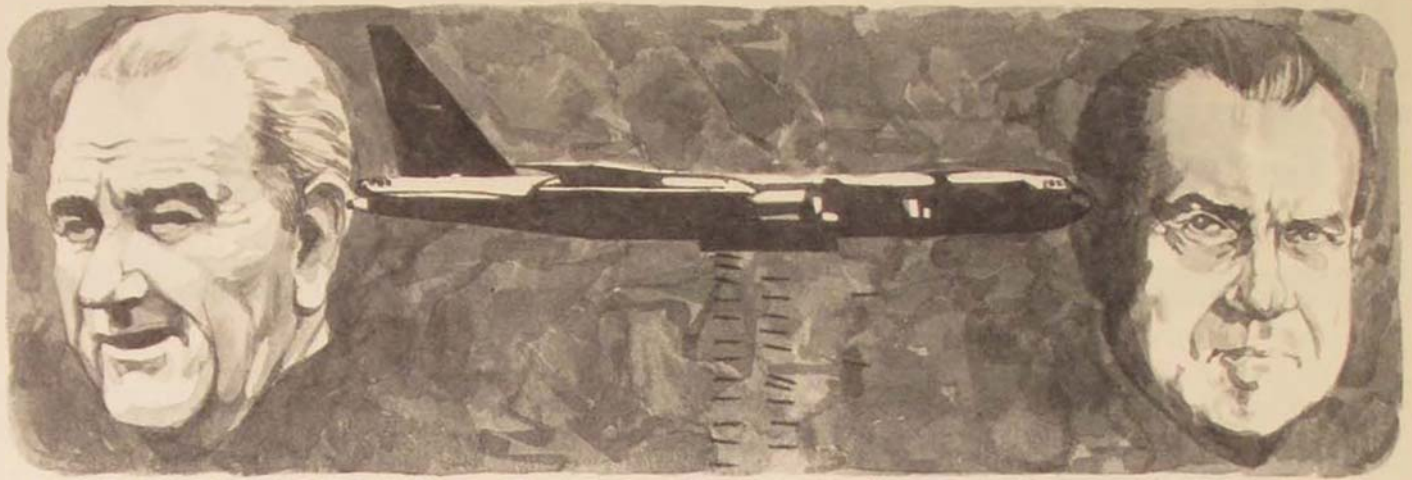
1. Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York, 1965), p. 245.
2. *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, 1978).
3. *Keeping the Faith* (1982).

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# LINEBACKER AND THE LAW OF WAR

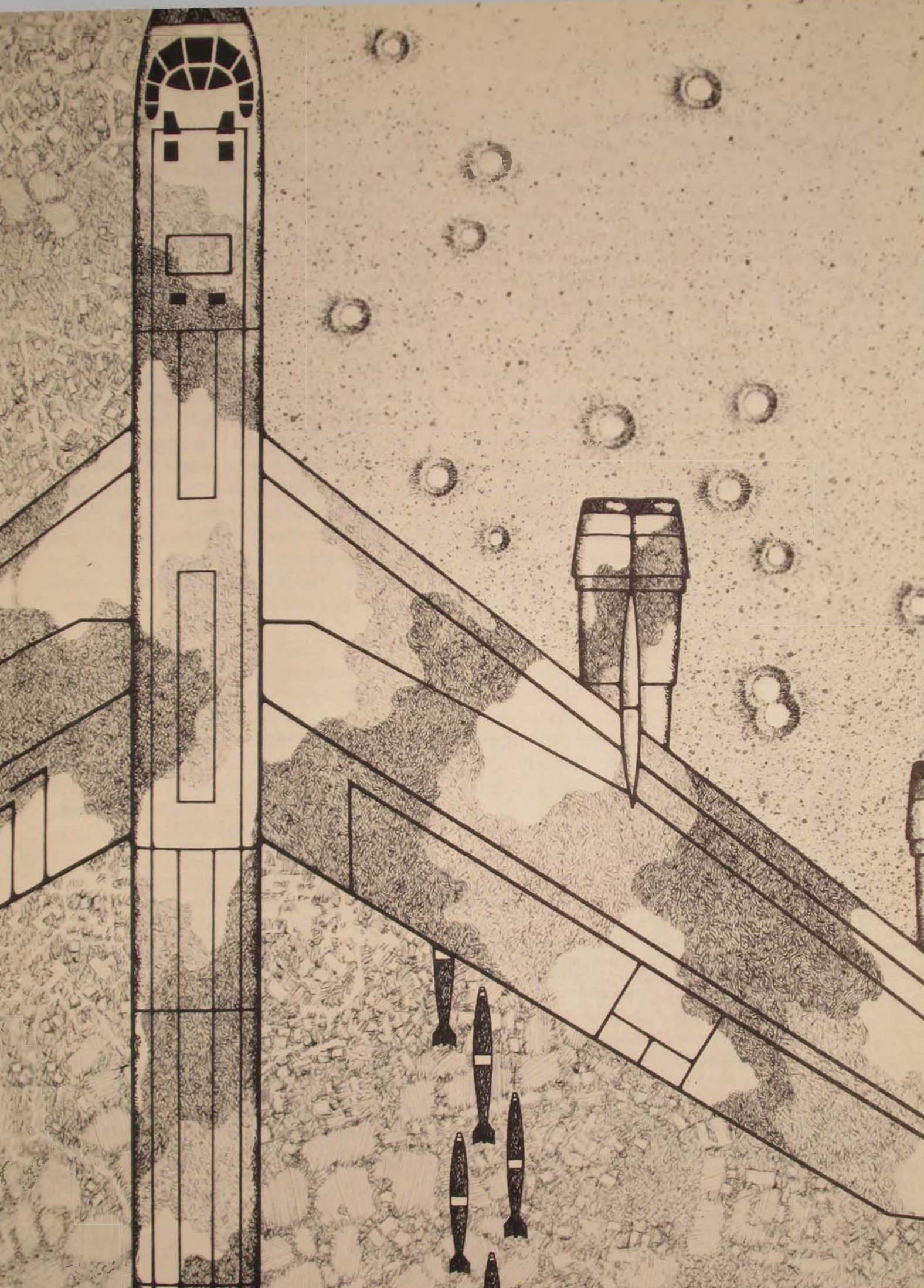
W. HAYS PARKS

ON Good Friday, 30 March 1972, three North Vietnamese divisions crossed the demilitarized zone (DMZ) separating the Democratic Republic of Vietnam from the Republic of Vietnam and invaded the northernmost provinces of the latter. Before the Easter weekend was over, twelve of Hanoi's thirteen regular combat divisions were carrying out military operations in South Vietnam. The 120,000-soldier force was equipped with more than 200 T-34, T-54, and PT-76 tanks as well as mobile radar-controlled antiaircraft weapons and portable surface-to-air missiles. The North Vietnamese invasion, timed to exploit the adverse weather during the transition from the northeast to southwest monsoon and initiated to enable Hanoi to strengthen its political hand in the Paris peace talks, prompted the second major bombing campaign over North Vietnam by the United States. Named Linebacker I and II, these operations would have a major effect on thwarting North Viet-

namese politico-military efforts before they were concluded nine months later.

The preceding campaign, Rolling Thunder, had been terminated north of 19° N almost exactly four years earlier, with a total cessation of offensive air operations over North Vietnam occurring seven months later. Discussions seeking a diplomatic solution to the Vietnam War had commenced in March 1968. Undoubtedly in recognition of its effect, North Vietnamese officials argued that serious discussions could not take place until U.S. bombing of the North had ceased. The Johnson administration agreed to stop the bombing on 31 October 1968, with a tacit agreement that

- North Vietnam would not use the area in or near the DMZ to attack U.S. forces or otherwise take advantage of U.S. restraint;
- Vietcong forces would not strike major cities in South Vietnam; and
- The United States could continue reconnaissance flights over the DMZ and those areas



of North Vietnam immediately adjacent to the DMZ to verify North Vietnamese compliance with the first condition of the agreement.<sup>1</sup>

In the years following the conclusion of Rolling Thunder, United States air power continued to support military operations in South Vietnam. North Vietnamese direction and support of the war in South Vietnam did not cease but shifted resupply and reinforcement emphasis to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, winding its way through Laos and Cambodia. The United States responded, concentrating its air power on interdiction of the trails while permitting North Vietnam the sanctuary of its supply base in the north. As North Vietnam rebuilt itself, President Richard M. Nixon announced his program for Vietnamization of the war and withdrawal of U.S. forces. From an authorized high of 545,000 in 1969, U.S. personnel in South Vietnam were to be drawn down to 69,000 by 1 May 1972, but with a promise by President Nixon to the North Vietnamese lead-

ership that he would react strongly to any overt North Vietnamese offensive.

The cessation of bombing over North Vietnam had not brought peace but a diplomatic stalemate as North Vietnam reconstructed its defenses and supply routes. Using the peace talks as a platform for propagandistic harangues, the North Vietnamese eschewed diplomatic resolution of the conflict, instead buying time until the Easter offensive, when they had "brutally and cynically chosen a test of arms."<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. response to the North Vietnamese invasion was immediate. B-52 Arc Light missions in South Vietnam against infiltration routes and staging areas increased, and B-52 forces in the theater increased dramatically with the Bullet Shot deployment of B-52Gs to Guam. Over the next weeks Marine squadrons deployed to Da Nang, Bien Hoa, and the "Rose Garden" at Nam Phong, Thailand; Navy carrier support doubled; and Air Force tactical air

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### Glossary

AAA	antiaircraft artillery	HASC	House Armed Services Committee
BDA	bomb damage assessment	JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
CBU	cluster bomb unit	LGB	laser guided bomb
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific	NCA	national command authorities
CINCPACFLT	Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet	OJCS	Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CINCSAC	Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command	PACAF	Pacific Air Forces
COMUSMACV	Commander Military Assistance Command, Vietnam	PGM	precision guided munitions
DMPI	desired mean point of impact	PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
DMZ	demilitarized zone	POL	petroleum, oil, and lubricants
ECM	electronic countermeasures	RAF	Royal Air Force
EOGB	electrooptically guided bomb	SAC	Strategic Air Command
GCI	ground-controlled intercept	SAM	surface-to-air missile
GPW	Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War	TACAIR	tactical air
GWS	Geneva Convention Relating to the Protection of the Wounded and Sick	USA	United States Army
		USAAF	United States Army Air Forces
		USN	United States Navy
		WBLC	water-borne logistics craft

(TACAIR) units rejoined the war from Korea and the United States. The first priority of returning air units was to support South Vietnamese forces directly so that the ground battle in South Vietnam could be stabilized; the second was to turn air power efforts north.

Unlike the gradualism of Rolling Thunder, there was little hesitation in 1972.<sup>3</sup> On 2 April 1972, the national command authorities (NCA) through the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) authorized air strikes against military targets and logistic supply points north of the DMZ to 17°25'; this was increased to 18°N on 4 April and to 19°N on 6 April. On 9 April, 15 B-52Ds struck Vinh railroad yard and Vinh POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) supply. It was the first use of B-52s in North Vietnam since 28 October 1968. Three days later, 18 B-52s struck Bai Thuong airfield. On the weekend of 15-16 April, B-52s and Navy and Air Force TACAIR struck military storage areas and POL targets in the areas surrounding Hanoi and Haiphong. One week later, similar targets were attacked at Hamm Rong and Thanh Hoa.

As with most military operations, these attacks served multiple and interrelated military and political purposes. They disrupted the flow of war supplies supporting the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam; warned Hanoi that if it persisted in its heavy fighting in South Vietnam, it would face mounting raids in the north; demonstrated continuing U.S. support for the government of South Vietnam which, as in Rolling Thunder, would bolster its will to defend itself. Furthermore, these attacks were intended to persuade Moscow to use its influence to encourage a political rather than a purely military resolution of the conflict.

U.S. military responses were coupled with diplomatic efforts to forestall further fighting. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger traveled to Moscow on 20 April for secret talks with the Soviets to enlist their assistance in facilitating a return to the peace talks and to Paris to meet secretly with North Vietnamese negotia-

tor Le Duc Tho on 2 May. Kissinger's appeals were spurned out of hand by the latter, whom Kissinger describes as bewildered by the quick response of U.S. air power to the North Vietnamese invasion. Similar efforts by U.S. Ambassador William J. Porter to resume the Paris peace negotiations on 27 April and 4 May were met by North Vietnamese demands for U.S. and South Vietnamese surrender.

As a result of North Vietnam's intransigence, President Nixon addressed the nation on 8 May to announce that the North Vietnamese ports of Haiphong, Cam Pha, Hon Gai, and Thanh Hoa, as well as smaller inlets harboring North Vietnamese patrol boats, were to be closed through naval mining. The mines were to be laid at 0900 on 9 May (Saigon time), to activate at 1800 on 11 May, thus affording third-country shipping the opportunity to depart the mined harbors unharmed. Simultaneously, he announced air operations throughout North Vietnam. These air operations (Linebacker I) would continue until the formal cessation of hostilities in January 1973; a separate operation, Linebacker II, would take place concurrently from 18 to 29 December 1972.<sup>4</sup>

Linebacker I was more ambitious in purpose than Rolling Thunder. Its objectives were to curtail the military resupply of North Vietnam from external sources; to destroy internal stockpiles of military supplies and equipment, wherever located; to destroy targets throughout North Vietnam which were providing direct support to that nation's war effort in South Vietnam; and to restrict the flow of forces and supplies to the battlefield, thereby inhibiting Hanoi's new-found dependency on advanced means of warfare. The overall objective was to sap the foundations of the enemy's desire to prolong the conflict by hampering its ability to conduct sustained combat operations, to induce its return to meaningful negotiations for a diplomatic settlement of the conflict. The Nixon administration shared the view of its predecessor that U.S. national objectives in the Vietnam War were limited. Like Rolling Thun-



*This composite USAF photograph was taken in January 1973 after the end of Linebacker II. It shows the geographically limited nature of the Linebacker targets (the dark outlined areas) and conclusively demonstrates the falseness of charges that the United States engaged in indiscriminate carpet bombing. Of interest are the Gia Lam railroad yard (area 1), the Hanoi thermal power plant (area 2), Gia Lam airfield (area 3), Hanoi railroad station (area 4), the port area*

*and barge assembly yard (areas 5 and 6), army depots and vehicle repair areas (areas 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12), an air defense headquarters (area 9), and Bach Mai airfield (area 12). Areas number 14 through 18, outlined in white, show areas of accidental collateral damage including the Cuban chancellery (area 15), the Kham Thien area (area 16), and Bach Mai Hospital (area 17). Ha Lo prisoner-of-war camp, the Hanoi Hilton (area 19), was not hit and is depicted only as a landmark.*





*The contrast between a comprehensive view of collateral damage and that presented by the North Vietnamese government can be seen by comparing the United States aerial photograph (above) of Kham Thien street with the press photos on the right released by North Vietnam. The fan-shaped, superimposed outline and arrow in the lower center show the area of coverage and the camera angle of the press photo at top right.*

*These two photographs of Kham Thien street, released by North Vietnam, show unrelieved devastation, the limited nature of which can be seen by comparing them with the U.S. photo at left. The use of camera angle, perspective, and lens selection to convey the desired impression is masterful. Notice, for example, how foreshortening compresses the foreground in the upper photo, intensifying the impression of destruction.*

der, neither Linebacker I nor II was intended to destroy the Hanoi regime, compel the North Vietnamese people to adopt another form of government, or devastate North Vietnam. If thoughts of ground invasion were remote during Rolling Thunder, they were nonexistent during Linebacker I and II; President Nixon had directed at the outset of Linebacker I that stand-down of U.S. ground forces would continue.<sup>5</sup> The last U.S. ground combat unit was withdrawn three months later, on schedule. From the beginning, U.S. efforts were dependent exclusively on air and naval power.

In order to seal off North Vietnam from external supply, Navy A-6 aircraft closed North Vietnamese ports by aerial mining in an operation named Pocket Money. In doing so, Pocket Money forces were permitted for the first time to implement JCS recommendations made in 1964 in the planning of Rolling Thunder, but essentially avoided during the former campaign. As one Air Force officer noted of Rolling Thunder, "instead of destroying the war-supporting pillow at the port, efforts were expended chasing the feathers all over Southeast Asia." Hanoi received 85 percent of its goods, or 2.1 million tons, through the port of Haiphong during 1971, including all of its POL; the failure to close the ports of entry was viewed by the planners of Linebacker and by the Nixon administration as one of the principal weaknesses of Rolling Thunder. Linebacker I forces then cut the northwest rail line running between Hanoi and Kwangsi Province in China; cut the northeast rail line between Hanoi and Yunnan; and interdicted the eight major highways from China and the water-borne logistics craft (WBLC) on the waterways of North Vietnam.

Rolling Thunder forces had been impeded further in the successful prosecution of campaign objectives by NCA-imposed geographic restrictions that severely curtailed air strikes in areas north of 20° N, providing North Vietnam with a sanctuary for its greatest military-industrial area for much of that campaign. They

were impeded further by denial of authorization to attack legitimate targets because of a fear by the NCA of unacceptable losses by U.S. forces and of targets in heavily populated areas because of a paranoiac fixation with regard to any incidental civilian casualties (based in part on apparent ignorance of belligerent rights under the law of war). Rolling Thunder also suffered from stringent strike restrictions that placed U.S. forces at undue risk and from frequent bombing halts which President Johnson subsequently acknowledged had a net result of "zero . . . indeed . . . less than zero."<sup>6</sup>

The North Vietnamese undoubtedly interpreted the Johnson conduct of Rolling Thunder as a manifestation of a lack of determination, as well as identifying a vulnerability of the U.S. government to sustained propaganda alleging violations of the law of war. Repeated disinformation, however false, resulted in increased restrictions on U.S. strike forces and target denial. After rebuilding its defenses around Hanoi and Haiphong, the Hanoi government was willing to engage in some risk taking with regard to any new aerial campaign over North Vietnam, convinced that it could win any test of national will with the United States.

President Nixon, profiting from the errors of his predecessor, recognized the challenge facing him. In a memorandum supporting bombing of the North, he noted:

[North Vietnam] has gone over the brink *and so have we*. We have the power to destroy his war-making capacity. The only question is whether we have the will to use that power. What distinguishes me from Johnson is that I have the *will* in spades.<sup>7</sup>

In studying the lessons of Rolling Thunder, President Nixon was bothered by the "dreary 'milk-runs' which characterized the Johnson administration's bombing in the 1965-1968 period."<sup>8</sup> On 6 April, President Nixon and Kissinger met with General John W. Vogt, whom President Nixon had just selected to command Seventh Air Force. After brief discussion of

U.S. objectives in the new air campaign, President Nixon asked General Vogt what support he required to accomplish his mission. General Vogt's requests were few, but one in particular would have significant impact on the success of Linebacker I. General Vogt asked President Nixon not to repeat the Johnson administration practice of exclusive NCA control of target selection. President Nixon assented without hesitation.<sup>9</sup>

The White House return of special trust and confidence to the military commanders responsible for execution of national policy was important for a number of reasons. During Rolling Thunder, targets had been "dribbled out" by the White House in no rational sequence. There was no restrike authority, or restrike authority was severely limited. Numerous targets were placed off limits for the duration of Rolling Thunder, or a substantial portion thereof. In Linebacker I, most of the list of targets<sup>10</sup> became the validated target list,<sup>11</sup> enabling the operational commands to identify target systems, establish target priorities, and attack them in a logical sequence. Field commanders possessed restrike authority. The list was supplemented as new targets were identified.

In Rolling Thunder, the White House selected targets weekly—subsequently at less frequent intervals—without consideration for the weather over North Vietnam. Only validated targets could be attacked during the prescribed time frame, and most targets remained validated only during the time frame prescribed. If weather prevented attack of a validated target, the target generally was not revalidated immediately; often it would disappear from the target list for months.

Linebacker I forces were not so constrained, permitting greater flexibility in planning and more effective utilization of forces. Targets were attacked by system. Thus Linebacker I forces were able to attack all power sources in a very short time (with the exception of the Hanoi thermal power plant, which remained off limits until Linebacker II). In contrast, during

Rolling Thunder, the White House would authorize the attack of power plant "A," withhold authorization for attack of power plant "B" for two months, then authorize air strikes against power plant "C" three months later, by which time power plant "A" had been restored to operation because of a lack of restrike authority to inhibit its recovery. Such a drawn-out process enabled the North Vietnamese to develop a cushion in each target system to mitigate the effect of U.S. air strikes. In the case of the power system, the North Vietnamese had enough time to import 2000 portable generators to offset the effect of airstrikes against its power plants.

Similarly, if Linebacker I forces were unable to attack portions of a target system in one part of North Vietnam because of adverse weather, they would concentrate on those portions of the target system that were weather clear. This operational flexibility enabled Linebacker I planners to "play" the enemy defenses. During Rolling Thunder, repetitious strikes on the targets validated for the week enabled North Vietnam to concentrate its forces to defend the target, once identified. By contrast, Linebacker I forces could attack targets in one area until the enemy adjusted its defenses, then shift its efforts to a less-defended set of targets.

Some political restrictions remained, although they were reduced substantially when compared with those of Rolling Thunder. A buffer zone extended south from the Chinese border for 30 miles from the Laos-North Vietnam border to 106° E longitude and 25 miles from 106° E east to the Gulf of Tonkin. The buffer zone was intended to prevent entry by U.S. aircraft into Chinese airspace; it did not permit the North Vietnamese a no-strike sanctuary for the staging and storage of military supplies, as occurred during most of Rolling Thunder. Strikes at targets in the buffer zone were authorized if operational commanders deemed them necessary. For example, while interdicting the northeast rail line, six spans of the Lang Giai rail bridge were downed on 25 May, and the rail

*In contrast to stringent U.S. efforts to control and restrict collateral damage in North Vietnam—efforts which were immeasurably aided by the development of highly precise bombing techniques—bombing during World War II produced widespread destruction in urban areas under attack. The Cologne cathedral, seemingly miraculously spared, was surrounded by a swath of destruction.*



*The prevalence of light, highly flammable wooden structures made Japanese cities peculiarly vulnerable to fire. The results of U.S. B-29 incendiary attacks on Tokyo show just how devastating conventional bombing attacks can be. U.S. aerial targeting policy against Japan was driven in part by the wide dispersal of Japanese industry, "cottage" industry being responsible for significant production of aircraft subassemblies.*



switching yard and road bridge at Lang Son were attacked on 6 June. Each lay within the buffer zone.

In Rolling Thunder, restricted areas of 30 and 10 nautical miles (nm) were established around Hanoi and Haiphong, respectively. Targets within those areas could not be attacked without specific NCA approval. Prohibited areas of 10 and 4 miles were placed within

the restricted areas. Attack of targets within those areas also required NCA authorization, which was less likely than for targets within the restricted areas. In Linebacker I, the prohibited areas ceased to exist, and the restricted areas decreased to 10 and 5 nm, respectively. Attack of some lawful targets continued to be prohibited for political reasons: Hanoi-Gia Lam airfield, used concurrently for military and civil-

ian purposes; the aforementioned Hanoi thermal power plant, located in a heavily populated area; the Hanoi international radio communication system; Lao Dong Party headquarters, from which the war was directed;<sup>12</sup> the Ministry of Defense Army and Area Capital Headquarters, a 150-acre complex located in a heavily populated area of Hanoi; economic targets not directly associated with the military effort; and the Haiphong docks.

In contrast to Rolling Thunder, where the White House selected all fixed targets, Linebacker I operational commanders selected targets for attack from the validated target list, subject only to the guidance that the JCS be informed of target selections 24 hours prior to their strike, and that B-52 strikes north of Route Package I would be approved by the Secretary of Defense.<sup>13</sup> Strikes in the Hanoi-Haiphong area were prohibited during President Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union from 21 May to 5 June and during the visit of Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny to Hanoi in mid-June.

Not all stand-downs were the result of the diplomatic efforts under way concurrent with Linebacker. In early September, the JCS sought authority for attack of most of the railroad bridges within the buffer zone in a special operation code-named Prime Choke. On 3 September, all bombing north of 20° N was suspended for 24 hours to prepare the aircraft and crews for a highly coordinated maximum effort. Under strict command supervision, Prime Choke was undertaken successfully from 4 to 16 September by selected Air Force F-4 units using laser guided bombs (LGBs). Prime Choke targets were restruck between 26 September and 19 October.

Targeting guidance was relaxed and for the first time reflected accurate application of the law of war. In contrast to Rolling Thunder restrictions, which maintained the impractical political restriction of avoiding *any* injury to the civilian population, the JCS instructed operational commanders to exercise reasonable

precautions to avoid incidental damage to prisoner-of-war camps, shrines, hospitals, and third-country shipping, and to minimize incidental or collateral civilian casualties and damage to civilian property consistent with strike force security. A clear distinction was made between the prohibition on attack of the civilian population per se, which is prohibited by the law of war, and incidental injury to civilians working in lawful targets or those injured or killed while taking part in the hostilities, such as manning anti-aircraft defenses.<sup>14</sup> Fixed targets in proximity to water control facilities such as irrigation dams or dikes required special justification for validation by the nominating authority. Strike forces could respond in self-defense to anti-aircraft artillery fire from third-country shipping.

Besides improved political support for the task assigned, operational command abilities had increased substantially through the greater force capability of the A-7 and F-111; enhanced electronic countermeasures such as the Marine EA-6A and Navy EA-6B; improved tactics, targeting, and weaponeering; and through use of precision guided munitions (PGM). The electrooptically guided bomb (EOGB) and laser guided bomb were to have a pronounced effect on the success of Linebacker I operations. One of the better examples of their effectiveness was the downing of the Thanh Hoa bridge. The Navy and Air Force flew hundreds of sorties against the bridge in the course of Rolling Thunder without success; the bridge was downed on 13 May 1972 by 14 Air Force F-4s using Mk-84 and M-113 LGBs.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, on 10 June 1972, F-4s struck the Lang Chi hydroelectric facility, 63 miles up the Red River Valley from Hanoi. The Soviet-built, 122,500-watt installation was capable of supplying 75 percent of the electricity for Hanoi's industrial and defense needs, and its operation threatened to offset Linebacker I accomplishments in the attack on the North Vietnamese power system. It was a vital target. However, it had been estimated that as many as 23,000 civilians would

perish if the dam were breached, a cost the NCA deemed impermissible. With the experience of earlier missions, Seventh Air Force was confident it could neutralize the hydroelectric facility without breach of the dam. The mission was authorized, with the absolute condition that damage to the dam was forbidden. The strike force placed 12 Mk-84 LGBs through the 50 x 100-foot roof of the main building at the base of the dam, destroying its turbines and generators and shutting the power plant down for the duration of Linebacker I, without damage to the dam or spillway.

The increased authority allowed operational commanders was met by acceptance of the concomitant responsibility. Targeting personnel evaluated targets to be nominated for attack with a view to target location and the threat to the civilian population. All reasonable precautions were taken to minimize collateral civilian casualties through tactics and selection of means and methods to suit the target. For example, Seventh Air Force directed that targets in heavily populated areas were to be attacked with LGBs only. Bomb damage assessment (BDA) coverage was made of each strike to assess mission success but also to ensure adherence to mission parameters, including the rules of engagement. This command supervision paid off on several occasions, as it provided the United States with the ability to rebut the North Vietnamese disinformation campaign against U.S. air operations. As a result of the combination of improved weapons, tactics, and rules of engagement, Linebacker I in three months had greater impact on the ability of North Vietnam to wage war than Rolling Thunder had in three and a half years, and the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam rapidly lost momentum. In late June, North Vietnam signaled its willingness to return to the peace table. Profiting from his predecessor's experience, President Nixon elected to maintain the military pressure on North Vietnam through the summer and fall of 1972. The bombing of targets throughout North Vietnam

would continue as a means to induce North Vietnam to abandon its plan of conquering South Vietnam through military force and to choose a diplomatic settlement of the conflict.

Because Linebacker I operations were planned and executed with a conscious consideration of the law of war, the North Vietnamese were unsuccessful in manipulating international public opinion against the bombing through allegations of indiscriminate bombing. Their one major disinformation effort related to the alleged bombing of the earthwork dikes of the Red River Valley and failed abysmally.

The terrain of the Red River Valley running from the northwest to southeast in the northern sector of North Vietnam has been described as a giant drainboard as the water from the monsoon seasons rushes to the Gulf of Tonkin. To meet the floodwater, which usually crests between July and September, the North Vietnamese over the centuries have constructed a complex system of almost 2500 miles of earthen dikes, dams, and sluice gates. Other dikes prevent seepage of sea water into crop-growing areas, while many primary dikes are backed up by a second line of dikes. The system was expanded by 50 percent between 1953 and 1972, with many previous dikes growing in width and height. The increase vastly complicated maintenance, already a constant preoccupation of the North Vietnamese government and people. In 1971, the Red River Valley suffered its worst flooding in three decades. One 30-mile section of the dike system was breached. The force of water unleashed through this and other breaches on the primary dikes caused widespread erosion, cut long stretches of irrigation canals, and washed out many pumping stations; prolonged inundation undermined both the primary and secondary dike systems. More than one million acres of riceland were flooded and the crops destroyed, forcing North Vietnam to import food from the Soviet Union and China.<sup>16</sup> Because much of the effort of the civilian population normally dedicated to dike maintenance had been diverted to support the

war effort, the government of North Vietnam faced the 1972 flood season with ill-maintained dikes and the possibility of residual stress from the 1971 floods. Partly in the attempt to rally international public opinion against Linebacker I but primarily to increase the efforts of its people to maintain the dikes and to absolve itself of responsibility for failure to repair the system since the 1971 floods, the North Vietnamese commenced a major propaganda campaign in June 1972 alleging intentional attack of the dikes by U.S. forces.

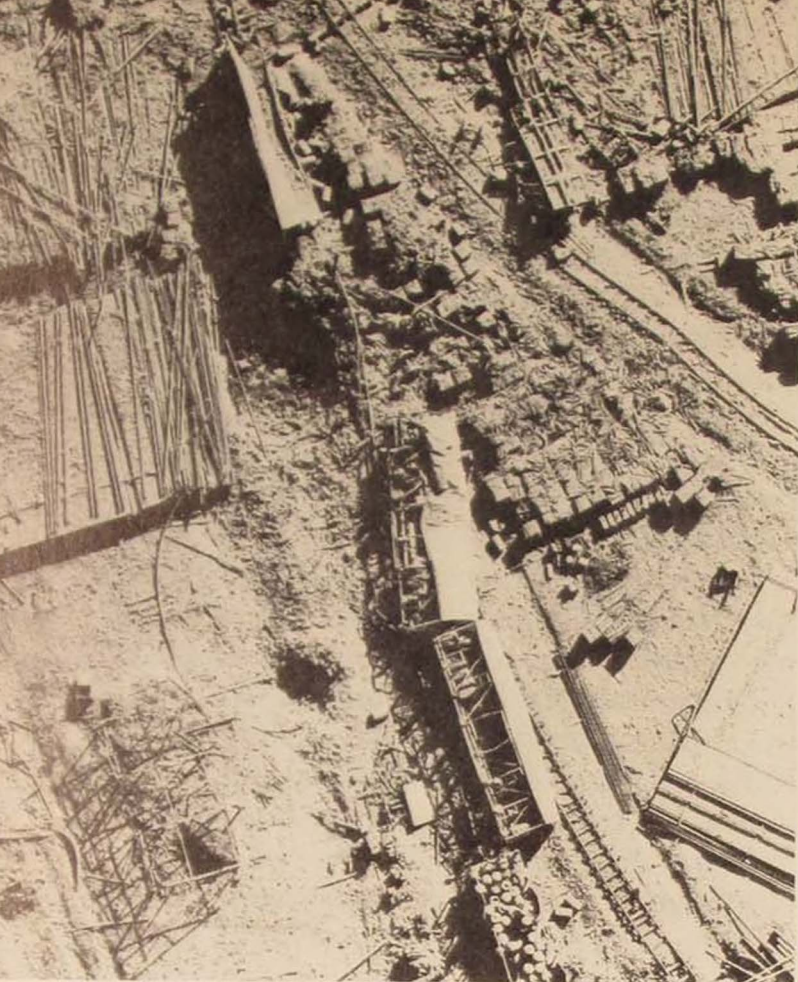
Dikes and dams can be legitimate targets from either a military or law of war standpoint, provided their destruction leads to a specific military advantage. The Möhne and Eder dams were breached by Royal Air Force Lancaster bombers of 617 Squadron on 17 May 1943 in an effort to impede military-industrial manufacturing in the Ruhr Valley,<sup>17</sup> while RAF and U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) bombers breached key points in the Dortmund-Ems and Mittelland canals as part of the attack on the German lines of communication in late 1944.<sup>18</sup> In the Korean War, breach of the Toksan and Chasan irrigation dams in May 1953 rendered unserviceable the two main railway lines and parallel highways into the North Korean military, industrial, and political center of Pyongyang.<sup>19</sup>

Attack of the North Vietnam dike system never was seriously contemplated during U.S. air operations over the nation. In a memorandum dated 18 January 1966, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs John T. McNaughton proposed destruction of the Red River Valley dams and dikes to shallow-flood the rice fields, thereby leading to "widespread starvation" of the civilian population of North Vietnam, which the United States could offer to rectify "at the conference table."<sup>20</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara rejected McNaughton's suggestion.

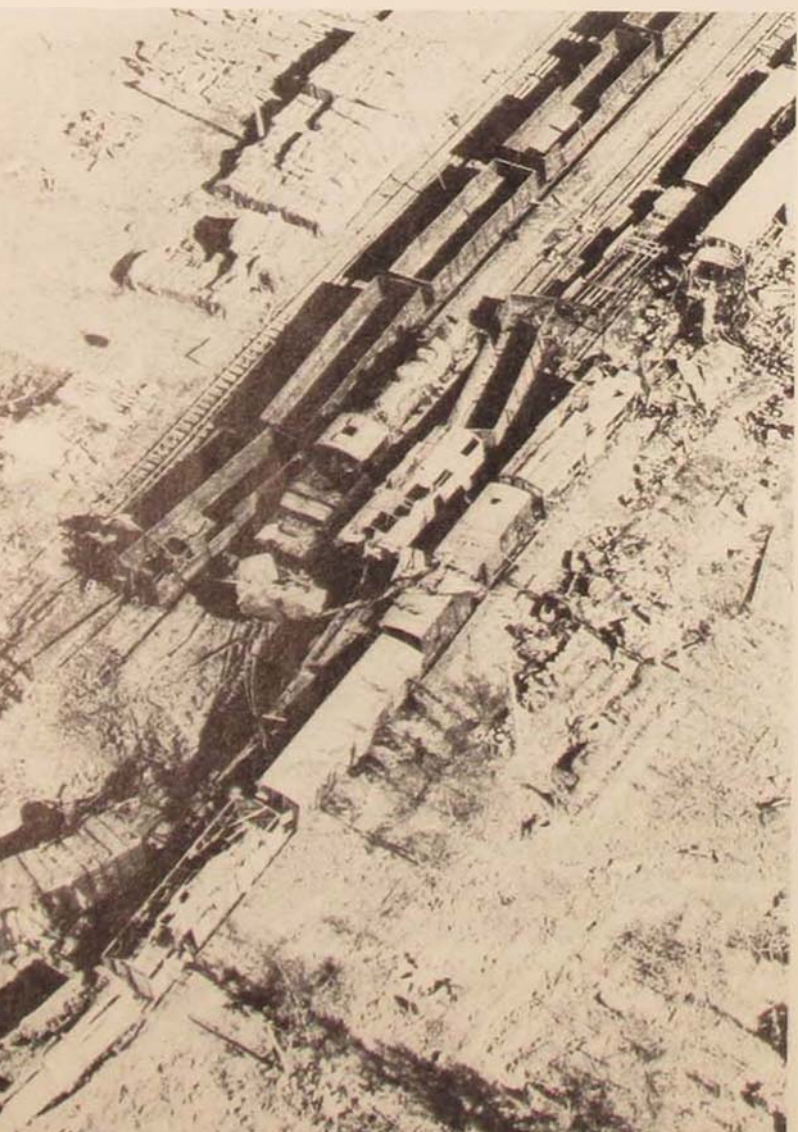
There were legitimate reasons for attacking the dike system. The country's major transportation waterways—the Red River, the Thai

Binh River, and the connecting Canal des Rapides and Canal des Bambons—were vital lines of communication between the major urban centers of Hanoi and Haiphong and lesser cities. Raw materials, such as coal from the Cam Pha and Mao Khe mines for use in the nation's myriad thermal power plants, were moved by the waterways. As the northwest and northeast rail lines from China were cut, military use of the waterways increased. Breach of the dikes would have been one way to attack this vital line of communications; this was the rationale behind the 1944 attacks on the Dortmund-Ems and Mittelland canals and would not have been prohibited by the law of war. United States forces operating over North Vietnam sought, and found, an alternative means for impeding WBLC rather than breach of the dikes: the use of air-delivered bottom-laid mines and armed reconnaissance against WBLC. This program, begun in March 1967 and renewed during Linebacker I, was effective for military and law of war reasons. Sunk WBLC blocked waterways and required more effort to salvage than necessary to repair breaks in the dikes while minimizing the likelihood of collateral injury to the civilian population.

U.S. investigation of North Vietnamese allegations revealed that there was some slight damage to some dikes but that their bombing was unintentional, their damage minor, and that no major dike had been breached. None of the damage was in the Hanoi area or involved the primary dike system protecting Hanoi. Nearly all damage was downstream from Hanoi as well as downstream from the major breaks resulting from the 1971 floods. All dike damage occurred within the proximity of specific targets of military value, such as POL storage facilities or road or rail lines of communication. For example, the rail and POL lines between Hanoi and Haiphong were attacked on 14 June at Hai Duong, a city on the Song Thuong midway between Hanoi and Haiphong. There was some slight collateral damage to dikes in proximity to the targets,



*Just what USAF B-52s could achieve against military targets is attested to by these postattack reconnaissance shots of the Kinh No supply point and railroad yard (left) and a warehouse area at Ai Mo (above).*



*A close-up of Kinh No supply point and railroad yard gives an even more vivid impression of destruction.*

which Hanoi alleged was intentional.

The law of war recognizes the inevitability of incidental damage in the attack of legitimate targets. What is prohibited is the *intentional* attack of civilian objects the destruction of which will have no value, the use of means of methods of warfare incapable of distinguishing between military targets and civilian objects, or incidental damage so extensive as to be tantamount to the intentional attack of civilian objects or the civilian population per se. Review of bomb damage assessment photographs at the points alleged by the North Vietnamese as well as detailed photographic coverage of all parts of the Red River Valley confirmed the unintentional, random nature of the damage, resulting from the attack of legitimate targets.<sup>21</sup>



The dike issue was complicated by North Vietnamese use of the dikes for military purposes. A large number of dikes served as part of the road network for North Vietnam, which were used to transport military equipment and personnel south to support the offensive in South Vietnam. Because President Johnson declared during Rolling Thunder that the

United States would not attack the dikes, the North Vietnamese exploited the situation by placing AAA gun positions, ground-controlled intercept (GCI) radar, and surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites atop or adjacent to dikes, and storing POL alongside or on top of dikes as a shield against attack. All were legitimate targets. The air defenses not only threatened U.S. forces but, in inhibiting bombing accuracy in the attack of lawful targets, were likely to lead to greater incidental civilian casualties. Nonetheless, the Johnson administration denied repeated requests for authorization to attack the air defense sites. When they were finally autho-



*Instrumental in enabling U.S. forces to restrict collateral damage and at the same time to increase the probability of destroying selected targets with less risk to attacking aircrews, precision guided munitions (left, a USAF F-4 dropping an Mk-84 laser guided bomb) represented a quantum step forward in weaponry. The precision of which U.S. air power was capable is graphically depicted in before (below left) and after (below) photographs of the Hanoi thermal power plant taken on 5 April 1973. Note the concentration of damage on the main generator building.*

HANOI THERMAL POWER PLANT

BEFORE



HANOI THERMAL POWER PLANT

AFTER



alized for attack during Linebacker I, it was with the stipulation that the targets were to be attacked with weapons that would minimize the risk of structural damage to the dikes. This was accomplished through the use of napalm, strafing, cluster munitions, and other antipersonnel weapons.<sup>22</sup>

The North Vietnamese continued their dike-bombing propaganda campaign through the dog days of August 1972. Despite the traditional late-summer paucity of news, their efforts received little serious attention and little more than the usual support of a movie star and individuals such as out-of-office political gadabouts.<sup>23</sup> Even leading antiwar activists doubted its validity,<sup>24</sup> undoubtedly because the Nixon administration met the issue squarely and produced evidence to rebut the North Vietnamese allegations. North Vietnamese credibility on the issue was damaged by a government admission published in the newspaper *Hanoi Mo* early in their propaganda campaign acknowledging that repair of portions of the dikes damaged by the 1971 floods had not yet met "technical requirements." Once the 1972 season passed without significant flooding, the dike-bombing issue subsided, notwithstanding continuation of Linebacker I.

The monsoon season that threatened the Red River Valley dike system also jeopardized the effective continuation of Linebacker I operations over the same area, which included the strategically important Hanoi/Haiphong military-industrial complex. Recognizing the degree to which weather inhibited TACAIR operations,<sup>25</sup> targeteers in early August began a detailed review of the target list to ascertain those targets against which all-weather bombing techniques by B-52s and TACAIR could be utilized. Navy aircraft on combat air patrols also began providing data for prediction of weather windows for LGB employment. Major criteria for B-52 employment were that a nominated target be readily identifiable for radar targeting purposes or be sufficient in size to be attacked by a three-ship B-52 cell with minimal

likelihood that the bomb train would fall outside the target. Targets fitting those criteria were airfields, railroad yards, large-area military warehouse and storage areas, and some power plants, petroleum products storage areas, SAM sites, and SAM storage areas.<sup>26</sup> Once targets meeting these criteria were identified, targeteers worked with photo interpreters to build radar montages of the targets to facilitate target identification, selected an axis of attack for each target (minimizing overflight of built-up areas immediately prior to and after crossing the bomb release line), and took other steps to maximize the capabilities of available assets while minimizing the risk to the civilian population.

On 1 September, CINCPAC established a joint targeting committee to review TACAIR targets nominated by PACAF and CINCPACFLT for validation by the JCS. The committee stressed target location vis-à-vis the threat to populated areas, location of U.S. and allied prisoners of war, and attack of the air defense system (including AAA and SAM installations, airfields, and command, control, and communication facilities associated with the air defense system), neutralization of which would optimize freedom of action and safety for U.S. strike and reconnaissance forces—thereby enhancing the ability of strike forces to put bombs on target while decreasing the likelihood of incidental civilian casualties. Concurrently CINCSAC and CINCPAC began a detailed review of targeting plans for the coordination and sustained use of B-52s against targets in the northeast sector of North Vietnam. The purpose of B-52 use was threefold:

- to provide maximum destruction of the North Vietnamese air defense system to lower U.S. aircraft risk and attrition, reduce mission support requirements, and provide U.S. strike forces greater freedom of action;
- to provide maximum destruction against enemy supply and transportation facilities to degrade his capacity to support his military operations in South Vietnam; and

- to offset adverse weather conditions extant and anticipated over the northernmost areas of North Vietnam which would limit TACAIR strikes.

By late September, as the bombing continued, the target list had been refined to a total of approximately sixty targets. Through September, October, and November, however, the operational commanders continued to eschew use of B-52s against these selected targets while concentrating B-52 attacks on logistics and interdiction targets located in the southern portion of North Vietnam.<sup>27</sup> TACAIR assets utilizing LGBs continued to strike targets in and about Hanoi and Haiphong. By early October, North Vietnamese efforts had been stymied, and the Hanoi government was suing for peace. The Paris peace talks entered a phase of fruitful discussions. With North Vietnam appearing to be responding favorably toward a mutually satisfactory conclusion of the conflict, the JCS issued new orders that decreased substantially or totally restricted offensive air operations over North Vietnam. On 11 October, the JCS directed cessation of air strikes within a 10 nm radius of Hanoi. Simultaneously, maximum effort strikes were redirected against bridges and rail targets outside the restricted zone surrounding Hanoi to maintain military pressure on North Vietnam.

On 21 October, Dr. Kissinger flew to Saigon to discuss the general terms of the proposed agreement with the Saigon government, U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and Generals Fred C. Weyand (COMUSMACV) and John W. Vogt. Generals Weyand and Vogt objected to cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam, including the Hanoi-Haiphong area, until all terms of the agreement had been reached. Kissinger did not accept their recommendation, messaging the White House that all agreed with the general thrust of the agreement. At the direction of the White House, the JCS ordered CINCPAC, CINCSAC, and Seventh Air Force to "cease air operations of all types . . . [including] leaflet and psychological operations and

naval gunfire operations north of 20° N commencing 23 October 1972. . . ." Kissinger simultaneously announced that "We believe that peace is at hand. We believe an agreement is in sight. . . ."<sup>28</sup>

Air operations did not cease entirely. Interdiction strikes continued, with emphasis on targets south of 19° N. For example, B-52s flew 848 sorties against logistic and interdiction targets in North Vietnam during November; on 22 November, the first B-52 was lost to a SAM in a strike against supply/storage areas near Vinh. Nonetheless, the bombing halt above 20° N provided the breathing spell sought by the North Vietnamese, who thereupon made the strategic decision to prolong the war in order to gain a military advantage which would lead to greater political concessions by the United States and South Vietnam in the Paris negotiations. They redoubled their air defenses in and around Hanoi/Haiphong while restoring their war-waging capabilities. By mid-December, for example, Hanoi had repaired its rail lines to China and adjusted its supply routing to compensate for the naval mine blockade. The restored rail lines were capable of handling 16,000 tons of supplies per day, or 2.5 times Hanoi's needs. Simultaneous with the cessation of bombing north of 20° N, the North Vietnamese began to unravel the terms of settlement to which they had previously agreed. By early December, the agreement that had appeared so near five weeks earlier was in a shambles; the North Vietnamese had returned to their pattern of using the Paris meetings as a propaganda forum while engaging in a massive military buildup. Anticipating the possibility of a U.S. response with air power, they began to evacuate Hanoi and Haiphong while giving further emphasis to the air defense of those cities. President Nixon elected to preempt their military planning by restoring the bombing campaign north of 20° N. However, the desire for immediate effect was hampered by the adverse weather conditions prevailing over the Red River Valley, substan-

tially impeding the use of TACAIR assets in a visual bombing mode. The planning of the previous five months provided the ability to strike selected targets regardless of the weather, while serving as an unequivocal display of U.S. resolve.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, on 17 December, the JCS issued the following message to CINCPAC, CINCSAC, and subordinate operational commanders:

YOU ARE DIRECTED TO COMMENCE AT APPROXIMATELY 1200Z, 18 DECEMBER 1972 A THREE-DAY MAXIMUM EFFORT, REPEAT MAXIMUM EFFORT, OF B52 TACAIR STRIKES IN THE HANOI HAIPHONG AREAS AGAINST THE TARGETS CONTAINED IN (THE AUTHORIZED TARGET LIST). OBJECT IS MAXIMUM DESTRUCTION OF SELECTED MILITARY TARGETS IN THE VICINITY OF HANOI HAIPHONG. BE PREPARED TO EXTEND OPERATIONS PAST THREE DAYS, IF DIRECTED.

FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS APPLY:

A. UTILIZE VISUAL AS WELL AS ALLWEATHER CAPABILITIES.

B. UTILIZE ALL RESOURCES WHICH CAN BE SPARED WITHOUT CRITICAL DETRIMENT TO OPERATIONS IN RVN AND SUPPORT OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA.

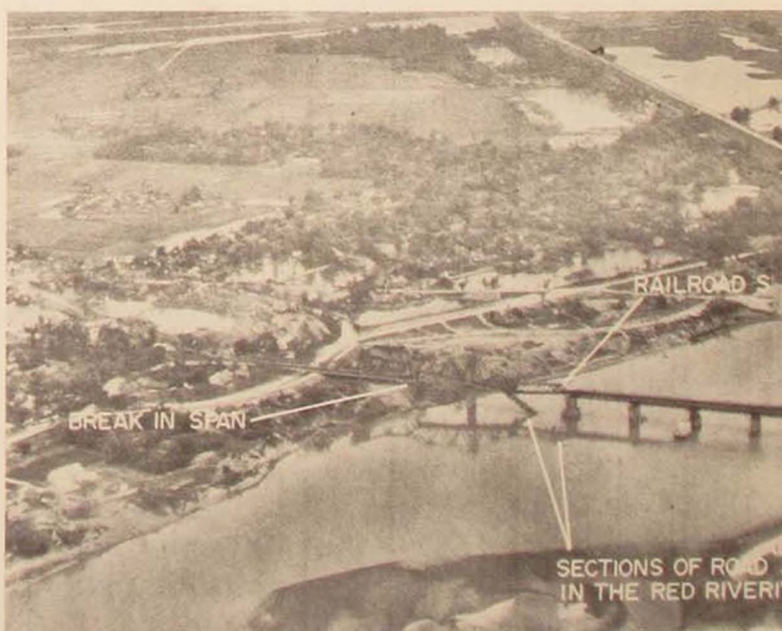
C. UTILIZE RESTRIKES ON AUTHORIZED TARGETS, AS NECESSARY. NORTH VIETNAMESE AIR ORDER OF BATTLE, AIRFIELDS, AND ACTIVE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SITES MAY BE STRUCK AS TACTICAL SITUATION DICTATES TO IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS OF ATTACK FORCES AND MINIMIZE LOSSES. . . .

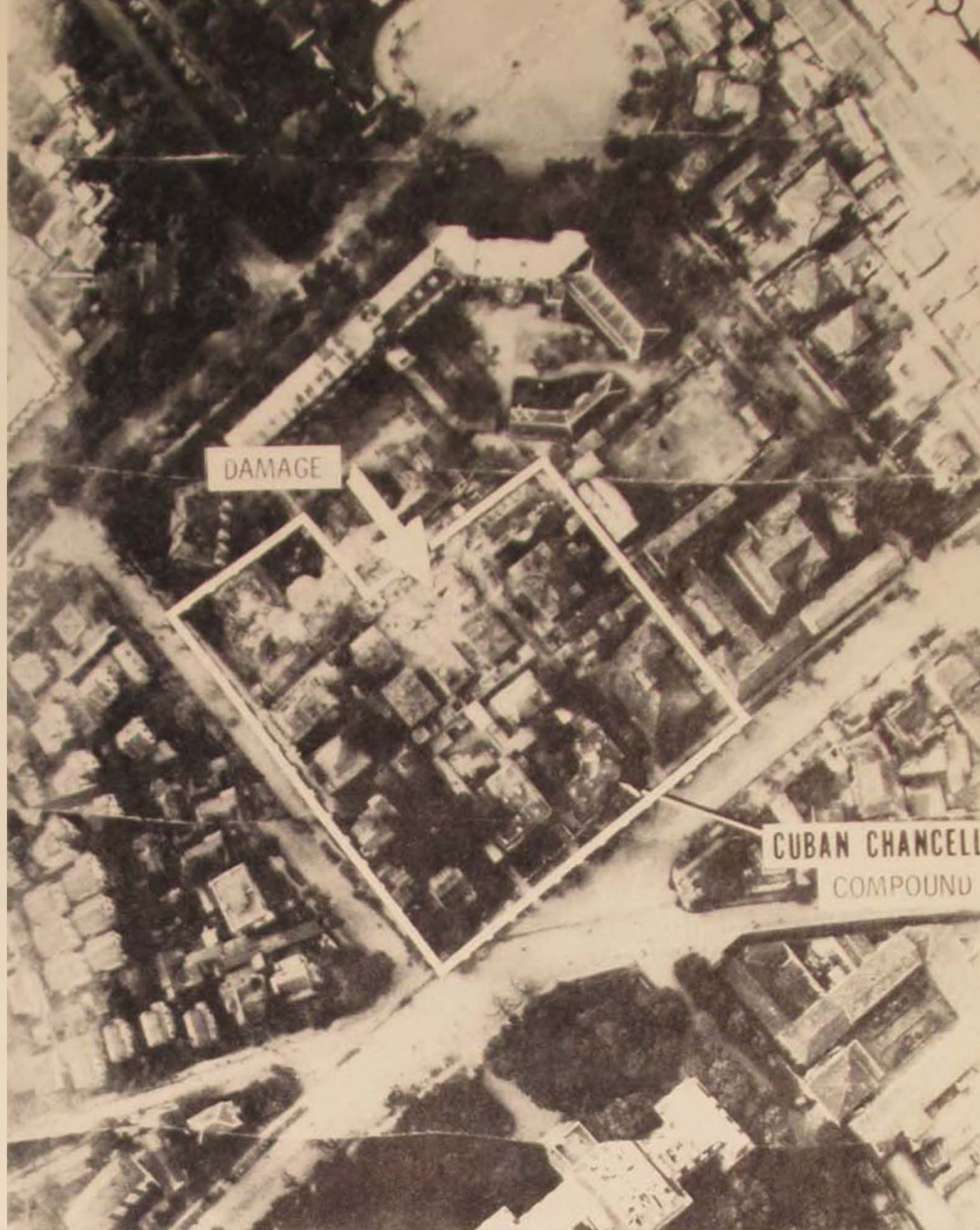
D. EXERCISE PRECAUTION TO MINIMIZE RISK OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES UTILIZING LGB WEAPONS AGAINST DESIGNATED TARGETS. AVOID DAMAGE TO THIRD COUNTRY SHIPPING. . . .

Although the operation named Linebacker II was essentially a continuation of the bombing campaign of the preceding eight months,

*Dozens of fighter-bomber sorties had typically been required to take out a reinforced concrete bridge such as the Lang Gai span north of Hanoi depicted here (above) early in the Vietnam War—not always successfully. The introduction of effective precision guided bombs made it possible to drop spans with almost surgical precision. The damage depicted here was caused by 2000-pound laser guided bombs. . . . Similarly, the Paul Doumer bridge across the Red River at Hanoi (below) was dropped with dispatch.*

which included earlier B-52 strikes in the Hai-phong area, it was distinctive in two respects. Ever-increasing international and domestic pressure on the United States for resolution of the conflict mandated attainment of a certain level of damage to military targets within the shortest period of time, while adverse weather conditions dictated reliance on all-weather ca-





*One area that did receive unintended collateral damage was adjacent to the Cuban chancellery compound in Hanoi.*

pabilities more than visual attack.<sup>31</sup> The overall objective remained the same. However, whereas earlier Linebacker I efforts had the military purpose of widespread interdiction, Linebacker II concentrated on bombing targets located in the military-industrial center of North Vietnam.<sup>32</sup>

Targeting, including choice of weapon systems and rules of engagement, reflected the limited objectives of the campaign and the concern for avoidance of collateral civilian casualties and injury to U.S. POWs. The previously established criteria for B-52 employment were maintained: B-52s were used only against targets away from heavily populated areas or against targets of sufficient size to es-

tablish a desired mean point of impact (DMPI) that would minimize the likelihood that any part of the bomb train would fall outside the target. Where rural targets were near a village or villages, an axis of attack was designated that would avoid intersection of the bomb train with the villages.<sup>33</sup> CINCSAC-imposed restrictions emphasized accuracy and assured destruction and minimization of incidental civilian casualties; constant verification, of course, 100 percent certainty of aiming points, and no maneuvering to avoid SAMs or enemy fighters from the initial point on the bomb run to the target—the latter requiring straight and level flight in a high-threat environment for approximately four minutes prior to bomb re-

lease.<sup>34</sup> BDA of every target was ordered. These restrictions far exceeded the requirements of the law of war. However, they reflected valid military as well as political concerns. For example, SAC posited that the last requirement enhanced the ability to maintain B-52 cell integrity, which in turn maximized electronic countermeasures protection as well as accuracy of bomb delivery.

On 20 December, Linebacker II forces suffered the loss of six B-52s to enemy SAMs. A change of tactics, diversification by SAC of their previously utilized axis of attack, coupled with increased command attention to maintenance of B-52 cell integrity, and increased ECM were ordered to enhance aircraft survival. The previous excellent multiservice cooperation and coordination to overcome the SAM defenses were redoubled. However, it was clear to mission planners that the SAM threat had to be confronted directly. The B-52 sorties decreased from the near-100 of each of the first three days to thirty for each of the next four days as targeting intelligence commenced an intense search for the key or keys to the SAM defenses. B-52 assets were deployed in part to attack SAM sites located outside populated areas. The search continued through the 36-hour stand-down ordered by President Nixon for Christmas. As SAM storage areas were located, each was added to the list of targets and validation requested. One key was a SAM assembly plant in the immediate Hanoi area. The value of its destruction was inestimable; but weather conditions precluded use of precision guided munitions (PGM) or visual attack by TACAIR, and the target location prevented B-52 employment. In one of the more remarkable feats of the air campaign, the target was destroyed by 16 LORAN-guided F-4s bombing through solid overcast from 20,000 feet. Despite the fact that 48 SAMs were fired at the formation, all aircraft held their positions throughout the bomb run. No losses were suffered, and collateral civilian casualties and damage were determined to have been minimal.<sup>35</sup>

Destruction of the SAM defenses led to a marked change in the North Vietnamese attitude toward a return to meaningful peace negotiations.<sup>36</sup> Linebacker II drew to a close after eleven days of intense bombing, flown in the face of equally intense defenses. The peace talks were renewed three days later, with formal discussions commencing on 8 January 1973. Bombing up to 20° N continued until 15 January, when agreement for a Vietnam-wide ceasefire was reached.

From a military standpoint, Linebacker II was highly successful. In the face of some of the heaviest air defenses in history, selected targets had been destroyed with loss rates less than anticipated.<sup>37</sup> Use of the all-weather capabilities of the B-52, F-111, and other TACAIR had been justified in that there had been only 2½ days of weather permitting visual bomb delivery. But Linebacker II was notable from a political standpoint as well. "[The] object [of war] is to cause the other State to desist from the action or abandon the claim which is the cause of offense. In other words, a war is fought in order to bring about a change of mind in another State."<sup>38</sup> The influence of Linebacker II on the North Vietnamese willingness to continue the war has been commented on at two levels. U.S. prisoners of war have attested to the reaction at the ground level in the reversal of attitude of their captors.<sup>39</sup> One member of the U.S. delegation to the Paris peace talks related that "Prior to Linebacker II, the North Vietnamese were intransigent, buying time, refusing even to discuss a formal meeting schedule. After Linebacker II, they were shaken, demoralized, anxious to talk about *anything*. They finally realized they were at war with a superpower. If there was bewilderment, it was with our reluctance to use that power earlier."<sup>40</sup>

Despite the unprecedented care taken to minimize collateral civilian casualties and collateral damage to civilian objects, the United States was castigated by the world press for what erroneously was believed to be the level of destruction being wrought over all of Hanoi.

Responsibility for this misperception lies with the White House. During the Linebacker I controversy over the alleged bombing of the dikes, the Department of State issued a detailed response to the North Vietnamese charges. In contrast, except for the release of a partial list of targets, the White House surrounded Linebacker II with a veil of secrecy which in large measure remains to this day.<sup>41</sup> The North Vietnamese disinformation campaign about the bombing went unchallenged by the facts and abetted by the less-responsible side of the political process.

Some responsibility for the misunderstanding of Linebacker II lies in shoddy scholarship, particularly in the promiscuous use of terms and estimations where accurate information was available. Much of the subsequent error of fact was error of convenience. For example, more than two years after Linebacker II, syndicated columnist Marquis Childs complained of the "carpet bombing" in which "much of Hanoi was razed," leaving "nearly a thousand civilians dead or wounded" in the Hanoi "suburb of Thai Nguyen," a statement which errs on no less than six counts, despite information available in open sources.<sup>42</sup> Critics have compared Linebacker II to the destruction of Coventry, Hamburg, Dresden, and Tokyo during World War II, and of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. One university professor, writing in late 1981, declared that "The Christmas, 1972, bombing alone ravaged Hanoi and Haiphong with more tonnage than the Nazis dropped on Great Britain from 1940 through 1945," a statement that is patently false.<sup>43</sup> This erroneous confusion of the facts has obscured the true criteria by which this campaign should be judged.

**I**F Linebacker II is to be judged, it should be measured against the law of war, for those are the rules governing nations in their conduct of hostilities. Moreover, as the United States is a nation dedicated to rule by law, it is

essential to understand our rights and responsibilities under the law of war.

The law of war constitutes a delicate balancing of national security interests (expressed in legal terms as *military necessity*) against the desire of the United States and most members of the international community to limit to the extent practically possible the effects of war to those individuals and objects having a direct effect on the hostilities (which is expressed as the avoidance of *unnecessary suffering* by those not taking part in the conflict). The Air Force document on the law of war defines *military necessity* as justifying "measures of regulated force not forbidden by international law which are indispensable for securing the prompt submission of the enemy, with the least possible expenditures of economic and human resources."<sup>44</sup> The compatibility of military necessity with the principle of war of *economy of force* is readily apparent in the Air Force's definition of the latter: ". . . no more—or less—effort should be devoted to a task than is necessary to achieve the objective. . . . This phrase implies the correct selection and use of weapon systems, maximum productivity from available flying effort, and careful balance in the allocation of tasks."<sup>45</sup> In contrast, unnecessary suffering has been defined to mean that "all such kinds and degrees of violence as are not necessary for the overpowering of the opponent should not be permitted to the belligerent."<sup>46</sup> The concepts of military necessity and unnecessary suffering are weighed both in the target value analysis and target validation process as well as in force application once a target has been validated for attack.

Lawful targets include any object that by its nature, location, purpose, or use makes a contribution to a nation's war effort and (correlatively) whose total or partial destruction, capture, or neutralization affects the enemy's capability to resist and lowers his determination to fight. The inherent nature of an object is not controlling; its value to the enemy or the perceived value of its destruction is the determi-



*Perhaps the most widely publicized North Vietnamese claim of extensive U.S. bomb damage to civilian structures involved the Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi, shown here in a low-altitude post-Linebacker reconnaissance photograph. The superimposed arrow shows the approximate camera location and angle of the widely publicized North Vietnamese photo releases shown on the facing page.*





*Again, skilled North Vietnamese use of perspective and angle (above) have enhanced the appearance of total devastation. The true extent of damage to the grounds of the hospital is suggested by the aerial photograph at left; though not as clear as the shot on the facing page, it plainly shows the area of the gate featured in the North Vietnamese photo (upper arrow).*

nant. Lawful targets are not limited to military facilities and equipment but may include economic targets (including industrial targets, whether directly war-supporting or not or used for activities such as export or import), geographic targets, transportation, power, and communications systems, and political targets. A lawful target may be attacked whatever its location, and targets do not become immune from attack simply because they are located in population centers. There were proposals before World Wars I and II to reduce the attractiveness of urban centers as aerial targets, such as the

removal of all military targets from cities. These proposals were rejected as impractical, as nations do not go about city planning over decades in contemplation of war. Some legitimate targets, such as transportation and energy facilities, support a nation's economy as a whole, in peace or war. Other objects are used jointly or can be transformed from purely civilian to purely military use with no effort. Moreover, workers must live near the "military target" in which they are employed. What is prohibited is the intentional attack of the civilian population per se or individual civilians not taking part in the conflict, or the employment of military force in such a manner as to result in *excessive* collateral civilian casualties or *excessive* collateral damage to civilian objects. Historically, this standard has enjoyed a high threshold—condemning only collateral civilian casualties so excessive as to be tantamount to the intentional attack of the civilian population or to a total disregard for the safety of the civilian population.<sup>47</sup> With rare exception, such as was exemplified by the balancing that occurred in planning the attack of the Lang Chi hydroelectric facility, this test of proportionality has not been applied to individual targets, due to the myriad factors within the control of the defender which affect execution of an attack. Such latitude also recognizes the movement of civilians on the battlefield and the necessity for decision-making in the

fog of war. It does not include civilian injury or death directly attributable to enemy action, such as civilians killed by the crash of an attacking aircraft downed by enemy air defenses or the injury or death of civilians used by the defender to shield a lawful target from attack. Nor does it include civilians injured or killed while working in a lawful target, such as an enemy power plant, or civilians killed or injured taking part in the hostilities, such as manning an anti-aircraft position. The latitude provided is qualified by the expectation that military commanders will make a good-faith effort to minimize collateral civilian casualties consistent with reasonable security expectations for their own forces. The measure, however, is not one of tons of bombs dropped, nor number of sorties flown, but the degree of collateral civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects directly attributable to an attacker, taking into consideration actions by the defender (including the intensity of the defenses). Inasmuch as the defenses faced in Linebacker II have been described as among the most intense in air power history and accepting the critics' choices for comparison, the accompanying chart provides testimony to the adherence of Linebacker II forces to the law of war in the execution of their assigned missions.

There was collateral damage during Linebacker II, and Hanoi did its utmost to exploit the propaganda value of it. But the damage was

#### Comparison of Collateral Civilian Casualties and Damage

Target/ Attack	Date(s)	Bomb Tonnage	Dwellings Destroyed	Dwellings		Civilian Deaths	Deaths Per Ton of Bombs
				Destroyed Per Ton of Bombs			
Guernica	26 April 1937	40.5	271	6.69		1,654	40.83
Great Britain	(Battle of Britain) June-December 1940	40,885	(not available)			23,002 <sup>48</sup>	.56
Coventry	14 November 1940	533	2,306	4.33		568	1.06
Hamburg	24-30 July 1943	5,128.12	40,385	7.87		42,600	8.03
Dresden	14-15 February 1945	7,100.5	78,000	10.98		25,000 <sup>49</sup>	3.52
Tokyo	9-10 March 1945	1,665	173,182	104.01		83,793	50.33
Linebacker II	18-29 December 1972	15,287.4	600 <sup>50</sup>	.04		1,318 <sup>51</sup>	.08

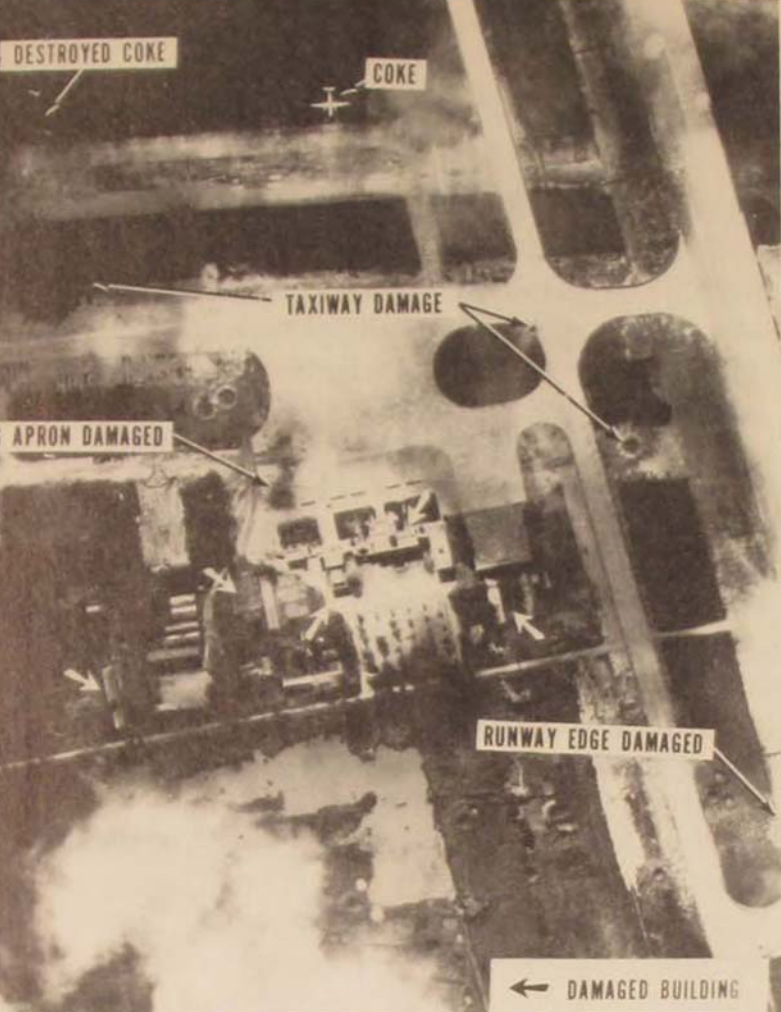
limited, particularly when compared to the aerial bombing of World War II or the North Vietnamese artillery and rocket bombardments of An Loc, Hue, Quang Tri, and other cities of South Vietnam during its Easter offensive. Of the principal examples of collateral damage by Linebacker II forces, one of the more renowned surrounds damage to Bach Mai Hospital. Bach Mai Hospital is a 940-bed facility located 1.8 miles from the center of Hanoi, and less than 500 meters from the nearest points of the military complex of Bach Mai airfield and Bach Mai military storage facility. The former was not capable of handling jet aircraft but served as the command and control headquarters for the North Vietnamese air defense system; it was for the North Vietnamese what RAF Fighter Command Headquarters at Bentley Priory was for Great Britain during the Battle of Britain. As such, it was a valuable military target. With the exception of Bach Mai Hospital, the military complex is surrounded by uninhabited marshlands. However, because of its proximity to the hospital, Bach Mai airfield was not attacked until the waning days of Rolling Thunder. During Linebacker I, improved weapons and delivery platforms resulted in the military complex's being struck on several occasions. During Linebacker I and II, mission parameters for attack of the Bach Mai military complex were established to minimize the likelihood of collateral damage to Bach Mai Hospital. Although it frequently housed anti-aircraft positions to defend the military complex, a violation of the law of war, Bach Mai Hospital never was nominated for attack.<sup>52</sup>

In the course of Linebacker II operations on 21 December, bombs were dropped on Bach Mai Hospital. The Hanoi government reported that the "main building and some other sections have been demolished. . . . Many patients, physicians and nurses [were] killed or wounded. . . . Today, practically nothing remains." Subsequently, it acknowledged that the hospital had been evacuated of patients and medical staff before Linebacker II and that only care-

taker personnel had been on hand at the time the hospital had been struck. On 2 January 1973, the Department of Defense confirmed accidental damage to the hospital. Aerial photographic coverage and investigation suggested that the hospital was hit by a portion of the bomb train of a B-52 bracketed and struck by two SAMs at the instant it reached its bomb release point, causing it to splay its bombs as the pilot lost control. Similar hits resulted in damage along the residential Kham Thien street in Hanoi, which Hanoi showed to all visitors as evidence of U.S. "indiscriminate" bombing. Aerial photographs were more discerning in showing the limited nature of incidental damage.<sup>53</sup>

Minor collateral damage occurred at Gia Lam International Airport, Hanoi textile plant on 8 March, and in the An Duong Nghia Dong area north of Hanoi. The Hanoi government alleged that the Gia Lam terminal had been "leveled." Poststrike photography revealed that a small VIP terminal had been hit, but damage to the main terminal was so minor that U.S. prisoners of war repatriated through Gia Lam observed no damage to the terminal, and some meetings of the postwar Four Party Joint Military Team overseeing the cease-fire were held in the terminal, which showed no signs of damage or recent repair.

By North Vietnamese count, 1318 civilians died during Linebacker II. The figure does not distinguish between civilians not taking a direct part in the hostilities and civilians killed while working in lawful targets or taking part in the conflict. Nor does the figure differentiate between those civilians killed by errant bombing caused by actions of the defender, as occurred in the bombs dropped on Kham Thien street, or civilians killed by North Vietnamese SAMs or AAA projectiles which, having missed their targets, plummeted to the ground. Hanoi fired more than 1000 SAMs at Linebacker II forces, showing little or no regard for the safety of its own people in their firing, and the area in and around Hanoi and Haiphong became an



Spokesmen for the Hanoi regime alleged that the Gia Lam airport terminal had been "leveled" in Linebacker. In fact, as the above aerial photo (left) shows, damage to the airfield was minor and did not include the terminal building, a fact eloquently testified to by a souvenir shot (above right) of a South Vietnamese member of the Four Party Joint Military Team taken after the bombing.

impact area for North Vietnamese high-explosive ordnance. Undoubtedly, many of the 1318 civilian deaths can be attributed to these North Vietnamese defenses.

Measured against the only standard accepted in principle by nations—the law of war—and accepting Hanoi's casualty figure without qualification, Linebacker II is unprecedented in its minimization of collateral damage and collateral civilian casualties when compared with the intensity of effort against legitimate targets.

FOR A LITTLE more than a century, the nations of the world have undertaken to find ways to ameliorate the suffering of individuals not taking a direct part in armed conflict. The principal vehicle for this effort has been a series of

multilateral treaties, commonly known as the law of war. Their obligations apply equally to all nations, in all conflicts. Some depend on reciprocity, while others do not. As is true of all laws, portions of the law of war have worked extremely well, while other parts have not worked well at all. Nonetheless, the law of war recognizes that the business of the military in war is killing people and breaking things.<sup>54</sup> The law of war reflects a delicate balance between humanitarian ideals and the national security interests of each belligerent, the latter serving as the lowest common denominator both in negotiations and implementation of law of war treaties. In many circumstances the *minimum* standard of conduct may also represent the *maximum* limitation acceptable to

belligerents if each hopes to achieve a successful end to the conflict.

In Rolling Thunder, apparent ignorance of the law of war at the national level placed unreasonable burdens on U.S. forces to their substantial detriment, which the enemy was quick to exploit. The campaign drew to a close just as some of these political shackles were being removed and the campaign was beginning to realize some success. Linebacker I and Linebacker II were conducted with myriad advantages over Rolling Thunder: improved weapons, weapon systems, targeting, operational flexibility, tactics, and, undoubtedly most important, with the will on the part of the nation's leaders to utilize military force as necessary to achieve campaign objectives. Both Linebacker campaigns were also conducted with an acute awareness by the military of its responsibilities under the law of war, with mission parameters well within the prohibitions of the law. Although unprecedented in the degree of

precaution taken by an attacker to minimize collateral injury to the civilian population of an enemy, each campaign was successful in attaining its objectives. But the White House decision not to respond to the unfounded allegations of "indiscriminate bombing" denied to those who risked their lives recognition for the professional manner in which they discharged their responsibilities.

Washington, D.C.

#### Notes

1. Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point* (New York, 1971), pp. 515-29; W. W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power* (New York, 1972), pp. 522-23.
2. Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston, 1979), p. 1109.
3. For a description of Rolling Thunder, see W. Hays Parks, "Rolling Thunder and the Law of War," *Air University Review*, January-February 1982, pp. 2-23.
4. Actually, this operation was called Freedom Train until 9 May, when it was renamed Linebacker I. The initial Linebacker I attacks of 10 May were named Rolling Thunder Alpha because the new name had not filtered down to the operational commands. The mining operations were called Pocket Money.
5. There was at least one recommendation for a counterinvasion. See E. W. Besch, "Amphibious Operation at Vinh," *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 1982, pp. 54-60.
6. Johnson, p. 241.

*The meetings of the Four Party Joint Military Team as seen here were held in the "leveled" Gia Lam airport terminal.*



7. Richard M. Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York, 1978), pp. 606-7. (Emphasis in original.)

8. *Ibid.*, p. 606.

9. Conversation with General John W. Vogt, USAF (Ret), 1 July 1982.

10. Confirmed, suspect, or possible targets for informational and planning purposes but not validated for attack.

11. In the case of Linebacker I and Linebacker II, targets authorized by the NCA (through the JCS) for attack.

12. Political targets that support military action, such as agencies that provide command, administrative, or logistic support for military operations, are lawful targets. Even if attacks on them would be otherwise lawful, political targets frequently receive protection from attack. In World War II, for example, the USAAF was directed to avoid damaging the Imperial Palace in Tokyo during air raids on that city. (Air Force Pamphlet 110-34, *Commander's Handbook on the Law of Armed Conflict* (1980), para 2-5.) In the course of Linebacker II, the Lao Dong party headquarters in Hanoi was struck by a laser guided bomb which had broken its guidance. The Hanoi regime, convinced that the attack was intentional, voiced no objection to the strike (apparently not wishing to acknowledge its success) but took serious steps to indicate its willingness to return to the negotiating process. (Conversation with General Vogt.)

13. Linebacker I maintained the route package system of Rolling Thunder, numbered I-VI running north to south from the DMZ. The Navy reassumed responsibility for Route Packages II, III, IV, and VIB; the Air Force, for V and VIA. COMUSMACV controlled bombing in Route Package I.

14. Part of the contrast in law of war application appears to have been the result of the presence on the staff of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of a judge advocate with a knowledge of the law of war. Previous judge advocates in the Chairman's office generally restricted themselves to advice on legislative and budget matters.

15. See Colonel Delbert Corum et al., *The Tale of Two Bridges* (Washington, 1976), for a detailed description of the attacks on the Thanh Hoa bridge. See also Peter B. Mersky and Norman Polmar, *The Naval Air War in Vietnam* (Annapolis, 1981), pp. 107, 109; and Henry W. Brandli, "The Use of Meteorological Satellites in Southeast Asia Operations," *Aerospace Historian*, Fall 1982, pp. 172-75. The first-generation PGM or so-called smart bombs were not the panacea weapon envisioned by many. In the course of Linebacker I and II, several errant LGBs caused incidental damage, which created a certain degree of diplomatic embarrassment for the United States. For example, on 11 October 1972, an LGB struck the French Embassy in Hanoi. Dr. Kissinger, at the time involved in the Paris peace talks, reported that the incident did not endear the U.S. with its French hosts; Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston, 1982), pp. 24-25. On 21 December, an LGB intended for the Hanoi railroad station struck the *excusado* at the nearby Cuban chancellery. The author's wife, a former Cuban refugee, believes this was the smartest bomb of the war, a view undoubtedly shared by those POWs tortured by Cubans sent by Fidel Castro to assist the North Vietnamese with propaganda exploitation of the U.S. POWs.

16. Seymour M. Hersh, "Dikes in Hanoi Represent 2,000-Year Effort to Tame Rivers," *New York Times*, July 14, 1972, p. 6.

17. Sir Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, *The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany*, volume II (London, 1961), pp. 168-69; Helmut Euler, *Als Deutschlands Dämme brachen* (Stuttgart, 1978); John Sweetman, *Operation Chastise* (New York, 1982). Albert Speer noted that the 617 raid, "employing just a few bombers . . . came close to a success which would have been greater than anything they had achieved hitherto with a commitment of thousands of bombers." His efforts to get the Luftwaffe to undertake similar attacks of Russian hydroelectric plants was unsuccessful. *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1970), pp. 280-83.

18. Webster and Frankland, vol. III (London, 1961), pp. 244-48; Kit C. Carter and Robert Mueller, editors, *The Army Air Force in World War II: Combat Chronology* (Washington, 1973), p. 482.

19. "The Attack on the Irrigation Dams in North Korea," *Air*

*University Quarterly Review*, Winter 1953-54, pp. 40-61; Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea* (New York, 1961), pp. 623-29.

20. *Pentagon Papers* (Gravel Edition), vol. IV (Boston, 1971), p. 43.

21. Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Issues Report to Rebut Charges on Dike Bombings," *New York Times*, July 29, 1972, p. 1; and "Text of Intelligence Report on Bombing of Dikes in North Vietnam Issued by State Department," *New York Times*, July 29, 1972, p. 2. Because of a House of Representatives resolution sponsored by Congressman Paul N. McCloskey, Jr. (R-Cal.), the House Armed Services Committee convened a formal investigation to look into the dike-bombing allegations. A JCS representative appeared before the full HASC. His presentation was so thorough that he was interrupted midway through it and the investigation summarily dismissed. The United States was able to rebut these charges only through substantial expenditure of valuable national assets and risk of life by U.S. military personnel. Thousands of man-hours were diverted from the war effort to respond to the allegations, raising a question for future military operations as to the degree to which the military must plan to respond to spurious charges.

22. Cluster bomb units (CBUs) or munitions were criticized by North Vietnam and supporters such as Sweden as being "illegal" during Linebacker. The legality of CBU was considered by an ad hoc committee on conventional weapons during the Swiss-convened Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, which met in Geneva from 1974 to 1977, and at the United Nations-sponsored Conference on Prohibitions of Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which met in Geneva from 1978 to 1980. CBU's were not determined to be "illegal," and neither produced a treaty containing any prohibition or restriction of CBU's.

The controversy surrounding CBU use by Israel in its war against the PLO in Lebanon in 1982 was limited to the question of whether U.S.-manufactured CBU's were employed by Israel contrary to U.S.-Israeli arms transfer agreements. Their use against PLO military positions in built-up areas not only was consistent with the law of war but probably resulted in less incidental damage to surrounding civilian structures than alternative weapons (such as high explosive bombs), a point acknowledged by the U.S. press. See, for example, the editorial in the *Washington Post*, "Cluster of Difficulties," July 21, 1982, p. A22. The reader is left to speculate as to whether the U.S. press would have been quite so charitable in its support for the legality of CBU had the issue been addressed during Linebacker.

23. For example, in late July, former Attorney General Ramsey Clark traveled to Moscow and Hanoi as a member of an "international commission" sponsored by the Stockholm-based International Commission of Inquiry into United States Crimes in Indochina investigating the North Vietnamese allegations.

24. Seymour M. Hersh, "War Foes See No Evidence of Deliberate Dike Attacks," *New York Times*, June 24, 1972, p. 3.

25. As noted by Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1098, 1111. Dr. Kissinger states that between 8 May and 12 August, 42 percent of all strikes against primary targets in North Vietnam were canceled because of weather. The problem was not unique to Linebacker I. See, for example, "The Rain Makes the Flak Worse," *The Economist*, October 14, 1967, p. 141; and General William W. Momyer, *Airpower in Three Wars* (Washington, 1978), pp. 175-83. One source concludes that Hanoi became intransigent because of the impending northeast monsoon season, feeling it would seriously impede FACAIR attacks if there was a resumption of bombing. R. Frank Futrell et al., *Aces and Aerial Victories* (Washington, 1976), p. 16.

26. For example, the Yen Vien railroad yard, which included classification, relay, and station yards; a service area and turning wye; and large approach area with holding spur, measured 5200 feet by 1400 feet and had only two small villages within one nm of the

outer edges of the target, or more than two nautical miles from the desired mean point of impact. Gia Lam railroad yard measured 4400 by 2250 feet; Thai Nguyen railroad yards, 13,300 by 1900 feet; and Hanoi POL storage, 4000 by 4000 feet.

27. B-52s flew 337 sorties in July, 560 in August, 411 in September, and 502 in October against targets in North Vietnam, which continued to be secondary to the Arc Light support being provided in South Vietnam.

28. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1399. The Saigon meeting was described by General Vogt at the Military Classics Seminar, Fort Myer, Virginia, 16 April 1982.

29. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1446-50.

30. Message, JCS to CINCPAC 170010Z Dec 72, Subj: Linebacker II Operations. Declassified by OJCS DJSJ-340-80, 15 February 1980. Certain targets on the JCS target list were designated for LGB attack only.

31. From a targeting and weaponeering standpoint, B-52s were not the optimum weapon system for many of the targets; TACAIR with or without PGM would have been the preferred weapon platform in many cases had operational commanders been able to choose the time and weather. For example, visual TACAIR strikes with conventional "dumb" bombs or with PGM would have been preferable to B-52s for attack of the Duc Noi warehouse storage area had a choice been available, including acceptable weather.

32. A total of 103 targets were authorized for attack. Thirty-one were in the vicinity of Hanoi; nineteen were near Haiphong. The remaining fifty-three were more than ten nautical miles from the geographic centers of Hanoi and Haiphong. Twenty-seven of the Hanoi targets were attacked, fifteen of the Haiphong targets, and twenty of those outside the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

33. For example, the Duc Noi warehouse storage area, seven miles north of Hanoi on the NW rail line, was struck on 28 December by B-52s flying on a course parallel to rather than intersecting two small villages located within one nautical mile of the outer edges of the target. Poststrike BDA photographs clearly reflect the axis of attack.

34. Brigadier General James R. McCarthy and Lieutenant Colonel George B. Allison, *Linebacker II: View from the Rock* (Washington, 1979), pp. 46-47, 50, 64, 68.

35. Conversation with General Vogt; Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, 15 September 1982.

36. General Vogt, Ambassador George H. Aldrich, Conference on International Humanitarian Law, American University, 12 March 1982. Ambassador Aldrich was Deputy Legal Adviser, Department of State, and one of Dr. Kissinger's principal assistants in the Paris negotiations. The connection of SAM destruction to the negotiators was not so clear to mission planners, nor was the degree of neutralization so certain. As a result, the support package for the 26 December raid was the largest of Linebacker II and the target system struck among the most varied.

37. Linebacker II loss rates were 2 percent, as compared to 19 percent for the Regensburg-Schweinfurt attack of 14 October 1943 and 30 percent for the 1 October 1943 raid on Ploesti. McCarthy and Allison, citing Thomas M. Coffey, *Decision over Schweinfurt* (New York, 1977), p. 332, and James Dugan and Carroll Stewart, *Ploesti* (New York, 1962), p. 222. Anticipated B-52 losses were three percent. "Tragedy of Linebacker II: The USAF Response," *Armed Forces Journal International*, August 1977, p. 24.

38. J. M. Spaight, *Air Power and War Rights*, third edition (London, 1947), p. 2.

39. John G. Hubbell, *P.O.W.* (New York, 1976), pp. 589-93; Rear Admiral Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr., *When Hell Was in Session* (New York, 1976), pp. 231-32; Colonel Robinson Risner, *The Passing of the Night* (New York, 1973), pp. 236-38; and Captain James A. Mulligan, *The Hanoi Commitment* (Virginia Beach, 1981), pp. 266-76. The North Vietnamese alleged during the course of Linebacker II that the Hanoi Hilton, which housed many of the U.S. prisoners of war, had been bombed "with many casualties," but former POWs have told me that the only danger during Linebacker

II, which they describe as "the greatest show on earth," was from eye strain trying to watch U.S. efforts.

40. Ambassador Aldrich noted that "Once the Christmas bombing was over and they returned to the table, the atmosphere, their attitudes were 180 degrees different." Ambassador Aldrich, *supra* note 35. This view is shared by Dr. Kissinger in *White House Years*, pp. 1458-61. In early February 1973, Dr. Kissinger passed through Saigon en route to Hanoi, filled with trepidation regarding his upcoming confrontation with the North Vietnamese in Hanoi. On his return from Hanoi, Dr. Kissinger observed that the North Vietnamese had greeted him as if he were their longest and dearest friend. General Vogt, *supra* note 27. A more subdued but substantially similar account is related by Dr. Kissinger in *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 23-28.

41. A point elaborated on by Ambassador Martin F. Hertz in *The Prestige Press and the Christmas Bombing, 1972* (Washington, 1980). See also Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1448-49. Part of the reluctance of President Nixon to confront the press undoubtedly lay in the then-rising specter of Watergate; but part also undoubtedly lay in the skepticism regarding the likelihood that the press would be willing to offer a balanced account (e.g., see Lieutenant Colonel Gerald S. Venanzi, USAF, "Democracy and Protracted War: The Impact of Television," in this issue of the *Review*, p. 58. Even where information was provided, it was received by some who considered it barbaric for the United States to utilize lawful means and methods of warfare to interfere with North Vietnamese barbarism, almost in a sense of frustration that the United States and South Vietnam might win. For example, during the conduct of Linebacker II, a representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff briefed the House Armed Services Committee after each day of operations. The JCS took great pains to illustrate through photographs the extremes being taken at every level of command to minimize risk to the civilian population of North Vietnam, much to the chagrin of those members of the HASC who opposed the bombing. A wrap-up briefing was provided in January 1973, after conclusion of Linebacker II. During the briefing a photograph was flashed on the screen showing damage in a residential section of Hanoi. A new member of the HASC seized upon the occasion to castigate the briefer for what appeared to be erratic bombing, demanding of the briefer that he explain the circumstances surrounding the damage. The briefer responded: "I regret . . . to say that the damage was caused by the crash of one of our B-52 aircraft after being hit by a North Vietnamese SAM, with the loss of the entire crew." The congressman was not to be denied, however, as she screamed: "Well, dammit, General! Can't you teach your pilots to crash somewhere else?" (Related to me by an individual who was present at that hearing.)

42. "Sky Writing and Carpet Bombing," *Washington Post*, April 29, 1975, p. A15. His column was forcefully rebutted in a letter to the editor by Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN (Ret), who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Linebacker I and Linebacker II. Most journalists reviewing available evidence had concluded by early 1973 that Hanoi had neither been "razed" nor "carpet bombed." For example, see Drew Middleton, "Hanoi Films Show No 'Carpet Bombing,'" *New York Times*, May 2, 1973, p. 2. Dr. Kissinger notes the minimal damage to civilian areas in Hanoi in *Years of Upheaval*, p. 24. See also Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York, 1978), pp. 413-14.

43. H. Bruce Franklin, "Teaching the Vietnam War: Who Won, and Why?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 4, 1981, p. 64. The 15,287.4 tons of Linebacker II is a far cry from the 40,885 tons of bombs dropped by the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain alone. Francis K. Mason, *Battle over Britain* (London, 1969), p. 615. A total of 71,270 tons of bombs and rockets fell on the British Isles during World War II. Terence H. O'Brien, *Civil Defence* (London, 1955), p. 680.

44. Air Force Pamphlet 110-31, *International Law—The Conduct of Armed Conflict and Air Operations*, 1976, paragraph 1-3a(1).

45. Air Force Manual 1-1, *Functions and Basic Doctrine of the United States Air Force*, 1979, p. 5-5.

46. J. Lauterpacht, editor, *International Law*, vol. II, *Disputes, War and Neutrality* (London, 1952), p. 72.

47. This definition has been clarified as the result of an exchange between Major General John P. Wolfe, former Judge Advocate General of the Canadian Forces, and me published in *Air University Review*, September-October 1982, pp. 82-83.

48. Mason, p. 615.

49. Figure based on retraction by David Irving, *Times* (London), July 7, 1966, p. 13. Irving in *The Destruction of Dresden* (New York, 1963), p. 11, erroneously put the figure at "more than 135,000."

50. The figure is derived from analysis of BDA coverage of all targets and the damage on Kham Thien street, *infra*, even though the latter legally would not be the exclusive responsibility of the attacker, and *doubled* to allow a large margin of error.

51. "North Vietnam Says 1,318 Dead in the Raids on Hanoi," *New York Times*, January 5, 1973, p. 3.

52. Article 21 of the 1949 Geneva Convention Relating to the Protection of the Wounded and Sick ("GWS") provides for the

discontinuance of protection for a hospital when it is used for "acts harmful to the enemy." It also is noted that neither Bach Mai Hospital nor any of the prisoner-of-war camps in which U.S. and allied personnel were held were marked for identification to avoid inadvertent attack, as required by Article 42 of the GWS, Article 19 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, or Article 23 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Both the United States and North Vietnam were parties to these treaties throughout the war.

53. Despite the North Vietnamese repudiation of their claim of extensive casualties at Bach Mai Hospital, their original allegation was repeated by CBS's "60 Minutes" in a segment broadcast on 14 November 1982. Although their error was brought to their attention and an original source proffered to verify the information, CBS elected to make neither a clarification nor correction.

54. A poignant but accurate statement I attribute to Colonel Zane E. Finkelstein, USA. Colonel Finkelstein served as one of the legal advisors to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Linebacker I and Linebacker II.

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IRA C. EAKER  
1st PRIZE ESSAY

# MILITARY ART AND THE AMERICAN TRADITION

*the Vietnam paradox revisited*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL DENNIS M. DREW



HOW can a nation win every battle and yet lose the war? This question expresses the paradox of the American experience in Vietnam, a paradox that still baffles the American military establishment. To be sure, many critics have offered explanations. Some blame the generals and their strategies, many others blame the politicians and their meddling, while still others point to a collapse of public will and hint at basic flaws in the character of American society. Each of these explanations contains a grain of truth, but none of them offer a totally satisfactory explanation. The paradox remains.

The American effort in Vietnam was the best that modern military science could offer. The array of sophisticated weapons used against the enemy boggles the mind. Combat units applied massive firepower using the most advanced scientific methods. Military and civilian managers employed the most advanced techniques of management science to support combat units in the field. The result was an almost unbroken

series of American victories that somehow became irrelevant to the war. In the end, the best that military science could offer was not good enough—and thus the paradox.

The ultimate clue to unraveling the Vietnam paradox may lie in the term *military science*. No knowledgeable observer in this age can doubt the importance of military science to the success of military operations. The firepower provided by sophisticated weapon systems dominates the modern battlefield. The procurement, management, support, and application of these weapons have become complex sciences in themselves. However, successful military operations generally are the product of military art as well as military science.

What is the difference between *military art* and *military science*? It is difficult to define either term precisely because both are very broad at the conceptual level and tend to overlap somewhat at the application level. However, they are different. *Military science*, as the term implies, is a systematic and exact body of

knowledge about the conduct of military affairs. The realm of military science includes those subjects, issues, or functions that man can quantify with a considerable degree of precision. For example, military science deals with such areas as munitions consumption rates, weapon system design and procurement, ballistic trajectories, weapon accuracy, probability determination, and ubiquitous cost effectiveness calculations. In general, military science deals with the question of what one can or cannot do in terms of military operations—the technical and managerial aspects of developing, deploying, and employing military forces.

While military science is reasonably exact, military art is relatively inexact and often abstract. *Military art* is the studied and creative planning and conduct of military affairs. It deals with those functions and issues that generally cannot be quantified and thus requires creative thought and the ability to deal with abstractions rather than the technical skills and hard data points required by military science. For example, military art would be deeply involved in strategy (including tactics), political-military affairs, leadership, morale, and other such inexact subject areas. In general, military art concerns what military forces should or should not do and why.

### A Proper Balance

Successful military campaigns result from some sort of balance between art and science. The balance required may well depend on the status of the contending forces. If a reasonable parity exists between opposing forces, military art—the creative aspect of military operations—may make the difference between success and failure. For example, it was Napoleon's genius, not his knowledge of military science, that made him master of the European continent. Napoleon's ability to marshal the forces of an entire nation, his creativity in combining old tactics into new combinations, and his sense of timing were crucial to his success.

The German invasion of France in 1940 provides another clear example. Forces were relatively well matched, but German military art proved superior. The Germans knew how to integrate land and air forces, how to use tanks more effectively, and where to strike the decisive blow. The victor in the Battle of France was determined by superior military art, not by superior military science.

Reasonable parity, of course, may not exist between opposing forces. Clearly, the inferior side must rely on superior military art to achieve victory. Military history is replete with examples of military art overcoming superior resources. "Stonewall" Jackson's Shenandoah Valley campaign in the American Civil War is a classic example. Faced with an enemy vastly superior in both numbers and firepower, Jackson's foot cavalry quickly marched and countermarched to isolate and defeat individual Union formations and their befuddled commanders.

In the modern era, the North Vietnamese and Vietcong had no choice but to rely on superior military art. In the face of an American enemy with far greater resources and vastly superior technology, the Vietnamese Communists avoided catastrophic defeat, mobilized the peasantry (or at least enforced their neutrality), and attacked American morale. In short, the Communists confronted their American foes with a baffling package of political, psychological, economic, and military warfare. The results bear witness to the triumph of military art over military science.

Finally, the superior side in an unequal military confrontation may naturally be prone to rely on military science. With superior forces, one might easily assume that victory requires only the efficient application of superior firepower. As pointed out, however, if the inferior opponent applies superior military art, the efficient application of firepower may not be possible or may be totally irrelevant.

In regard to the Vietnam paradox, it is reasonably clear that the American effort applied a great deal of the most sophisticated military

science but very little successful military art. American forces used superior weapons and employed devastating firepower delivered with great precision. The general logistical effort was incredibly well done in spite of enormous difficulties. However, American political objectives were confused and poorly understood, a circumstance which led naturally to confusion concerning military objectives. The military strategy and tactics used were designed for a far different kind of war, and political-military relations were strained at best. Finally, as casualty lists grew, yet with no end in sight, morale in the field declined and, more important, support for the war effort evaporated on the home front.

### The American Tradition

Although the outcome was unexpected, the American effort in Vietnam fit well within the American military tradition. Since the Civil War, the U.S. military has concentrated on the sciences of developing, deploying, and employing America's overwhelming resources. As a result, the U.S. military has not had to be exceptionally clever in terms of military art because it could "drown" its opponents in a sea of men, weapons, firepower, and logistics. This is the tradition inherited from Ulysses S. Grant, who hammered away at Lee in northern Virginia and overwhelmed the Confederate forces with the vast resources of the Union Army.

The American military's traditional reliance on military science rather than on military art continues today, which is not at all surprising. American military academies are primarily engineering schools. Other commissioning programs place major emphasis on recruiting potential officers with educational backgrounds in science and engineering. With an officer corps educated in such a manner, no one should be surprised that Americans always seem to frame solutions to military problems in terms of new technology or revised organizational structure rather than clever strategy.

Why is all of this a matter of concern? The

problem is that the American tradition no longer fits reality. No longer can the United States rely on overwhelming its opponents. At the highest level of the conflict spectrum, the military objective has changed to deterrence rather than traditional victory in combat. At the conventional war level, it is very doubtful that the United States can overwhelm its principal opponent. Even lesser opponents have an advantage because worldwide commitments place considerable strain on finite American forces and resources. At the lowest level of the conflict spectrum, protracted guerrilla-style war poses a problem the U.S. military has been unable or unwilling to solve. Protracted warfare assumes weakness on the part of the guerrilla forces and seems almost invulnerable to firepower. The guerrilla objective is to achieve victory simply by avoiding overwhelming defeat. Protracted war strategy is a masterpiece of military art.

If the American military tradition is no longer effective, then the American military establishment must place more emphasis on the creative abilities typical of military art if it is to deal successfully with the world model. The American military must master the "should," "should not," and "why" in addition to the technicalities of "can" and "cannot." The question is, of course, how does one master military art?

### Mastering Military Art

Military art—the art of warfare—is discovered through the study of military history. The great creative military minds of the modern era were, almost without exception, first-rate interpreters of military history. Clausewitz, Mahan, J. F. C. Fuller, Liddell Hart, and Brodie all fit this mold. Field commanders such as Patton and Montgomery also had a deep and abiding interest in military history. Although the list goes on, the argument for the study of military history as a basis for military art relies on more than just testimonial examples.

Military history is not merely the study of obscure facts and footnotes. The intelligent

study of military history provides insight into the evolution of strategic thought, the political and military objectives of warfare, the influence of technology on operational concepts, and the capabilities and limitations of military forces. History provides examples of success and failure in military operations and provides clues relating to the reasons for the success or failure. History provides the foundation for military doctrinal beliefs. It also provides illustrated examples of leadership—both good and bad—in very different situations. Thus, the intelligent study of military history can provide a fundamental understanding of strategy, tactics, doctrine, political-military relations, and leadership. Such are the elements of military art.

But of what benefit is a foundation in military art? First, a thorough understanding of the purposes, capabilities, and limitations of military power forms the foundation required to provide political leaders with sound and believable military advice. The American military must be able to do more than say “can do” or, on rare occasions, “cannot do.” The military must also be able to say “should do” and “should not do” as the situation warrants. Only if well founded in the “why” of warfare can the military offer this sort of professional advice and have it accepted.

Second, but perhaps most important, a sound knowledge of the art of war provides a conceptual framework for analyzing strategic and tactical problems, technological developments, and the impact of related issues on military operations. Perhaps with a better grounding in military art, the United States could have avoided the debacle in Vietnam. Perhaps American military and political leaders could have learned something from the French experience in the “first” Vietnam War, or from the British experience in Malaya, or from Mao’s experiences in China. Perhaps American leaders might also have learned something from the experience of fighting the British in the American Revolution. After all, revolutionary heroes such as Nathanael Greene and Francis Marion were early masters of protracted guerrilla warfare.

THE FUTURE success of the American military lies in the mastery of military art and its application in concert with military science. The key to the mastery of military art is the intelligent and diligent study of military history. Thus, the key to the future is found in the past. If Americans learn the lessons of the past, they may again learn how to win both the battles *and* the war.

*Center for Aerospace Doctrine,  
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## IRA C. EAKER ESSAY COMPETITION

Air University is pleased to announce the third annual Ira C. Eaker Essay Competition. Its purpose is twofold:

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—Second, to memorialize the indomitable martial spirit of these men, a spirit that nourishes the perception of military service as a calling.

Topic areas for the essay competition are professionalism, leadership, integrity, ethics and values, strategy and tactics, doctrine, esprit de corps, or any combination thereof.

### ENTRY RULES

—Essays must be *original* and *specifically* written for the contest. Only one entry per person may be submitted.

—Entries must be a minimum of 2000 words and a maximum of 4000 words.

—Essays must be typewritten, double-spaced, and on standard-size paper.

—The competition is open to all active (duty) members of the regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Academy and AFROTC cadets, and Civil Air Patrol.

—A separate cover-sheet should include the essay title, author's name, rank, duty/home addresses and duty/home phone numbers. The author's name must not appear on the essay itself. The title should be repeated at the head of the first page of the essay.

—Send entries to the Editor, *Air University Review*, Building 1211, Maxwell AFB, Alabama 36112. All essays must be received or postmarked by 1 June 1983. For further details, call AUTOVON 875-2773, Commercial (205) 293-2773.

—Essays are submitted with the understanding that first-publication rights belong to *Air University Review*.

First, second, and third-prize medallions will be awarded as well as \$2000, \$1000, and \$500 United States Savings Bonds. Distinguished Honorable Mention and Honorable Mention certificates will also be awarded. Winning essays will be published in the *Review*.

The Ira C. Eaker Essay Competition is funded by a permanent grant from the Arthur G. B. Metcalf Foundation through the United States Strategic Institute, Washington, D.C.

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**D**URING the dry season from 10 October 1970 to 30 April 1971, Seventh Air Force credited a dozen AC-130 Spectre gunships of the 16th Special Operations Squadron with destroying or damaging 12,741 trucks in night operations over Laos. The total number of trucks destroyed by AC-130s was more than three times that of the previous years, far exceeding what most planners had predicted; and that had started a controversy.

The AC-130 Spectre was the ultimate truck buster. F-4 Phantom pilots who escorted the gunship called it "The Fabulous Four-engine Fighter." With its solid black exterior and weapons protruding from gunports down the left side of its fuselage, an AC-130 was reminiscent of a marauding pirate sailing ship. Two 20-mm M61 Vulcan cannons, six-barreled Gatling guns, stuck out ahead of the left main wheel well. Above the well were a pair of 7.62-mm MXU470 machine guns, also six-barreled. Aft were two 40-mm M2A1 (modified) Bofors

capable of pumping out 100 rounds per minute, usually in rapid bursts of three to five. The Forty was the primary weapon used to kill trucks. It also was the focus of contention.

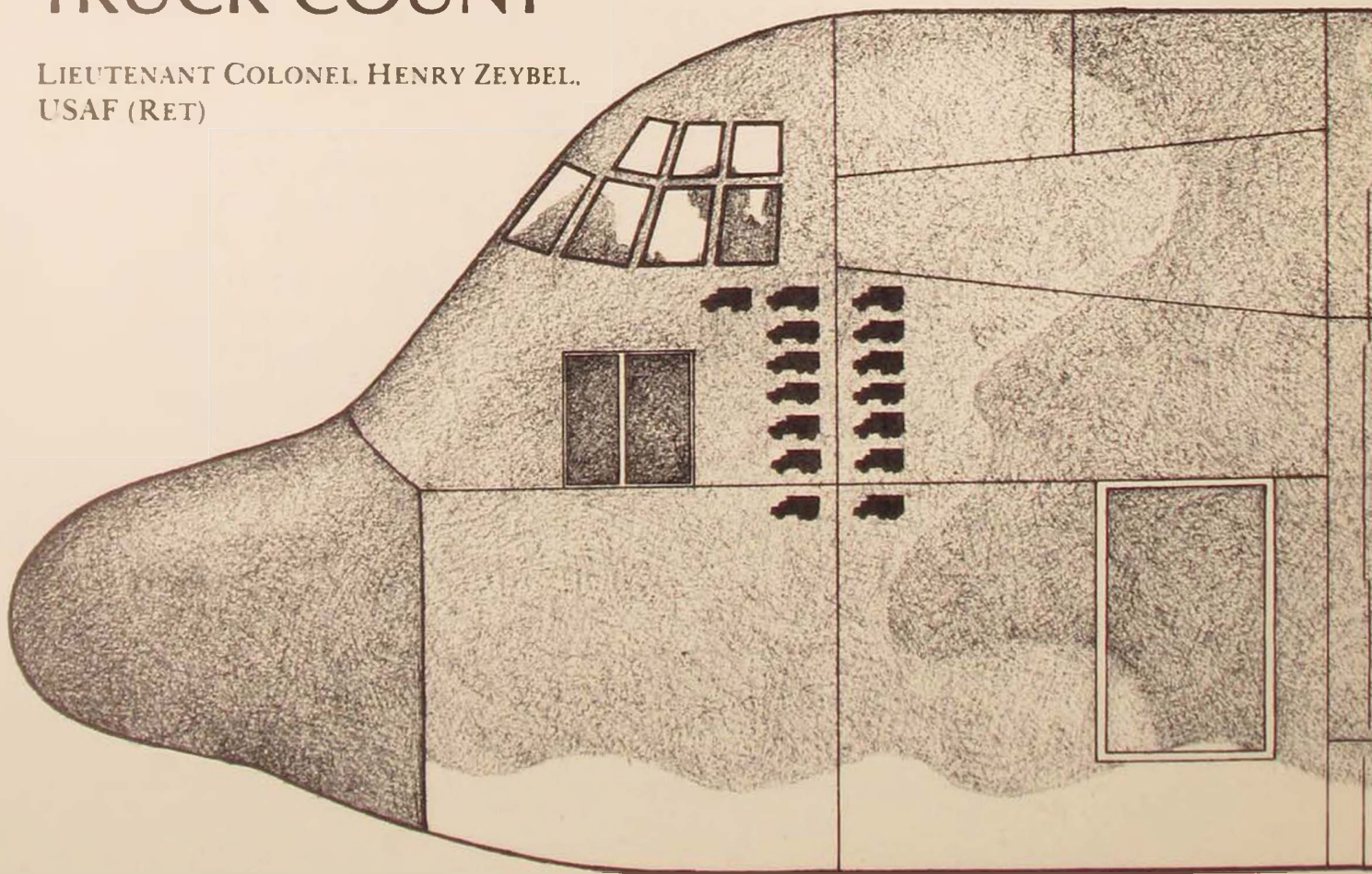
After testing a pair of Forties on a single gunship during the 1969-70 dry season, Aeronautical Systems Division personnel considered the cannon's two-pound warhead to be a truck stopper. With Forties aboard all AC-130s for 1970-71, damage assessment criteria were as follows:

- A vehicle was destroyed if it burned, exploded, or was directly hit by a 40-mm round.
- A vehicle was damaged if it was peppered with 20-mm fire or a 40-mm shell detonated short of it within ten feet (at that distance, the shell's shrapnel pattern remained concentrated enough to disable the vehicle).

From November 1970 to May 1971, Spectre reached its peak in killing trucks. The reasons appeared obvious. There were twice as many airplanes as during the previous dry season,

## TRUCK COUNT

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HENRY ZEYBEL,  
USAF (RET)



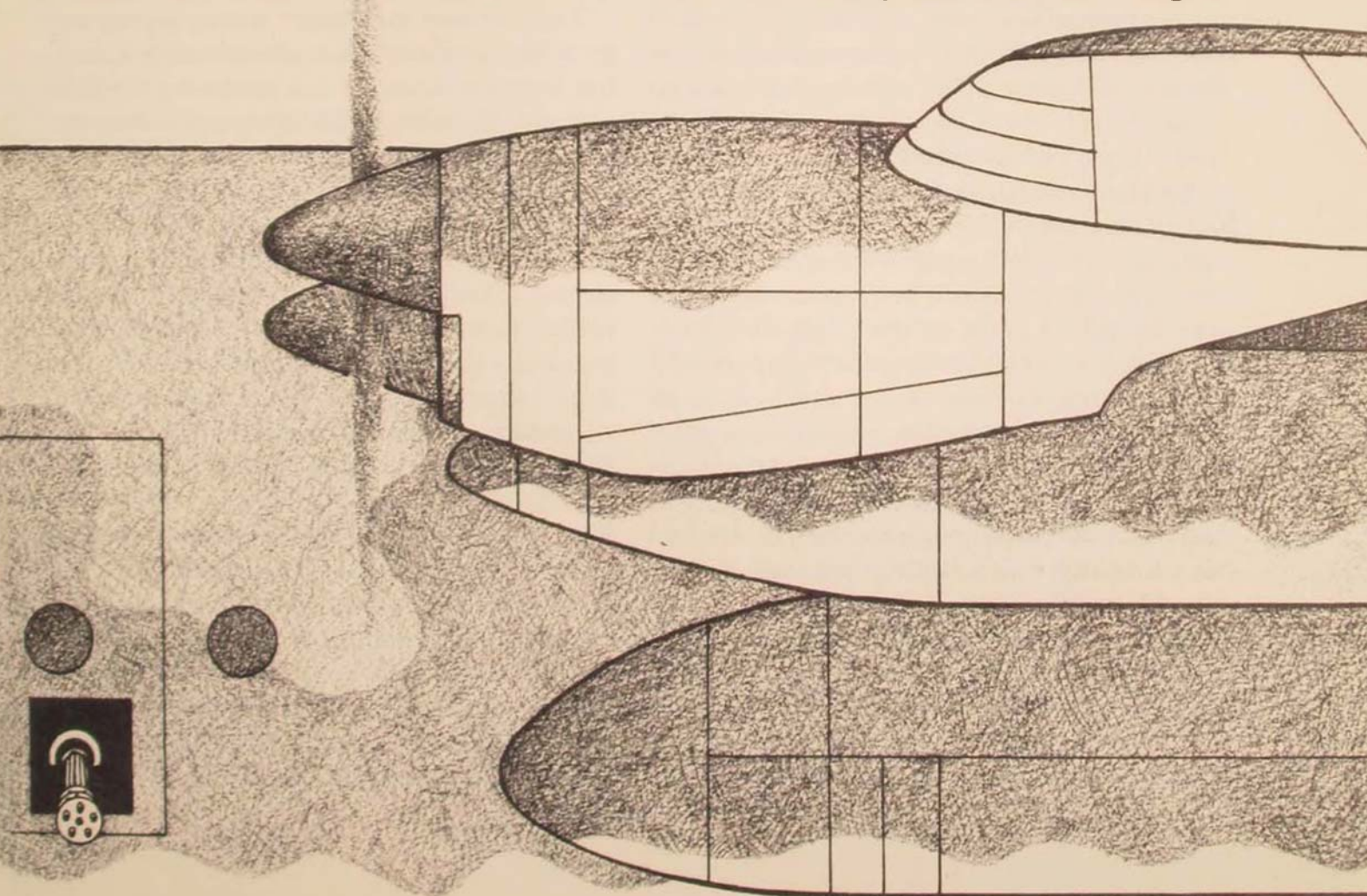
and every plane had heavier firepower. The array of sensors used to locate trucks was better than ever. Every plane was equipped with an infrared (IR) detector which had higher resolution and better tracking stability than the preceding model. The six newest planes carried low-light-level television cameras with both wide-angle and telephoto lenses. (The six older gunships still relied on a starlight scope, called night observation device or NOD.) Along with the ever-dependable Black Crow (BC) sensor, which detected electromagnetic radiations, a gunship's three-man sensor team could do everything but sniff out a vehicle.

At the start of May, rains caused by the southwestern monsoon flooded Spectre's operating area, the eastern half of the Laotian panhandle, code named Steel Tiger. The North Vietnamese Army's 559th Transportation Group ground to a halt as the Ho Chi Minh Trail turned to mud. For the Spectre crews based at Ubon in Thailand, the war stopped until approximately six months hence when the mon-

soon reversed, weather over the Trail cleared, and trucks resumed rolling.

About the time North Vietnamese Army (NVA) trucks were stopped by mud, staff analysts at Seventh Air Force Headquarters in Saigon shifted into high gear. To them, the Air Force destroyed-damaged totals for Steel Tiger appeared inordinately high. In addition to Spectre's 13,000, more than 5000 vehicles were credited to other units, primarily fighter-bomber squadrons. The analysts' main question was: How many trucks did the North Vietnamese own? At the start of the 1969-70 dry season, USAF Intelligence said 6000 to 8000. By the start of the 1970-71 season, the figure had climbed to 18,000. If that was so, the analysts said, the Air Force had destroyed all of them! A new intelligence report raised the estimate to between 23,000 and 25,000. According to the latest information, the NVA had already asked Russia for 9000 and China for 3000 new trucks.

"That request for 12,000 makes Spec's numbers look pretty good," our crew navigator



said. (He had doubts about the 5000 vehicles credited to other units. After his experiences on a Southeast Asia tour with Blind Bat, dropping flares to illuminate tactical air strikes, he believed fast-moving bombers were lucky to hit the ground, especially at night.) The crew navigator and I were fascinated by the numbers games; we read every document we could get our hands on. We had also seen our share of trucks, having logged 135 missions with Spectre; I was a television/night observation device operator.

During the dry season, AC-130s were frugged for armed reconnaissance of the trail from the end of evening twilight until the first light of dawn. Unless battle damaged, every airplane flew every night. "On target" time over an assigned sector of Steel Tiger was three to four hours. Although the NVA had deployed anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) there, its primary defense was darkness. Few trucks moved during daylight. The IR, TV/NOD, and BC sensors enabled Spectre crews to see in the dark.

The three sensor operators and a fire control operator (FCO) sat in a small room called "the booth," located in the middle of the cargo compartment. While the navigator directed the gunship through systematic sweeps of a target sector, the sensor operators randomly searched for trucks. Usually the Black Crow made initial contact. On the BC's oscilloscope, a target appeared as a green blip. Using computer direction, the pilot homed on the target. Closer in, the IR or TV/NOD located it. Pilots preferred TV for firing guidance because it was more stable. From an operating altitude, the pilot orbited the target in a bank at a constant air-speed and aimed the guns by aligning electronic symbols on a computer display. He had the option of firing manually or automatically when the symbols were near or in coincidence. Unless a target burned or exploded, the pilot never saw it.

The boys in the booth ran the ball game and, by consensus, decided what was destroyed or damaged. Action that appeared on the IR and

TV sensor screens was videotaped. With a photo interpreter, damage assessment was reviewed and, if necessary, reevaluated during postflight debriefing. No special skill was needed to interpret what took place. Watching the sensor screens and the videotapes was like watching ordinary black-and-white television. The NOD-equipped gunships had no video recorders and, as before, operated on an honor system.

Because of the volume of videotape, only footage of the most interesting or unusual events was saved by converting it to 16-mm film and calling it "AC-130 SEA Gunship Activity—Best of the Week." Distributed Air Force-wide, the motion picture showed the destruction wrought by the gunship and also much of the anti-aircraft fire directed at the plane. A soundtrack of interphone conversations provided a vivid and often X-rated background. What did not go into the "Best of the Week" eventually was erased so that the videotape could be reused.

The "Best of the Week" was a novelty that grew into a form of entertainment rather than a battle report. At times it resembled a Keystone comedy. It showed NVA drivers who were frightened by near-misses swerve their trucks off roads and crash into trees, tumble down ravines, or drive up steep hillsides before turning over. In one sequence, a driver abandoned his truck without setting the brake; the truck rolled backward down a grade while others swerved wildly to avoid it. On another occasion, a heavy tank reacted like a plastic bear in an electric-eye shooting gallery: each time a 40-mm round bounced harmlessly off the tank's thick armor, the tank driver reversed course. The only thing needed to complete the farce was the "Anvil Chorus" on soundtrack.

Despite the pictures, the truck count was periodically questioned. For example, one night a crew found a truck park with 65 vehicles; the crew hit each vehicle with a 40-mm shell; and none of the trucks burned. In accordance with the damage assessment criteria, the crew claimed



65 destroyed, the largest single mission total of the season. In the morning, on orders from Seventh Air Force, an OV-10 Bronco pilot visually checked the area but found no sign of trucks. As a result, the Seventh Air Force staff asked questions that were accusations: Did the crew actually hit that many targets? Were the targets trucks or things that looked like trucks? If the former, where did they go? If the latter, what were they?

In reply, the crew asked some questions of its own: Did the recce bird overfly the correct coordinates? Did enough time elapse for the NVA to sweep up? What about the pictures?

For the crews, every night was a new battle. The dry season schedule provided little time to reflect. From experience, sensor operators knew the speed with which maintenance teams cleared the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Sometimes when we had damaged a single vehicle, we would then fly elsewhere, hoping to find a convoy. If we found nothing, we would circle back to the lone vehicle ten minutes later and frequently find a repair crew there with a second truck. According to Intelligence, the population of the Trail provinces was a quarter of a million Laotians, with an additional 75,000 NVA troops supervising work. It was our impression that everybody in the Trail provinces worked on trucks.

For every mission that was questionable, there were dozens that were absolutely convincing of Spectre's truck-killing ability. Many convoys died spectacularly. Trucks traveled either singly, in small convoys of about five, or in large convoys of around fifteen. Often, by the time a gunship finished with a large convoy, the road was ablaze with flaming vehicles. Burning fuel from 8100-gallon tanker trucks ran down the roadside ditches. Tankers erupted anew, and fires gained in size and intensity as flames spread from one fuel cell to another. Ammunition trucks exploded when heat cooked off their cargo; exploding tracer rounds pinwheeled into the sky before falling back into the holocaust. Nothing escaped the flames.

The destruction was breathtaking, and much of it was recorded on videotape.

Seventh Air Force Awards and Decorations helped create the controversy that surrounded the truck kill figures. Using data from 1969-70, Awards and Decorations decided that a gunship crew would be given the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) if it stopped 25 trucks (total of destroyed and damaged) on one mission and encountered at least moderate ground fire (say, 200 rounds of AAA). Since the previous season, however, not only were more 37-mm guns deployed along the Trail but 57-mm AAA was added at key locations. The salvation for Spectre was that none of the guns were radar-controlled. During March and April, our crew averaged more than 300 rounds of AAA per mission. Therefore, half the criteria for a DFC were automatically fulfilled. Two scanners called out AAA rounds to alert the pilot, and, as an additional duty, the BC kept a running total. Anyway, it was axiomatic that trucks and AAA went together. As our navigator explained to new guys, "You're going to get shot at if you do your job properly. The NVA doesn't position guns to protect trees or karst. Find guns, you find trucks."

Twenty-five trucks was a good night's work during the first half of the 1970-71 season. Few crews attained that figure. When American and South Vietnamese soldiers drove into Laos during Lam Son 719 in February and March, a total of 25 became a joke. Each night at least one gunship destroyed that many or more. The incursion into Laos interdicted the Trail's eastern roadways and forced traffic to the fewer roads along the less complex western part of the Trail. Because the NVA did not reduce its volume of traffic, jams resulted, and convoys backed up on each other. From Spectre's viewpoint, the same number of targets had been compressed into an area half as great. Searching was eliminated. The Trail was a shooting gallery. This was the only time that NVA maintenance teams could not keep the roads cleared. Hulks sat untouched for days, and bottlenecks



*Tanks, like these destroyed PT-76s caught along an open part of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, were easy targets for the AC-130 Spectre. The 105-mm howitzer, installed on the AC-130s in 1972, could make short work of almost any target with a direct hit, and the thin upper surfaces of light armored vehicles such as these were vulnerable to Spectre's 40-mm and 20-mm fire.*

developed where convoys piled up in ruin. Moving vehicles were forced to weave around scattered wreckage. In the eyes of the Spectre sensor operators, it was lovely chaos.

The wealth of vehicles influenced the sensor operators' attitude regarding damage assessment. When targets were scarcer, they hit a vehicle with several 40-mm rounds in hopes of making it burn. They succeeded just about half the time. Nearly as decisively, those trucks that did not burn, nevertheless, did sustain multiple hits. The large number of truck sightings during Lam Son 719 caused a shift in tactics. Crews spent less time on each truck in order to strike more trucks. The single-hit criterion was liberally applied. As a result, crews burned or blew only one out of four targets. Spectre's March figures were 3361 destroyed and 819 damaged, a third of the season's total.

With the large number of truck kills, Awards and Decorations personnel thought presentation of the DFC had been cheapened. When a Spectre crew earned a DFC, every man aboard the airplane received the award. (A crew consisted of 13 members. There were seven officers: pilot, copilot, navigator, IR, TV/NOD, BC, FCO; and six enlisted men: flight engineer, three weapon mechanics who were called "gunners," and two scanners.) The navigators and enlisted men loved the reasoning of the Seventh Air Force Commander who said, "A gunship crew is a team on which every member is equally vital and faces equal danger. Therefore, each man deserves equal reward." A number of other Air Force fliers, particularly F-4 pilots who escorted us, resented it. Spectre crewmen won plenty of medals. A few individuals had DFC oak leaf clusters numbered in the teens.

**A**FTER the rains came, Lieutenant Colonel Ken Harris, 16th SOS Commander, met with our pilot and the navigators from our crew. Harris read us a message from Seventh Air Force that talked about restruck and twice-counted vehicles, decoys, and armored trucks.

Instinctively playing cover-your-ass, our IR said, "Nothing in there we didn't already think about." We knew the NVA drivers had tricks, probably more than we recognized. Like most crews we had learned by trial and error. When we first started, we would find a convoy and blast away at the leader who took off like a scared rabbit. By the time we stopped him and then punished his truck, the others in the convoy were nowhere to be found. We fell for that three or four times before we decided to ignore the escaping leader who probably had an ar-

*"Ho Chi Minh's Highway" was a complex network of single-lane dirt roads, bypasses, footpaths, and truck parks. One of the 12 vehicles (right) are headed for a truck park located 150 yards off the main road. The ability of Spectre's sensors to penetrate darkness and camouflage made it a particularly feared adversary. . . . When Spectre caught a convoy (below), the preferred tactic was to disable the lead truck with the first rounds and then blast the rear truck, trapping the convoy between to be destroyed at leisure. The AC-130s were so deadly that truck drivers often bounded for cover at the sound of any aircraft overhead. The problem became so serious that the North Vietnamese handcuffed drivers to their steering columns to keep them from leaving their trucks; many died in their cabs.*



mored cab and, instead, plow into the others before they had time to vanish. While trucks and their cargo traveled the overall length of the Trail, drivers worked only short segments that they knew perfectly. They could nestle vehicles into side roads or beneath overhanging branches so that IR signatures disappeared. We once watched four trucks fade from sight right before our eyes, just slip off the road and be gone. We hammered through the foliage at where we thought they had hidden and, before we departed, had a pair of fires raging. We also watched drivers pull up near a burning vehicle in order, as we figured, to mask their IR signature in the glow of the blaze. We often wondered just how much the drivers knew about our capabilities.

Harris reported, "Seventh wants us to analyze our results."

"Why don't they go back and review the tapes," our BC said, knowing that all but the most recent tapes had been demagnetized. "Tell them to review the 'Best of the Week.'"

"That's nothing but a commercial," said our FCO.

Harris nodded: "Its name condemns it—'Best.' What about the other ninety-nine per cent?"

I asked, "Why did they wait until now to start this?" but I knew the answer. We all knew the answer. Nobody had expected Spectre to rack up over 13,000 trucks. Now a larger issue was at stake: How could Tactical Air Command program managers justify huge expenditures for sleek "advanced" multipurpose jet fighters when a lumbering cargo plane accomplished interdiction on such a grand scale?

Harris told us, "Answer the message. Verify the destroyed and damaged as best you can. If it's any consolation, you're doing this for General Clay. He happens to be on our side. Whatever you come up with goes directly to him. Take a hard look at the big picture. Tell him what you see."

"The big picture was flushed down the tubes," according to the IR.

Harris was patient: "General Clay understands that, and he regrets it. Do the best with what you have."

George Orwell would have loved our predicament.

**WE** trashed Seventh's questions and struck out on our own. The only things we had to work with were mission reports and our experience and intuition. We decided to do a hatchet job on the squadron. If the results turned out to be too embarrassing, then, we jokingly agreed, we would lie.

We went through more than 2000 mission reports, one by one, the entire 1970-71 dry season. If nothing else, the exercise proved that navigators are outstanding bookkeepers, CPA quality. The sensor that made initial contact; the sensor that provided firing guidance; the Greenwich mean time of start and stop attack; the geographical coordinates to the minute (within 600 feet) as taken from long-range aid to navigation (LORAN) readings; and the results (burner, blower, etc.) were logged for every target. The forms comprised a statistician's dream.

We determined that of 10,319 trucks claimed as destroyed:

- 2786 burned;
- 2169 exploded in some manner;
- 5364 suffered at least one direct hit by a 40-mm shell (and, of this subtotal, approximately 1000 could have been restruct vehicles).

Of the 2733 trucks damaged:

- 1720 suffered from near-misses by 40-mm shells;
- 1013 were struck by 20-mm shells;

Of the total, approximately 500 could have been restruct targets.

We were harsh in our judgments. If on the same night two trucks were logged within 1000 feet of each other by different airplanes, we called them restruct. There was no way to account for decoys, armored vehicles, or trucks

that were damaged, repaired, redamaged, re-repaired.

As we saw it, 5000 trucks had definitely been destroyed. Possible restruct numbered 1500. From there it was easy to see that the real measure of success depended on the degree to which we had damaged the remaining 6500.

**S**HORTLY thereafter, along with Lieutenant Colonel Harris, our crew made a trip to Tan Son Nhut Air Base and met with General Lucius D. Clay, Jr., Seventh Air Force Commander, and a staff that overflowed a large conference room's seating capacity. The meeting was short and to the point. General Clay told everyone to pay attention and then talked to only the sensor operators.

Our crew had flown a couple of special missions in which General Clay had a personal interest. At those times, he made us feel as if we were working for us as much as we were working for him. That day at Tan Son Nhut was no different. I doubt that we told him anything he did not know or had not guessed. Still, he listened. We said that from our experience we believed that:

- crews relied on the single hit with a Forty criterion mostly for expediency;
- when time allowed, crews tried for burners and blowers;
- crew errors were honest mistakes (it was possible to be faked out; but as in any work, experience reduced errors);
- if it did not burn or blow, a vehicle probably was not destroyed with a single 40-mm hit.

On 12 May 1971, we took our show on the road again. Colonel Harris piled our crew aboard a gunship and took us back to Tan Son Nhut. This time General Clay told us, "We may be working the problem backward, but the truth is all that matters. At the start of the dry season, we took ASD's word on what damage the weapons would do. Now I want to see for myself."

A staff officer briefed us that we would strike trucks parked on a range north of Bien Hoa. General Clay would be observing from a bunker 1000 yards away. The briefer gave us coordinates, a takeoff time, and a radio frequency on which to call for further instructions after we located the trucks. That was it.

Our navigator directed us to the coordinates. Six miles out, we picked up signals and rolled into geometry on BC guidance. Eight trucks were parked on an S-shaped portion of dirt road, out in the middle of nowhere. The first six were 30 to 40 feet apart, staggered left and right of the center of the road. The last two were 100 feet farther back, around the second curve near a clump of trees. A long grassy field abutted one side of the road; at the far end of the field was a bunker topped with grass.

We called on the assigned frequency, and General Clay answered: "Affirmative, Spec, we have you overhead. How many trucks have you found?"

"Eight," was the relayed answer.

"According to the IR, how many engines are running, and which ones?"

"Three. Engines one, three, and seven." They produced the brightest heat signatures. "Eight looks like it shut down not too long ago."

There was a pause following the pilot's message reply. Then General Clay laughingly said, "My aide tells me that's right. We had trouble finding a suitable eighth truck, and it arrived only a short while ago." He told us to strike the first six trucks with 40-mm fire and the last two with 20-mm.

One of the officers said, "TV tracking the lead truck." The crosshairs were centered on its hood.

The pilot then said: "Put TV in the computer and give me a Forty."

The crew navigator replied, "TV in."

One of the enlisted men said: "You got the gun, sir."

We opened fire with a vengeance, not using the normal rhythm; instead pouring out a long

stream of rounds. The first shell exploded in a roadside ditch. "Five low," was the reflexive comment. The stream of rounds "walked" out of the ditch, arced across the road, and smacked all over the lead truck.

Another officer said, "Beautiful, just beautiful."

Round after round pounded into the lead truck, but it did not burn.

"Spec, enough," General Clay said. "Try the next one."

With the crosshairs moved, we resumed firing, smoothly slipping into our normal tempo: One. One-two-three. On the third burst, the truck blew and burned. Thick black smoke rolled skyward. A few minutes later, we set number three afire. What a command performance! We felt a kind of omnipotence unexperienced since some of our early kills.

We hammered number four, but it would not burn.

General Clay asked which sensor we had been using, then said, "Switch to IR for the last four targets. On trucks five and six, cease fire when you consider them damaged."

Firing one round at a time, we planted a shell about ten feet from the fifth truck. We talked it over and were not satisfied. We put another round four feet in front of the target and agreed it was close enough.

The sixth truck was hit with the first round. "Sorry, Sir."

"Good enough," the general said and sounded pleased.

The load of 20-mm rounds was split equally between the last two vehicles. Sparkles danced over both trucks, but neither burned.

"Come on down and let's look at them," General Clay said.

**B**Y the time we landed and drove to the range, the high-ranking spectators were gone. Trucks two and three had burned because each had been carrying three barrels of fuel. We had hit the barrels, set them on fire,

and in turn torched the trucks.

Trucks one and four had six-to-12-inch wide holes all over them. The 40-mm shells had penetrated the hoods and torn into the engines. On one, the driver's cabin was demolished. Oil and hydraulic fluid dripped from both trucks.

Trucks five and six were disappointments. Near-misses had flung shrapnel through the sides of number five. Its tires were flat, as were the tires of the first four. Likewise, most glass was punched out or shattered. Once the tires were replaced, however, it looked as if number five would be operable. The keys were in the ignition. The navigator climbed aboard, started and raced the engine; it sounded healthy. He shifted into gear and drove fifty feet on flat tires while the rest of us wished the vehicle would die. The sixth truck, on which we had scored a single direct hit, was unharmed except for a nine-inch hole through its quarter-inch, corrugated-steel bed. Even the tires were intact. The truck could have been driven to Hanoi.

The ground around the last two trucks was strewn with unexploded 20-mm high explosive incendiary (HEI) shells. From certain altitudes the rounds tended to tumble before reaching target. Fist-sized dents covered the trucks like vehicular pockmarks. A few shells had gashed the hoods without producing visible damage to the engines. With new tires, both trucks might have been operable.

Using dry season criteria, we would have logged five destroyed and three damaged. In reality, we had definitely destroyed two; damaged two so that they required major maintenance and would be out of commission indefinitely; damaged three that probably could be repaired and returned to duty within a day or two; and barely touched the other. I was disturbed by that last one, the single hit with a 40-mm shell. It would have been logged as destroyed when actually it was the least damaged of the lot.

Colonel Harris was ecstatic when he met us at the gunship for the flight home to Ubon. "A marvelous demonstration," he said. "Great shooting. You guys cleared the crews once and

for all. There's no doubt about what Spectre can do. General Clay was delighted."

After we were airborne, the rest of the story came out. In the future, no matter what it was hit with, a truck had to burn or blow up before being counted as destroyed. Crews were expected to hit trucks several times in an effort to make them burn. "General Clay has no complaints about the crews' past performances," Harris said. "He thinks your statistics, your research have validity. He is irritated with ASD for selling the wrong criteria."

Later Harris told us that the dry season figures would stand as they were.

**M**ONTHS later, we found data that wrapped up our research. According to USAF Intelligence, during the 1969-70 dry season, the NVA fed 68,000 tons of materiel into the Trail network, and 21,000 tons reached final destination. In 1970-71, input ran the same but only 9500 tons got through.

Our navigator was so far ahead of most problems that I seldom tried to outguess him. "The number of trucks doesn't mean much," he explained. "Supposedly, with 68,000 tons of input, the NVA needs only nine to 12 per cent throughput to maintain offensives in South Vietnam and Cambodia. So, if the NVA pushed through 9500 tons, that's 14 per cent. Twenty-nine per cent of the input supports Trail operations, and about six per cent is stockpiled in Laos. Add those and they account for 49 per cent. Therefore, we can say we destroyed 51 per cent of the NVA input—and we failed?"

Nevertheless, we were permitted to keep our medals.

FOR THE 1971-72 dry season, the Spectre fleet was increased from 12 to 18 gunships. Most important, however, the aft 40-mm gun in one of the aircraft was replaced by a 105-mm M102 cannon. After this AC-130 sustained battle

damage, the howitzer was installed in a different gunship. The 105's 33-pound warhead came close to what designers at the ASD laboratory had anticipated when they modified the 40-mm for use on the AC-130; a single hit inflicted major damage on a vehicle. (In the fall of 1971, I participated in live fire missions out of Hurlburt Field, Florida, that were similar to the one our crew flew for General Clay. From what I saw, I conservatively estimated that there was no more than a ten percent chance that a truck would be operable after being hit with a 105-mm round.) Seventh Air Force retained the criteria that ruled vehicles had to burn or blow up to be counted as destroyed. Despite that, during 32 missions, the howitzer-equipped AC-130s received credit for destroying 75 trucks and damaging 92 with the 105-mm weapon, while destroying 27 and damaging 24 with 40-mm fire.

On 11 January 1972, USAF Intelligence confirmed the deployment of SA-2 Guidelines in Laos. Although the AC-130 was not designed to operate in a surface-to-air missile environment, Spectre continued to go into Steel Tiger. Despite the hazardous situation, Spectre amassed respectable totals, receiving credit from Seventh Air Force for destroying 2782 trucks and damaging 4553.

On 31 March, ten miles southwest of Tchepone in Steel Tiger, antiaircraft fire destroyed the AC-130 now carrying the 105-mm howitzer, but miraculously, the pilot held the airplane level until the crew bailed out. Fifteen men parachuted into the jungle of western Laos, and at daybreak all were rescued by helicopters. Just two days earlier a SAM had downed another AC-130, killing the entire crew.

The loss of two AC-130s caused Seventh Air Force to curtail gunship operations drastically in Laos and in Military Region I, the area below the demilitarized zone in South Vietnam.

Spectre's role as the ultimate truck buster was ended.

*Austin, Texas*



# Thunderchief

THEODORE VAN GEFFEN, JR.

SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT GERALD C. ARRUDA

**A** JOKE in the early sixties had the F-105 used as a squat bomber; taxi over the enemy tank, retract the landing gear, and log the kill. Early crews dubbed it the Lead-Sled and Ultra-Hog. In fact, it took a war to erase such negative reactions. The F-105's high speed at low altitude, its flight stability at all speeds, and its ability to haul a heavy bomb load proved to be great assets in the Vietnam War. If any single factor won over even the hardest-to-convince, it was the aircraft's ruggedness that enabled it to sustain extensive battle damage and return the pilot to friendly territory, an ability owed largely to its tough J75 engine and dry wing.\* Ever since, everyone involved with the

F-105 has called it by the affectionate nickname Thud.

Some years before the F-84F Thunderstreak entered the U.S. Air Force inventory, fifteen engineers at Republic Aircraft Corporation had conceived, as a private venture, model Advanced Project (AP) 63-31 to improve the performance of and succeed the F-84F series. Numerous configurations were investigated after which Republic decided that the basic concept should be a single-seat, single-engine aircraft, primarily meant for the nuclear mission but with secondary air-to-air capabilities. The F-105's projected nuclear role was to result in an unplanned benefit: designed to carry a single nuclear weapon, the F-105 was built with an internal bomb bay, an unheard of design feature for a fighter. Although the bomb bay never carried a bomb into combat, it provided secure storage for a fuel tank which gave the Thud extra range without a drag

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\*The F-105 wing, unlike that of many contemporary aircraft, contained no fuel tanks, thus sharply reducing the vulnerability area of the aircraft.





penalty. In February 1952, Republic proposed the new airplane, initially designated Weapon System 306A, to the Department of Defense (DOD). Altogether the development would embrace 5,000,000 manhours of study over a six-year period.

As recommended by the Aircraft and Weapon Board, the Air Staff endorsed the F-105 in May of 1952 instead of ordering an improved version of the F-84F. Five months later, on 25 September, Republic received a contract directing it to proceed only with the preproduction engineering, tooling, tool designing, and material procurement needed for tentative production. Fabrication and material procurement originally called for the acquisition of 199 aircraft with the first Thunderchief operational by 1955. Following a configuration conference on 16 February 1953, the final shape of the F-105 became evident. In May, the Air Research and Development Command (ARDC) advised that it was programming the T-171-D Gatling-type gun for eventual use in the F-105. In June, the preliminary model specifications were completed and approved by Hq USAF.

In the meantime, however, a change of plans announced in March had reduced the initial number of aircraft from 199 to 46, including 37 F-105s and 9 RF-105s. In an August 1953 warning, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics informed Republic that the overall efficiency of the J-71 engine was only 80 percent of that predicted by the contractor. Interim use of the Pratt & Whitney J57 engine was then considered. Despite this setback, delivery of the first aircraft was still scheduled for the spring of 1955.

The beginning of 1954 did not look bright for the further development of the F-105. At one point, the Air Force suspended procurement of the aircraft because of excessive delays at Republic. However, in late February, the Air Force decided to procure 15 aircraft after all, to be powered by the interim Pratt & Whitney J57-P-25 with 16,000-pound thrust, as recommended by the Wright Air Development Center (WADC). In May, a provision was made to install the M-1 and MA-1 bomb computers in the event that the development of the long-range toss bomb computer and the MA-8 time-of-flight computer lagged.

Development of the F-105 was still shaky when, on 10 August 1954, the Air Force authorized the modification of four F-105s "as required to incorporate the YJ75-P-1 in lieu of the J57-P-25 engine." One month later the Air Force, because of further development slippages, decided to reduce the program to only three aircraft. But within a month, the F-105 program was revised yet another time to provide for six aircraft, two powered with the J57 and

the remaining four with the J75. In December, General Operational Requirement (GOR) 49, calling for in-flight refueling capability, a more complex fire-control system, and improved performance, was approved. Finally, the GOR dictated that the higher-thrust J75 engine be installed to qualify the fighter-bomber for first-line service from 1958 through the sixties. This did not halt further changes; GOR 49 was revised three more times between December 1954 and April 1955.

The F-105 design team headed by Alexander Kartveli, famous as the designer of the P-47 Thunderbolt, constantly proposed new design features. Among the most striking was the "coke bottle" shape of the fuselage, reflecting the "area rule" design principle.\* Other innovations included the swept-forward air-intake ducts, a ram-air intake, "clover leaf" speed brakes, and a one-piece, fully maneuverable flying tail. As construction of the first two F-105s was too far advanced to incorporate these innovations, it was obvious that the third F-105 featured substantial external modifications. Meanwhile, in February 1955, an amendment to the August 1954 contract again authorized the acquisition of fifteen test aircraft funded in February 1954 and changed the funded F-105 procurement to include two YF-105As (with J57 engines), ten F-105Bs, and three RF-105Bs. Seven months later, on 19 September, the parts of the first YF-105A were delivered from Republic's Farmingdale plant in Long Island, New York, to Edwards AFB, California. After assembly, the Air Force conducted a safety inspection on 13 and 14 October and two days later tested the engine. Finally, on 22 October, Republic's chief test pilot, Russell "Rusty" Roth took the YF-105A for a 45-minute flight, during which time he managed to exceed mach 1 despite the limited power of the J57 engine.

By mid-November, the prototype had accumulated 12 flights and adequately demonstrated airworthiness. On the last day of that month, the Air Force accepted the aircraft and turned around to bail it back to Republic for Phase I flight testing. Fifteen days later, however, after 22 hours of flight time and on its 29th flight, the YF-105A made a wheels-up landing on a dry lake bed at Edwards. It was

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\*The area rule, for which no theoretical explanation existed at the time, dictated that transonic speeds could not easily be exceeded unless an aircraft's total cross-sectional area changed smoothly from nose to tail. For the F-105, this meant that the fuselage had to be pinched in sharply at the wing roots to compensate for the large wing, then expanded behind the wings to smooth the transition.

immediately awarded "aircraft out of commission" status and returned to the factory.

On 28 January 1956, the second YF-105A, also powered by the J57, made its maiden flight and was accepted by the Air Force three days later. On 19 February, the production of the F-105 suffered another setback when machinists at Republic went on strike, staying out for nearly four months. As if to compensate for these frustrating delays, in early 1956, at Edwards AFB, the F-105 was named overall winner in a competitive flyoff against the North American XF-107, a J75-powered derivative of the F-100 Super Sabre.

Meanwhile, on 14 March, Republic received the first J75 engine on schedule, which together with



*Beginning in World War II, Republic Aviation built rugged planes suited for attack as well as air-to-air missions. The P-47 Thunderbolt (above) flew interdiction missions and escorted bombers over Germany and Japan. . . . In Korea, the F-84 Thunderjet (right) pounded railyards, bridges, and highways and then held its own in combat with MiG-15s. . . . Advanced Project-63 (below), begun by Republic in 1951 as a private venture, proposed a number of configurations before settling on what became the Thunderchief.*





*Although underpowered by its interim engine, the Pratt & Whitney J57, the YF-105 (above) broke the sound barrier on its first flight in October 1955. . . . The large pitot boom (right), absent on production models, was used to gather vital flight information during the test flights. . . . During the Vietnam War, the Air Force used the Thunderchief in many ways. The F-105F (below) is configured for Wild Weasel antisurface-to-air missile operation.*



the first Republic YF-105B was airlifted to Edwards AFB on 29 April. Also in March, the Air Force released \$10 million of FY57 funds for the acquisition of 65 F-105Bs and 17 RF-105Bs. The first flight of the YF-105B took place on 26 May. The flight ended in a wheels-up landing with only minor damage, caused by the inability to lower the nose gear. This resulted in a further delay of the test program. The first YF-105B was finally accepted by the Air Force on 31 August. By July, the Air Force had decided that it preferred the RF-101C Voodoo to the reconnaissance version of the F-105, and the three RF-105Bs already on the assembly line were canceled and were completed as JF-105Bs. The 17 RF-105s funded from FY57 funds were also canceled. (In June, five F-105Cs, a tandem seat version of the F-105B, had been added to the program, but these were canceled on 30 October 1957.) In August 1956, the F-105 was officially named the



Thunderchief. By 30 June 1957, Republic had completed only five aircraft, two YF-105As and three YF-105Bs.

On 8 July, Hq Air Materiel Command (AMC) announced plans to equip the F-105 with an AN/APN-105 Doppler navigation system, deleting the planned inertial navigation system. At about this time, all F-105 requirements were consolidated in a completely revised GOR 49, including as new requirements the Doppler system, a cockpit instrument display, a tow target subsystem, and a TX-43 nuclear delivery system.

*During Operation Rolling Thunder, in the effort to stem the flow of men and supplies moving from North Vietnam to the South, F-105s used a variety of armament. Here, rather early in the war, a Thud unleashes a salvo of 2.75-inch rockets inside North Vietnam.*

The first production model of the F-105 was accepted on 27 May 1958 and entered operational service with the 335th Tactical Fighter Squadron/4th Tactical Fighter Wing at Eglin AFB, Florida, in August, three years later than originally planned. By mid-1959, the Tactical Air Command possessed only one complete squadron of 18 F-105Bs. Because of difficulties enumerated, Category I, II, and III flight tests were either delayed or interrupted: Category II testing was extended beyond the 30 November 1959 deadline and officially ended on 30 March 1960. Category II operational testing was accomplished by an operational unit, the 335th TFS at Eglin, in order to speed transition of aircraft from test to squadron use. During Category II testing under Project Fast Wind, Brigadier General Joseph H. Moore, Commander of the 4th TFW, set a new world's speed record of 1216.48 mph at Edwards

*Continued on p. 54*





## REFLECTIONS OF A THUD DRIVER

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN F. PIOWATY,  
USAF (RET)

**I**N looking back on my experiences as an F-105 pilot in the midsixties, I realize that some of my strongest recollections involve the general frustration that we Thud drivers felt concerning the restrictions under which our war against the North was fought. Our rules of engagement (ROE) were defined with a rigid precision that made little sense to us at the time—and which make little more sense to me today.\* I particularly remember the cynical relief with which we learned we were to strike *one* railroad bridge at Lang Son in the fall of 1967.

This was our first strike inside the Chinese buffer zone, about ten miles from China. Here was a chance for us to hit one bridge and a

chance for their gunners to fire at twenty Thuds. The force commander wanted to give us a steep bomb run: he did—about 90 degrees! Each of us had a bridge under his pitot boom. Looking straight down, we lost our orientation with the river that snaked through town and the several railroad bridges that spanned the river. We hit all three plus a dike. The Wild Weasel pilot who hit the dike—attacks on dikes were forbidden by our ROE—was exonerated. A strike photo showed a 6x6 truck flying through the air off the road surface of the dike; it was deemed a legitimate target of opportunity—a “fleeting lucrative” as it was called—and thus open to attack. Otherwise . . . After we got shot at over Lang Son, our wing commander took flak from Washington because we struck more than the one bridge released to us.

The interdiction campaign was hampered by more than concern for collateral damage. It was hard to understand the mentality that sent us to Kep railroad yard again and again for interdiction. Freight continued to pass through large yards, for they had ties, track, ballast, machinery, and manpower for repairs and switching to shunt trains through on undamaged track. At the entrance to Hanoi, rail traffic was routed off the Doumer Bridge onto a completely separated span that lay on the river bank, then back up and onto the tracks into town.

A visiting general from Seventh Air Force asked a group of captains at Takhli, of which I was a member, what we thought of the interdiction campaign on the Northeast railroad. He got an earful. I told him I thought we were more interested in photography than interdiction and that if I were to go after the railroad I'd give each flight of four a ten-mile segment of single-line track as far from towns as possible. Each flight member would have his own section of rail to go after. The probability of achieving a cut—we used the technical acronym for probability of kill,  $P_k$ , pronounced “P sub k”—on any one segment might be reduced; but the overall  $P_k$  for at least one cut remained

\*See W. Hays Parks, “Rolling Thunder and the Law of War,” *Air University Review*, January-February 1982, pp. 2-23.

the same, and there would be an even better  $P_k$  for each individual bomber than when rolling in out of a 16 or 20 ship gaggle. We could even rocket and strafe rolling stock caught between cuts. (Remember how free-ranging P-47s did more to stop rail traffic in France than did all the bombing of marshaling yards.) Seventh Air Force approved the plan and authorized a strike for multiple cuts. The day came, the weather was bad, the day passed, and to my knowledge such a strike was never made.

In spite of Harrison Salisbury's beliefs, we caused very little collateral damage. There were plenty of anti-aircraft artillery batteries in villages, but many of them came alive only after we passed overhead. I would imagine that at least as many tons of Russian shrapnel fell on North Vietnam as did American bombs. The North Vietnamese learned very quickly to put guns where we bombed—the Mo Trang two-track siding became a hot spot after we hit it a

couple of times—and to put supplies where we didn't. I remember a protected building in Route Pack 1, a church we were told. My wingman, one day, bragged that he got a large warehouse.

"Not a big white building with a pitched roof?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"That was a church. We weren't supposed to hit it."

"Well, whatever it was, I got a helluva secondary (explosion) out of it!"

No matter what basis one uses to argue against the White House's hand in the war, waste, inefficiency, and lack of effectiveness stand out. By the time President Nixon got serious and won in two weeks, as we could have done in *any* two weeks for nearly a decade, it was too late to hold the victory. We marched home as victors and let the losers spoil South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

*Alamogordo, New Mexico*

#### EDITORIAL NOTE

The history of any fighting aircraft is ultimately a human story, the saga of those who took it into battle; the F-105 is no exception. Committed to the test of battle against the most extensive, intense, and sophisticated defenses in the history of air warfare up to that time—and perhaps ever—the Thud made its mark as a tough and capable combat aircraft, fighting in an environment far different from that for which it was built. The F-105 was designed in the early '50s under the assumption that it would have to face anti-aircraft defenses consisting mostly of large, sophisticated surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). Since a hit by a large missile warhead was presumed to mean an automatic kill, the F-105 was built with little emphasis on system redundancy and resistance to battle damage. It was called on to face SAMs, to be sure. But above and beyond Soviet SA-2 missiles, it also had to penetrate a storm of fire from anti-aircraft artillery (AAA), heavy automatic weapons, and massed small arms.

Designed to carry a nuclear weapon in an internal bomb bay, the F-105 was intended for delivery tactics that emphasized minimizing exposure to defenses and a speedy getaway, not precision. Instead, it was expected to deliver conventional munitions with pinpoint accuracy on the most difficult of targets—bridges, road cuts, camouflaged storage areas—under the worst of conditions.

The image of the F-105 as a fighting aircraft is inseparably wedded to the hazards and pressures of the longest and most frustrating war in Air Force history. It is, thus, appropriate that we accompany this technical essay with an impressionistic, retrospective look at the human side of the F-105's war as seen through the eyes of a "Thud driver."

The Editor

AFB for a 100 kilometer closed circuit without payload run. On 1 June, Category III test program for the F-105B started at Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina, and ended on 16 August. However, despite the success of the modifications accomplished during the tests, the poor reliability of the MA-8 fire control system raised serious doubts as to the system's overall capabilities. By 31 March 1960, TAC possessed 56 F-105Bs, none of which were operational.<sup>1</sup>

During 1960 and 1961, the aircraft in-commission rates remained low. F-105s were frequently grounded for want of spare parts and shortage of maintenance skills needed for attending to the increased complexity of the weapon system. It took about 150 maintenance hours to get the F-105 airborne for one hour.

Meanwhile, Republic was studying a new version of the Thunderchief, designated F-105D. It featured a higher-thrust J75-P-19W engine with water injection, bad-weather navigation system (ANP-131 Doppler), a Bendix toss-bomb computer, and integrated instruments (including the ASG-19 Thunderstick fire control system with the North American Search and Ranging Radar/NASARR R-14A all-purpose monopulse radar). Altogether these devices formed the most sophisticated automatic navigation and aiming system then in existence.

Troubles plagued the F-105 program throughout 1961. In December, certain F-105B/Ds were grounded for inspection after routine laboratory fatigue tests at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, resulted in a failure of the aircraft's main fuselage. Yet successive tests revealed that the frame retained considerable strength after cracking, and Republic moved quickly to correct the defects. The program, however, was still in trouble, and on 23 June 1962, Hq USAF grounded all F-105s after two were lost within eight days in major accidents at Nellis AFB, Nevada. The Air Force rescinded all flight restrictions on 12 October 1962 except those on the automatic instrument landing system.

Again, corrective actions had to be taken to save the F-105 program. Project "Look-Alike" was origi-

nally developed by the F-105 System Program Director (SPD) in January 1962, with the objective of standardizing all F-105Ds to a single configuration. The major work was originally planned over one or more years during normal maintenance cycles. The project was divided into two phases. In phase I flight safety modifications were made. In phase II the fleet was modernized and its combat capability enhanced. In May 1963, the Air Force ordered the most extensive and subsequently the most significant modification, installation of the dual in-flight refueling capability. This major structural modification to the nose of the aircraft took about 2000 hours per aircraft. The decision to incorporate this modification into the program extended the completion until May 1964.

In March 1959 the production program was changed once more. The Air Force canceled the high cost two-seat F-105E (the F-105E was a Republic Aviation Corporation proposal to the Air Force featuring a one-piece canopy over the tandem seats: the E models already on the line were converted to straight D models) in favor of a speed-up production of the F-105D. Altogether, 18 F-105Es would be affected in FY58, 1959, and 1960. On 9 June 1959, the F-105D made its debut flight at Farmingdale, and six months later the first F-105D arrived at Eglin AFB, Florida, for the second phase of testing.

After having entered service with TAC, USAFE's 22d TFS/36th TFW at Bitburg AB, Germany, became the first unit outside CONUS to receive the F-105D, when on 12 May 1961 two F-105Ds landed there on the first high-flight mission. On 10 January 1964, the final F-105D delivery, the 610th, was delivered to McConnell AFB, Kansas, for service with the 23rd TFW.

Republic kept pushing the two-seat version of the F-105. In May 1962, Hq USAF decided to go ahead with the design of a two-seat Thunderchief to be designated F-105F and authorized the purchase of 36 F-105F aircraft with FY62 money and 107 additional F aircraft with FY63 money. However, the 36 F series airplanes, to be bought with FY62 funds,

#### F-105 Major Accidents in the First Eight Years in Service

year	rate	number	hours	year	rate	number	hours
1958	331.1	1	300	1962	41.7	22	52,800
1959	0	0	2900	1963	14.5	17	117,500
1960	63.8	6	9400	1964	27.4	38	138,600
1961	36.5	12	32,900	1965	18.0	31	172,100

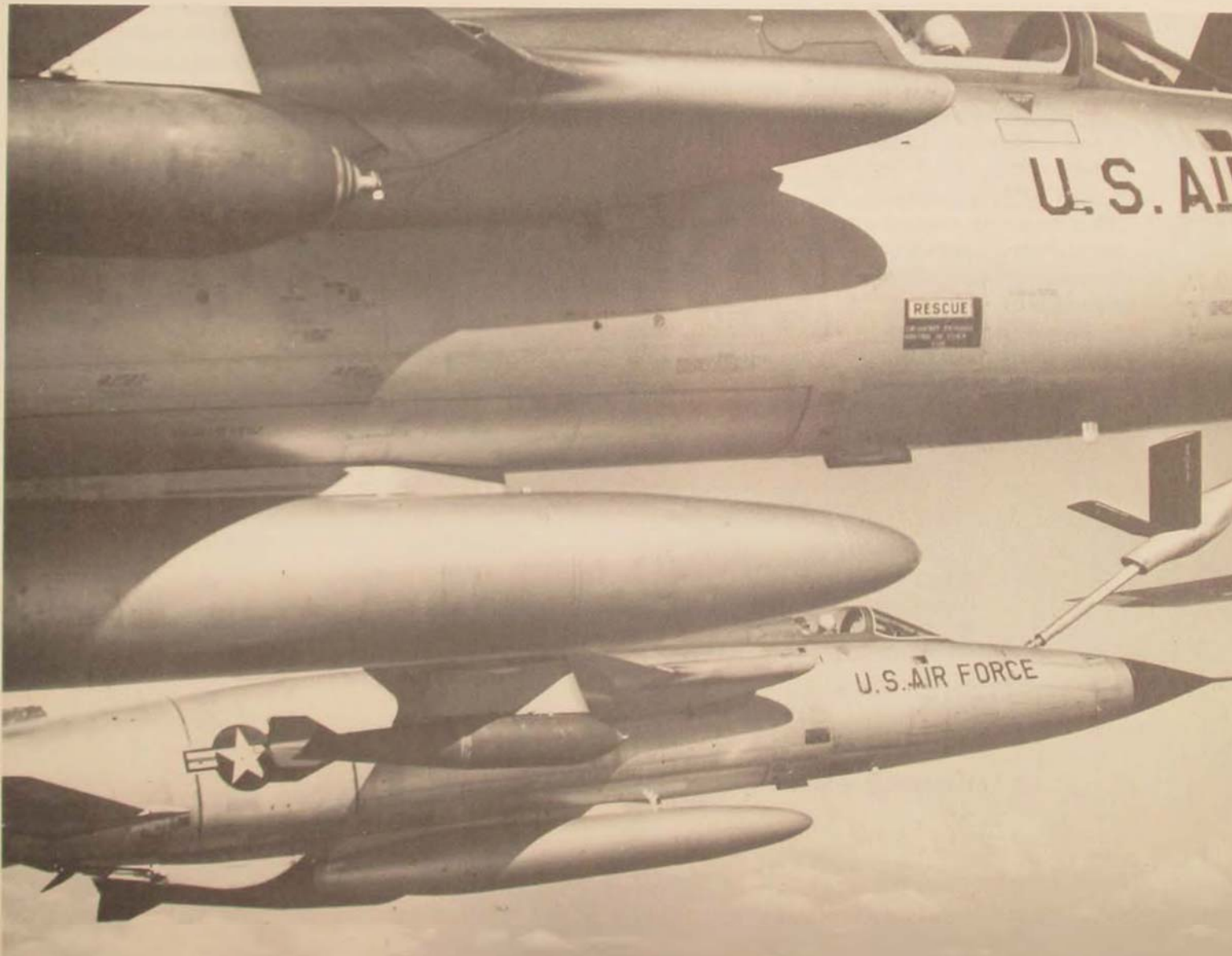


would replace a like number of F-105D aircraft. The F-105F featured a 31-inch longer fuselage to accommodate the second cockpit and a higher tail fin. Its first flight was made on 11 June 1963, forty days ahead of schedule. On 7 December 1963, the 4520th Combat Crew Training Wing at Nellis AFB received its first F-105F while the acquisition by the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing at Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina, on 26 December signaled the start of operational service for the F-105F.

The F-105F, developed from the D model, did not require extensive testing. Category I and II testing took 15 months, from June 1963 to August 1964. The two-seater went through a series of tests to determine if the addition of a rear cockpit, radar, and other equipment had any adverse effect on the front-seat equipment and to see how closely the radar presentation in the rear seat duplicated that in the front. On the other hand, the F-105F retained the shortcomings of the F-105B/D and had to receive substantial safety modifications and improvements as well. The final F-105, an F-105F, was delivered to Brookley AFB, Alabama, on 9 January 1965.



*Early in 1966, the Thunderbirds replaced their North American F-100 Super Sabres with F-105s. Following a series of accidents, they returned to the more nimble F-100s. . . . Thunderchiefs (below) refuel en route to North Vietnam during Rolling Thunder mission.*



**A**NOTHER version of the F-105D was considered, although only on paper. That would have been the RF-105D. It would have been equipped with a variety of cameras and a pod containing side-looking radar and infrared sensors. Additionally, the RF-105D would have retained its strike capabilities. When the Air Force opted for the McDonnell RF-4C, the reconnaissance version of the Thunderchief was dropped (December 1961).

Unfortunately, despite the successful completion of the "Look-Alike" program, the F-105 was not as safe as the Air Force wanted it to be. During the first four months of 1964, twelve F-105s were lost in major accidents due to engine failures, fuel leaks, and malfunctions in the fuel venting systems. At the time, these causes were not readily apparent. Therefore, Tactical Air Command requested a program dubbed "Category X Test" to seek out the problems. Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis E. LeMay gave the tests top priority. Accordingly, the Category X people went over five F-105Ds in minute detail. Once the installation of simple but sensitive test instruments had been completed, each plane was taken out for a taxi test. When the results of those tests were known, test pilots put the aircraft through a series of increasingly difficult flights. The testers had 90 days to complete the program, but it took only sixty; thus, 500 flying hours were accumulated.

Accordingly, a major Class IV modification program, nicknamed "Safety Pack I and II," was accomplished on the F-105 fleet on 30 June 1965 and in May 1966, respectively. The modification provided major improvements in the basic fuel system, the plumbing, and incorporated provisions for increased ventilation and cooling in the engine shroud area.

More modifications and reconfigurations were to come for the Thunderchief. In the midsixties, the

war in Southeast Asia prompted an entirely different mission for the F-105: low-level penetration to attack with conventional weapons. To accomplish this mission, a score of major modifications were needed. A few were to improve mission reliability, but the majority were to change or enhance mission capability. Modifications included installation of AGM-12C/E Bullpup and AGM-45A Shrike capabilities, installation of QRC-160 electronic countermeasures pods under the wing, and provision for an X-band radar. Further modifications included installation of multiple ejector racks under the wings and fuselage so that the F-105 could carry a larger and more varied assortment of ordnance.

By late 1965, North Vietnamese surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) had become a serious threat, requiring the development of an electronic device to warn of Fansong (SA-2 associated radar) tracking, lock-on, and missile launch. Taking the equation a step further, the ability to locate and attack SAM sites was needed. Altogether there were twelve electronic countermeasures/quick reaction capability modifications. Among the most significant were the installation of radar homing and warning (RHAW) gear and the development of the Wild Weasel two-seat F-105F SAM hunter-killers. In January 1966, further modifications to the F-105F gave these Wild Weasels the ability to use AGM-78A and AGM-78B, Standard antiradiation missiles (Standard Arm). Numerous other modifications resulted in a varied number of aircraft with peculiar configurations tailored for specific types of SEA missions, such as the specially modified F-105F Commando Nail all-weather attack planes featuring a modified radar and rearranged weapon release switch which enabled the back seater to control bomb release, and the F-105F Combat Martin communication jammer planes, featuring installation in the back seat of the QRC-128 VHF jammers to

#### Major Accidents of Supersonic Military Planes at

	10,000 hours	20,000 hours	52,300 hours
F-100	11	26	54
F-101	10	12	29
F-102	10	20	38
F-104	15	24	48
F-105	6	8	28
F-106	4	6	18
F-111	6	8	16
F-4*	0	1	2

\* USAF F-4s only

block communications between MiGs and their ground-control intercept centers. In fact, these QRC-128-equipped F-105Fs became one-seaters.

Combat experience gained in Southeast Asia resulted in the introduction of new modifications so that by 1 April 1968, the F-105 system manager was working 34 different modification programs involving approximately 639,000 manhours. For example, on 31 March 1968, the Air Force approved modification of 65 F-105Ds to receive an improved visual bombing capability, a more precise navigation system, and a better blind bombing capability (Loran D). This modification was dubbed Thunderstick II, and it included the reinforcement of fuselage stations and the installation of a saddleback to house the avionics equipment.

Testing was, however, hindered by numerous problems. The AN/ARN-85 Loran system proved difficult, as well as expensive, to maintain. These problems lasted until September 1969, when the prototype Thunderstick II aircraft was successfully flight tested with the AN/ARN-92. The result was that after all only 30 F-105Ds were converted to Thunderstick II aircraft. The final F-105 selected for "T-stick II" modifications was completed in July 1971 and reached McConnell AFB on 4 August for service with the 563rd Tactical Fighter Squadron. However, not a single T-stick Thud ever saw combat action.

Meanwhile, as the war in Southeast Asia ground along, the danger from improved SA-2s increased as the enemy received newer and more sophisticated systems from their Soviet and Chinese suppliers. Accordingly, the Air Force worked to improve its anti-SAM capabilities, resulting in yet another Thunderchief model: the F-105G. This version fea-

tured improved Fansong signal detection capability and a better weapons delivery system, the inclusion of the ALQ-105 in two blisters alongside the fuselage, and a dual AGM-45 Shrike capability. Originally, 51 Thuds were modified, but at a later date twelve more F-105Fs were upgraded as well. The F-105Gs saw action in Southeast Asia from 1970 through the end of the conflict.

THE F-105s (more than 800 were eventually produced) fill a proud page in the history of Air Force operations. Thuds and Thud drivers carried the brunt of the war during Operation Rolling Thunder. General William W. Momyer's tribute was, like the aircraft, blunt and to the point: "The F-105 Thunderchief with its outstanding speed and ruggedness permitted us to carry the war to the heart of the enemy. Its speed at low altitudes made it the finest aircraft in the war."

*Utrecht, Netherlands*  
and  
*Sumter, South Carolina*

#### Note

1. Marcelle Size Knaack, *Encyclopedia of US Air Force Aircraft and Missile Systems: Volume I, Post-World War II Fighters* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1978).

**Editor's note:** Some of the photographs used in this article were provided by the International Agency for Aviation Photographs.

The authors are working on a book about the F-105 in Southeast Asia. They would appreciate stories, anecdotes, and photographs from air and ground crews that served with Thunderchief units there. The addresses are:

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# DEMOCRACY AND PROTRACTED WAR: THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GERALD S. VENANZI

*"... none of the networks made any effort to train their people to comprehend military matters."*

**T**HROUGHOUT history, relatively small nations or revolutionary groups have been able to defeat major democratic powers whose military and economic strength tower over that of the victor. Good generalship, strategy, and tactics may account for victory in specific battles and even decide the outcome of wars between nations of equal strength and size. They do not, however, supply the total answer for the victory of a small force at war with a world power. To find the answer, we must look at national will and how it can be influenced.

The role of a nation's news media during

wartime is critical. The media are a population's source of news about world events. In war the media are like a weather vane, telling the people how things are progressing. If the media lead people to believe that their national interests are not at stake, the war is not going well, or their involvement is under less than honorable conditions, the people may force the government to end the war, even if it means the nation's defeat.

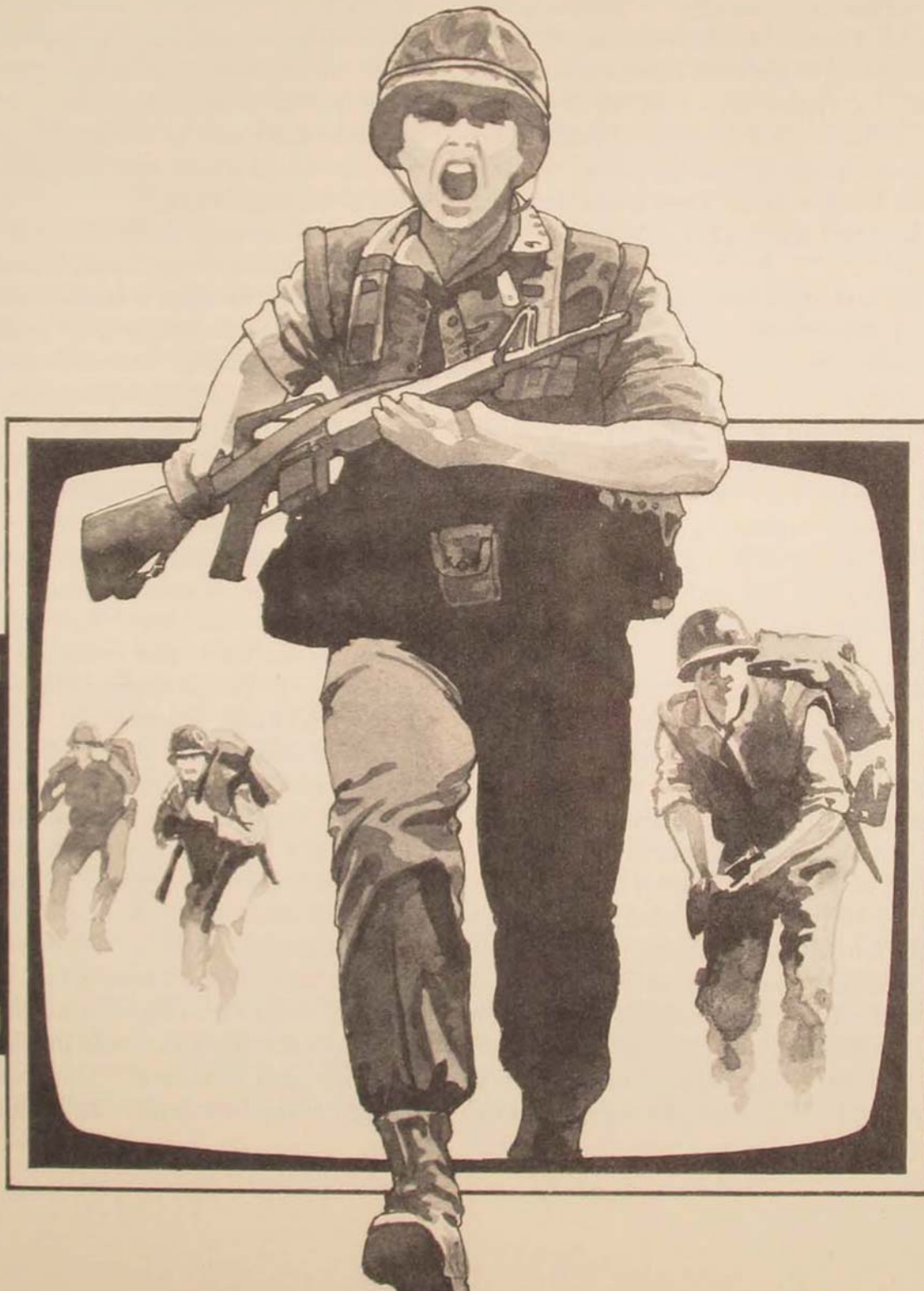
**H**OW did the Vietnamese Communists defeat the French policy in Indochina? In 1947, a powerful member of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Truong Chinh, wrote a book entitled *The Resistance Will Win*. This book, written for the Viet Minh, outlined their



strategy for protracted warfare against the French. Although touting the three classical stages of revolutionary warfare that would ultimately lead to France's military defeat, Truong Chinh gave us an insight into the Communists' real goals. He stated that the Vietnamese must prolong the war in order to discourage the enemy. "The more the enemy fights, the more critical his financial and economic situa-

tion."<sup>1</sup> He told the Vietnamese to act in such a way that the French people would actively support the Communist cause and believed that the key to victory for the Viet Minh lay with the French people:

The French people will more strongly oppose the war day after day and will rise up to overthrow the reactionaries. . . . Their struggle will combine with that of the Vietnamese resistance war.<sup>2</sup>



While some scholars may believe that Truong Chinh's statements were meant only for internal consumption, internationally the Viet Minh acted in accordance with these preceding statements. They emphasized international communist support and the mobilization of external sympathy for their cause.<sup>3</sup>

The Viet Minh used their armed forces more for their political shock effect than for the military damage inflicted on the French. For example, Dien Bien Phu was militarily insignificant in terms of its strategic location or the number of French soldiers stationed there, when compared to the total French contingent in Indochina. However, a Viet Minh victory, timed to influence the opening of peace negotiations, was meant to hurt the enemy so badly in a single battle that the French lost their will to continue the war.<sup>4</sup> This is precisely what happened.

America suffered a similar fate in Vietnam. With the United States in the war, North Vietnamese leaders must have realized that for them military victory was impossible. They understood the economic and military power of the United States. In a war of attrition, the Communists were bound to lose. North Vietnam's military losses compared to those of the United States were on the order of 10 to 1. Even Vo Nguyen Giap has admitted to losing 600,000 men in the fighting between 1965 and 1968.<sup>5</sup> They obviously thought they could win the war by other than military means. One clue to their intentions was stated early in the conflict by North Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, when he explained their strategy of protracted war to an American journalist: "Americans do not like long, inconclusive wars . . . thus we are sure to win in the end."<sup>6</sup> He admitted that the only way they could win was to outlast the United States. Again, they could not outlast America militarily or economically. They could outlast the United States only in terms of the political will needed to prosecute the war. For the North Vietnamese, American opposition to the war would be the stress point

on which they would concentrate.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the United States found itself in a political battle to control the sentiments of its own citizens.

**F**EW inventions have done more to transform American society than television. By the mid-1970s, 97 percent of all American homes had at least one television set, and one in three had two or more sets. These sets were on an average of six hours a day and were usually turned to one of the big three: ABC, CBS, or NBC.<sup>8</sup> These corporations compete with each other for audiences, advertising dollars, and prestige. For a network, prestige comes with being number one in terms of audience and revenue, which executives feel requires a first-class news department.

Polls reveal that since 1961 television has been the most believed news medium in the United States. In 1968 it reached a two to one advantage over newspapers for reliability and fairness in reporting.<sup>9</sup> Research also indicates that the vast majority of Americans watch TV network news. In 1978, 67 percent of all Americans regarded television as the source of most of their news. By June 1980, polls showed that 65 percent of the American public received 100 percent of its national and international news from the three networks' news programs.<sup>10</sup> Who watches TV news? Early studies conducted in the 1950s and 1960s concluded that well-educated and professional people did not watch television. However, recent data have indicated there is no difference between the hours spent watching television by the college educated, professors, or journalists and the public as a whole.<sup>11</sup> Although cable systems have increased the potential for local stations and specialized news channels to reach millions of people, national TV news is still the dominion of the three networks.

Much has been written about the term *mass media*, which refers to media that are national in scope and circulation (or audience). Although many newspapers and magazines can

claim to be national in their coverage, few have national audiences and none with the audience of each of the major TV networks. Consequently, the term *mass media* properly refers to these three corporations. Together they have the ability to reach millions of Americans simultaneously and constitute a much more powerful force than newspapers and magazines combined.

What Americans watch on the network news shows is created through a process of selection having two dominant characteristics. The first of these is the profit motive. For all of television, the commercial message is of primary importance. Viewers are counted and evaluated in terms of income level, age, and sex and then sold to advertisers.<sup>12</sup> Although Edwin Diamond thinks the most profit-minded network executive is not a pure economic being, he believes that in a business like broadcasting, the importance of the profit motive cannot be overstated.<sup>13</sup> Max Kampelman, a critic of the mass media, notes that as television has grown more powerful it has also become more profit oriented.<sup>14</sup> The three networks are in competition with one another for audience share which equates to advertising dollars. Therefore, as Professor Doris Graber observes: "News is geared to attract and entertain rather than educate."<sup>15</sup>

The second dominant characteristic of news selection is in part related to the profit motive. This characteristic is the selection of the relatively few items to be shown nightly, out of hundreds of potential stories. While some television executives think that the TV news mirrors reality, Edward Jay Epstein, a well-known TV critic, believes otherwise. He states: "What is reflected on TV as national news depends, unlike a mirror, on certain predecisions about where camera crews will be assigned."<sup>16</sup> In a 1950 study, David Manning White called this process of news selection "gatekeeping."<sup>17</sup> The gatekeeping system is required because of the scope and cost of television news, which results in an "immense weight of administrative man-

agement from above."<sup>18</sup> This "micromanagement" reaches all levels of the organization, including who will be assigned to cover a story and how it will be reported. *Time* magazine has identified twelve announcers, commentators, editors, and producers who control TV news.<sup>19</sup> These people are, in effect, the gatekeepers. Epstein notes that the network news is centrally assigned by editors in New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles.<sup>20</sup> Although the assignment editor is a powerful figure, Lester Bernstein, a managing editor for *Newsweek*, suggests that the "most influential single editor in network news is the producer of the evening news show."<sup>21</sup> The producer determines the story, format, the order of items, and the time given to each story.<sup>22</sup> Thus it is this small group of editors and producers who determine and limit what 65 percent of all Americans understand as the news of the day.

Television news is limited not only by the gatekeeper system but also because of technical constraints as well as the nature of TV drama. The very size of the TV camera and its field of view cause problems. Navy Lieutenant Commander K. C. Jacobsen likened this to looking through a pair of binoculars:

The things that you see are magnified and in sharp focus but everything outside the field of view is hidden. In the most literal sense, it is often impossible to see the forest for the trees. The television screen makes this illusion even more powerful. The viewer cannot take the binoculars from his eyes and observe the whole horizon. He sees only what is on the screen. He can do nothing that the cameraman does not do.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of this limitation, Jacobsen feels that TV alters both the dimension and the form of the event, causing the appearance of something which is not true. In addition to technical limitations, the very presence of the TV camera often distorts a story. Demonstrators have been known to start an event only when the camera crews were on the scene, and some events have even been restaged because the cameras were not initially available.<sup>24</sup> Since nearly everyone is a ham at heart, this urge often

causes human actions to occur in front of a TV camera that are not normally part of a person's outward personality. One example is the way striking air traffic controllers cheered into the camera when President Reagan's 48-hour return to work deadline had expired. This dramatic gesture no doubt resulted from the presence of a TV camera. As Bernstein points out: "There is a premium of show business value—on drama and good looks—and a plethora of ego."<sup>25</sup>

ACCORDING to Edward Jay Epstein, the networks' news departments select not only which events will be portrayed as news but also which parts of the filmed portions of the event, when combined with editing, will stand for "the whole mosaic." Epstein believes this requires choosing symbols that have a more general meaning to a national audience. The picture is no longer a fact unto itself but becomes a symbol. One child crying on TV becomes the symbol of all children. Epstein refers to what Walter Lippmann called a "repertory of stereotypes." This repertory is the result of the same images or symbols being used consistently to depict the behavior of groups or individuals. They result in stable images or the groups or issues as seen in the eyes of the viewers, who usually watch the same network news show, night after night.<sup>26</sup> In this way, what Americans know about various groups or issues is controlled by the media. Professor Graber points out: "Much of what the average person learns about political norms, rules and values, about events in the political universe and about the way people cope with these happenings, comes, of necessity, from the mass media."<sup>27</sup> Reuven Frank, former executive producer of the NBC Evening News, has claimed "there are events which exist in the American mind and recollection primarily because they were reported on regular television news programs."<sup>28</sup> It naturally follows that if television's coverage of an issue were slanted or biased in the same

way night after night, the public perception of that issue would be skewed accordingly.

Although objective reporting was an industry standard throughout the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries, in the late 1960s, a new form of journalism began to gain in strength. It has been called by different names: "investigative reporting," "adversary," or "partisan journalism." In essence, this form advocates a point of view on an issue and often creates issues. It "begins with an explicitly political point of view" and stems from the theory that the media are responsible to discover and report the truth, not merely state the facts.<sup>29</sup> Speaking of the new journalism, Michael Novak writes: "Good and evil are rather clearly placed in conflict. 'Hard hitting' investigative reporting is mythically linked to classic American forms of moral heroism; the crimebuster, the incorruptible sheriff."<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, today most journalism awards are given to the investigative reporter, the discoverer of the truth.<sup>31</sup> Senator Daniel P. Moynihan sees this adversary journalism well established in the media and growing as the new, college-educated reporters reach management positions.<sup>32</sup>

Adversary or partisan journalism has affected the relationship between the government and the media. The new journalism implies a distrust of government. Walter Cronkite believes newsmen "have come to feel very little allegiance to the established order. I think they are inclined to side with humanity rather than with authority and institutions."<sup>33</sup> Newspeople now see themselves with a special mission to be the watchdogs and guardians of democracy.

While Mr. Cronkite believes that a good reporter leaves his personal views at home, others feel today's TV reporters are "impatient with the standards of objectivity or with any standard that would prevent them from placing their own views before the public."<sup>34</sup> Even when attempting to hide their personal views, human nature prevents newscasters from being completely objective. ABC's Frank Reynolds is



quoted as saying: "You can't expunge all your private convictions."<sup>35</sup> The expression of opinion crops up in TV news reporting, "often inadvertently but sometimes deliberately."<sup>36</sup>

Bias reporting is also present because of what newscasters call "herd instinct." TV news works on this principle. NBC reporter Mike Gavin has noted there is pressure to ensure that his network covers what the competition is covering. "If they've got it, we've got to get it, too."<sup>37</sup> Ted Koppel of ABC also explains the herd instinct: "Someone seems to set the tone. There are opinion leaders both in network television and newspapers . . . magazines. We have a tendency to go along, traveling that same carefully carved channel."<sup>38</sup> No network news organization wants to be left behind during a fast-breaking news story.

Television news works on the same show business principles as any other form of entertainment. As a result, the salaries of TV personalities, including network newscasters, have risen dramatically and now easily exceed those of government cabinet officers. Their large salaries, visibility, and public respect have made them a part of society's elite, ranking them with college professors and doctors. Senator Moynihan feels that news personalities now constitute one of the most important social elites in Washington, D.C., "with all the accoutrements one associates with a leisured class."<sup>39</sup>

Newscasters are able to exert considerable influence over their viewers. One reason for this influence is the development of a parasocial relationship between the viewer and the news personality. Studies have found the viewer thinks of his newscaster as a friend or close acquaintance.<sup>40</sup> For example, Walter Cronkite has been cited by scholars as a father figure to many Americans. One network executive said Cronkite almost represents, "God, mother, the American Flag, the four minute mile and Mount Everest."<sup>41</sup>

In addition, research indicates when a newscaster shakes his head, raises an eyebrow, or

changes voice inflection, 31 percent of the viewers respond with a similar gesture, corresponding outrage or amusement.<sup>42</sup>

Can TV change the opinion of the public on a variety of complex issues? The answer is yes. This change of attitude is not based on a single broadcast, but the result of a constant stream of images and symbols projected on the same issue. Michael Novak believes that television molds the soul's geography incrementally, in much the same way as school lessons—"slowly, over the years, tutor the unformed mind and teach it 'how to think.'"<sup>43</sup> Dr. Mark R. Levy of Albany's State University of New York has completed research on how TV affects public sentiment. His results show that more than 80 percent of the people surveyed compared their own ideas to those expressed by their favorite newscaster. Levy's study proves that TV directly affects people and can be a powerful influence on viewer opinion, attitudes, and behavior.<sup>44</sup>

TELEVISION correspondents and network executives were initially in favor of United States participation in the war. The media felt that American policy in Vietnam could work, and they generally supported the South Vietnamese government. However, support for the war by either the media or the people was not to last. Professor Peter Burger of Boston University was a member of Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam. He thinks the news media, including television, started being biased against the war in 1967.<sup>45</sup>

Like the United States military, TV reporters were sent to Vietnam on a rotating basis. On the average, correspondents spent six months to a year in South Vietnam.<sup>46</sup> Most reporters felt that a tour in Vietnam was essential for proper career progression. Robert Elegant, a British reporter, has noted: "Fame or at least notoriety rewarded the correspondent who became part of the action. . . . Quick careers were made by spectacular reporting of the obvious

fact that men, women and children were being killed."<sup>47</sup> This "short tour" of newscpeople in Vietnam created some problems for them. For example, none of the networks made any effort to train their people to comprehend military matters. Also, because of the short time spent in South Vietnam, there was little incentive for reporters to learn Vietnamese. As late as 1968, not one American reporter in Vietnam could speak the language. Consequently, most correspondents were isolated from the Vietnamese, their culture, and their problems.<sup>48</sup> Such circumstances can hardly lead to a satisfactory understanding of such a complex military and political situation as the Vietnam War.

Television reporters did understand their own private attitudes about the war. Epstein interviewed correspondents in 1968 and 1969 and found that most of those interviewed were against the war, against President Nixon, and for the black power movement. Most of the reporters felt the United States should get out of Vietnam and classified themselves as doves.<sup>49</sup> John Roche, former foreign policy advisor to President Johnson, cites an example of the media's feelings about the war:

Just before going on the air, [news] staffers would ask me how anyone can support an immoral war. On one news program I felt like a nun in a whorehouse. The producer was using a picture of Johnson for a dartboard. The whole atmosphere was of contempt for me and the views I accept.<sup>50</sup>

As we have observed, newscpeople do let their personal views influence their reporting, no matter how hard they try to avoid it.

According to Elegant, during most of the Vietnam War, the media felt obligated to be more partisan than objective.<sup>51</sup> This partisan journalism, coupled with the reporters' personal feelings, gave the American people a biased picture of the war on a nightly basis. One example illustrates the general nature of this biased point of view. Epstein speaks of an NBC news story in which David Brinkley played the song "Ruby Don't Take Your Love to Town" accompanied by a three-minute film clip show-

ing what was said to be the room of a crippled Vietnam veteran. The room was complete with mementos, trophies, and photographs, including a picture of Ruby, the veteran's wife. Ruby could be heard leaving, the door slammed shut, and a funeral ended the film clip. Brinkley told his viewers the song was written for Vietnam and was a social documentary commenting on "our times" and the war. Epstein reported that the song was originally written in 1942 and the veteran's room shown in the film clip was a rented set in Los Angeles. The producer of the show told Epstein the props were carefully selected "to create an atmosphere of futility and absurdity." The film and song were featured on the same evening Mr. Brinkley told his audience that the news was neither "produced nor created."<sup>52</sup>

Another way broadcasters slanted their coverage of Vietnam was by exaggeration of atrocities committed by the Americans and South Vietnamese. Cameramen in Vietnam were ordered to "shoot bloody."<sup>53</sup> Robert Elegant points out that "the competition for beastliness among the networks was even more intensive than the similar competition among the representatives of the print media."<sup>54</sup> This competition was so widespread that Guenter Lewy, author of *America in Vietnam*, reported: ". . . the tendency on the part of all too many newspaper and television reporters and editors was to see the war in Vietnam as an atrocity writ large, . . . Some allegations were repeated so many times that they seemed to supply their own confirmation."<sup>55</sup> The burning of a Vietnamese village by American Marines was shown on television. According to Murray Fromson, former correspondent for CBS: "In an era of symbolism, that incident was not just a case of one village being burned."<sup>56</sup> Correspondents did not satisfy themselves with just reporting alleged atrocities. There are several documented instances where newscpeople actually tried to coerce American soldiers into committing illegal and immoral acts. A reporter is said to have given his Zippo lighter to a soldier with the

suggestion he use it to set fire to a house. Another example involved a cameraman who offered a soldier a knife and dared him to cut the ear off a Vietcong corpse.<sup>57</sup> After all, such atrocities were news and widely accepted as standard practice. As previously indicated, single isolated incidents of misconduct became symbols of America's involvement in Vietnam. Fully as important as what correspondents reported about American atrocities is what they did not report about the other side. For example, during the 1968 Tet offensive, the North Vietnamese massacred 3000 Vietnamese at Hue, yet the media scarcely reported the fact.<sup>58</sup> Every American knows about My Lai, but few know about Dak Song, where 250 Montagnards were killed with flame throwers by the Communists.<sup>59</sup> Such one-sided coverage reinforced the idea that the United States was involved in an unjust and immoral war that could not be won.

Further evidence of partisan journalism can be found in the treatment reporters gave to the 1968 Tet offensive and the battle at Khe Sanh. The Tet offensive was seen by the press as a Communist victory even though the Vietcong were so badly beaten that for the remainder of the war they would comprise only a small percentage of the Communist force. Peter Braestrup, in his excellent examination of the media's coverage of Tet, has stated: "TV coverage of the Tet Offensive veered widely from reality."<sup>60</sup> His detailed documentation of this event leaves no doubt that television saw Tet as a Communist victory and reported it as such, regardless of the military facts. Network coverage of the offensive indicated that the U.S. and South Vietnamese were badly defeated. After the battle, NBC thought about filming a retrospective program to show Tet had been misrepresented and was really a decisive American victory. In the end, the network rejected the idea because Tet was already "established in the public's mind as a defeat and therefore it was an American defeat."<sup>61</sup> The reporting of events at Khe Sanh was equally misleading. Howard K. Smith is quoted as saying: "That

terrible seige of Khe Sanh went on for five weeks before newsmen revealed that the South Vietnamese were fighting at our sides and that they had higher casualties. . . . We just showed pictures day after day of Americans getting the hell kicked out of them."<sup>62</sup> The few wrecked American planes were frequently shown to television viewers as symbols of Khe Sanh's imminent defeat. In an attempt to draw parallels between American and French involvement in Vietnam, the media consistently compared Khe Sanh to Dien Bien Phu.<sup>63</sup> Again, rather than a defeat, Khe Sanh was an American victory with Communist losses many times those of the United States and South Vietnam.

THE reporting of Khe Sanh and Tet had profound impact on network coverage of the Vietnam War. Although previous coverage of the war was somewhat biased, the Tet offensive rapidly accelerated the network's shift to an antiwar position.

Walter Cronkite, anchorman and managing editor of the CBS Evening News, was initially in favor of the war. When the first reports of Tet reached Cronkite, they began to disturb him. He decided to take a fact-finding trip to Vietnam in order to get a firsthand view. The following account of his trip and subsequent events were taken from *Air Time—The Inside Story of CBS News* by Gary P. Gates.

Walter Cronkite met with General William Westmoreland, who told Cronkite that Tet was a dramatic American victory. Cronkite and his entourage were flown to Hue. There, Westmoreland had assured him, the situation was under control. At Hue, Cronkite saw the war in miniature. According to Gates, it was a moving experience for the anchorman and one which would change his views concerning the conflict. Throughout the rest of the trip he would wonder how such a thing as Tet could happen if the United States were winning the war as the government had stated on numerous occasions. After returning home, Cronkite used his power as an-

chorman and editor to expound his personal views and thus phased into the world of partisan journalism. He used the "CBS Evening News" as a forum for his personal, critical remarks about the war. Throughout February and March of 1968, he criticized every aspect of the war, from the pacification program to the overall military strategy. He "did not align himself with the militant antiwar groups, the raucous protestors. Instead, he reached out to his natural constituency. . . ."64

The number one network news show during the late 1960s and early 1970s was the "CBS Evening News," edited and anchored by Walter Cronkite. The CBS Network has since come under considerable criticism because of reported bias in its presentation of the news.

In his book, *TV and National Defense*, Dr. Ernest Lefever demonstrated how CBS slanted its coverage of the Vietnam War in 1972. His analysis covered the "CBS Evening News," "60 Minutes," and the various news specials on Vietnam throughout the year. For the "CBS Evening News," Lefever classified comments and stories as either supportive (favorable) or critical (unfavorable) of United States policy in Vietnam. The percentage of comments for each of the three parties involved in the conflict may be noted as follows:

#### CBS Themes on Vietnam

	supportive themes	critical themes
United States	19.03%	80.97%
South Vietnam	16.67%	83.33%
North Vietnam	57.32%	42.68%

According to Dr. Lefever, the critical themes concerning the United States were directed against its military presence in South Vietnam, against atrocities committed by American forces, and for deceiving the public about the entire Vietnam situation. His analysis of "60 Minutes" and the news specials yielded much the same information. Here, comments critical of American involvement, policy, or action in Vietnam outnumbered supportive statements

by 5 to 1. Dr. Lefever also conducted a by-name analysis of comments made by 10 categories of newsmakers or newsmen, including North Vietnamese. Individuals in these 10 categories had expressed specific viewpoints about the war on the "CBS Evening News." He found CBS overwhelmingly selected for airing those viewpoints which were against United States involvement. Significantly, of the 16 CBS reporters expressing their views, only one aired a sentence supporting the government position on the war. Except for the group of antiwar activists, CBS newsmen constituted the most heavily antiadministration category of Americans in the study. Additionally, Lefever found that the views of CBS newsmen were aired more than the views of the administration, Congress, or any other category of spokesperson on Vietnam.

Most Americans who watch the network news are loyal viewers, tuning in the same network night after night. They have developed a parasocial relationship with the newscasters. Dr. Lefever summarizes his analysis as follows:

The citizen viewer who relied solely on CBS-TV Evening News during 1972 would have received a vivid, dramatic and clearly etched picture of the Vietnam War—US participation in this essentially civil conflict in Southeast Asia was cruel, senseless, unjust and immoral; the South Vietnamese Government was corrupt, repressive, unpopular and an obstacle to peace, and its armed forces were inefficient and cowardly; and in contrast, the North Vietnam government had the support of its stoic people, its armed forces fought courageously and it treated American POWs well. The responsible course for the United States, according to this portrayal, would be to cease bombing military targets in the North, speedily withdraw its troops from the South and show less concern with the fate of South Vietnam.<sup>65</sup>

It would be grossly unfair to suggest that CBS was alone in its portrayal of the Vietnam War. The other networks were also highly critical of administration policy. For example, in March 1969, ABC published a list of stories that should be covered by its Vietnam correspondents. They included black marketeering in

South Vietnam, treatment of former Vietcong, possible corruption on the part of a province chief, and political opposition to the South Vietnamese government.<sup>66</sup> The types of stories give an indication of the partisan journalism that emerged over ABC. Additionally, ABC had chosen to interview Averell Harriman after President Nixon's 3 November 1969 speech on Vietnam. *Time* believes the choice indicated ABC meant to criticize the President, since Harriman had been a vocal opponent of Nixon's Vietnam policies. NBC has also been accused of biased reporting concerning the war. Again, *Time* notes that hours before President Nixon's November 1969 speech, the network carried films of atrocities committed by South Vietnamese troops.<sup>67</sup> NBC was accused by its affiliates of not showing enough coverage of Nixon's view of the war, of giving too much air time to peace demonstrators, and of not showing the government's side of Kent State.<sup>68</sup>

JUST as the media attempted to portray Khe Sanh as another Dien Bien Phu, political analysts also have likened the Tet offensive to the famous French battle. While the military outcomes were totally different, their effect on public opinion was virtually identical. Both had the effect of destroying the political ability of the government to effectively continue the war through their impact on public belief. Network coverage of Tet convinced Americans that a military victory in South Vietnam was impossible. According to John Spanier, the Tet offensive caused the public increasingly to think of the war as "morally ambiguous if not downright immoral."<sup>69</sup> Additionally, because of the wide discrepancy between official announcements that the war was being won and the media's portrayal of a Communist victory, there was an acceleration in the so-called "credibility gap" at home.<sup>70</sup> Finally, the impact of TV's Tet coverage can be summarized by an analysis done by the Roper organization. It shows that February and March

of 1968 appear "to have led to a turning point in opinion on the war."<sup>71</sup> We should recall that in these months the most one-sided stories were reported by the networks. These stories showed Tet as a major American defeat.

If the Communists' aims were to win a military victory during Tet, they failed badly. If, on the other hand, the offensive was meant to gain political advantages and weaken America's resolve, the Communists succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

To win, Hanoi knew it had to break America's will to fight. The Vietcong strategy of protracted war, formulated first against the French, would have a new and unwitting ally—television.

In a democracy, the will to fight is lost when the public turns against the cause. Several scholars believe that American public opinion was the crucial "domino" in the war.<sup>72</sup> Although some members of the television profession have denied TV's key role in the war, Hanoi has stated it could not have won without the Western media.<sup>73</sup> Television was the agent for changing American beliefs on the war.

This change was reflected in the continued growth of the antiwar movement. Hanoi used the movement as its key to victory, and the strategy was successful. Most leaders of the Vietnam antiwar movement did not believe they would essentially determine the war's end. However, Henry Kissinger points out that the movement did have a dramatic effect on the policymakers in Washington. He believes that from 1968 until the end of the war, the government was influenced by the growing power of the movement.<sup>74</sup> Richard Nixon feels that antiwar activists not only influenced the public and policymakers but also had a serious effect on the morale and discipline of the U.S. Armed Forces.<sup>75</sup> We may argue that this reduction in morale was partially due to perceptions of the movement's strength as portrayed by the networks. Additionally, military men and women saw commentators whom they had watched since childhood and grown to respect report that the war was wrong and the United States

should withdraw as soon as possible. Undoubtedly, this reporting significantly impacted morale.

The growth of the antiwar movement was largely a result of TV's Vietnam coverage. Michael Novak states that the movement tried to obtain TV coverage for its activities. "Everybody knew the media was the battleground. The youth movement was acutely aware of the power of television. It was, after all, the first media generation."<sup>76</sup> Professor Peter Burger points out that the war came to his attention because of television's coverage, and he believes it was the same with the vast majority of Americans. He states, "It was television images that aroused my moral outrage and led me to become a vocal opponent of the Vietnam War."<sup>77</sup> John Hulteng and Roy Nelson confirm the contention that the antiwar movement gained strength due to the power of television and its treatment of the war.<sup>78</sup>

Although many scholars believe the antiwar movement was the primary factor in America's withdrawal from Vietnam, the Communists did not tell the movement about its role in achieving Communist objectives. In fact, Hanoi continually told the movement's leaders that a Communist victory was not dependent on the American domestic situation.<sup>79</sup> Rather than a direct alliance with TV, Hanoi watched as television reported on issues created by the Communists and the antiwar movement. The networks' broadcasting of these issues, placed in the context of their partisan position on the war, resulted in shifting American opinion to an antiwar attitude.

Communist actions as well as those of the antiwar movement were staged for American consumption through television. Politically, Hanoi used time to legitimize its cause. For example, Henry Kissinger found the Communists were unwilling to negotiate seriously at Paris. He thought they were using the negotiations as a propaganda device, designed to undermine America's domestic support and split the United States from South Vietnam.<sup>80</sup> At

Paris, the networks interviewed Communist negotiators and aired their views on the war. The networks also continually broadcast the views of the antiwar movement and covered their demonstrations. On occasion, demonstrations were even restaged for the benefit of late camera crews.

The Communists used their military to convince Americans they could not win militarily and that the South Vietnamese were unworthy allies. Major offensives such as Khe Sanh, Tet, and the 1972 drive across the demilitarized zone were aimed at this goal. It is interesting to speculate why both the Tet and 1972 offensives took place in American presidential election years. No one can seriously think General Vo Nguyen Giap believed the South Vietnamese people would actually rise up in mass during the Tet offensive, thus enabling the Communists to overthrow the government. Nor can anyone believe Giap felt the Communists were strong enough in 1968 to defeat the South Vietnamese Army and throw the United States into the sea. Why, then, sacrifice thousands of lives—unless Giap was seeking psychological advantages both in the United States and internationally? As far as the networks were concerned, Tet was a clear-cut Communist victory, and it was reported in that context. In addition, the networks continually showed combat film supplied by the North Vietnamese. This film usually depicted air action over North Vietnam and the resultant destruction. Who could not begin to sympathize with this poor nation, fighting for its life against the sophisticated weapons of the United States? North Vietnamese reports on the bombings of hospitals, dikes, and schools were retold almost verbatim by the networks. This forced the United States to respond and deny the charges. However, such responses often fell on deaf ears. As one TV commentator is reported to have said, "It's an awful thing when you can trust Ho Chi Minh more than you can trust your President."<sup>81</sup> The continued, one-sided reporting of atrocities swayed public attitudes by casting the United

States and its ally into the light of immoral combatants pitted against just and heroic fighters for liberation.

TELEVISION'S treatment of the Vietnam War was not part of a plot against the government. There was no collaboration between the three networks to stop the war or bring down a president. Rather, TV's coverage was the result of the national tendency of the media toward partisan journalism; the tendency toward an antigovernment position regardless of the issue.

In addition, honest, well-meaning Americans differed on the issue of Vietnam. It is only natural that some prominent newscasters and reporters would honestly think the United States was involved in an unjust, immoral war. They would believe American lives and treasure were being wasted in a war where a victory appeared remote, regardless of official government announcements. And why Vietnam? What were our real interests and objectives? These questions confused even the most ardent supporters of administration policy.

Also, some reporters were angry because of the faulty information they received through official channels in Vietnam.<sup>82</sup> Often this information differed greatly from the truth, thus exacerbating the hostility of the journalists. They soon came to distrust the official government position on almost all matters. The reporters' search for "truth" and the other view became a part of the Vietnam scene.

Lastly, there was the "herd instinct." It became fashionable to criticize official policy on the war as the networks followed the lead of the more prominent in their field. None of the three networks wanted to be left behind supporting a policy that others had abandoned. Once the public's opinion had shifted to an antiwar attitude, a network being objective might find itself without any viewers.

If Vietnam was television's first war, how can we account for insurgent victories in other

conflicts? We have cited the case of France in Indochina. In this war, television was just entering its infancy.

In protracted war, the crucial variable is public opinion. What has been said about TV applies in general to the printed media. In the past, the American press had substantial influence on local politics through the editorial page. While newspapers in the United States are local in circulation, those in European countries are nationally distributed. Thus opinions and editorials had a tremendous impact on French beliefs during the war. In Indochina, the combined effect of the media (radio, newspaper, and some television) provided the insurgents with victory. The victory came about by changing French sentiment on the war.

Today there is a new giant on the scene. TV dwarfs the combined ability of other media both in size of audience and its power to persuade that audience. It has replaced all other media as the primary source for news and consequently as the main target of insurgents.

In the Vietnam example, the catalyst for the change in American public sentiment was television. This medium's ability to influence people has significant implications for any democratic world power involved in a protracted war.

Andrew Mack tells us, "Vietnam has been a reminder that in war the ultimate aim must be to affect the will of the enemy." He points out that in every successful insurgency, victory was not due to the adversary's military defeat but because of the progressive erosion of its will to wage war. In addition, he believes that "superiority in military force [for the insurgent's opponents] . . . may, under certain circumstances prove counterproductive."<sup>83</sup>

A major democratic power aiding a small Third World nation against another or helping that nation against an insurgency movement places itself in a tenuous position. This is especially true if it is operating with a free and uncontrolled television broadcasting system. In the situation described here, the allied Third

World nation will be in a struggle for its very existence, as will the enemy. In such a case, the allied country will probably be forced to institute measures that will appear to the citizens of the world power as undemocratic and probably immoral. After all, the major power is essentially at peace. If the country is the United States, another problem arises. Because of America's historic antimilitary tendency, the United States will not directly involve itself in the conflict until the turning point has been reached. This is the point where the allied Third World nation will collapse unless America intervenes directly and immediately. It is the point of desperation where the only perceived alternatives are "send in the Marines" or let the ally perish. At this point, the enemy has such a stranglehold on the ally, it may appear useless to intervene.

Because the democratic world power is fighting a relatively small force, it will be reluctant to use all its military might. Neither will it declare war since it does not want to appear as a bully. Instead it will send in a small but reasonable force, something adequate to do the job. There will be rules of engagement and, of course, sanctuaries for both sides.

The democracy will enter the conflict with the support of the majority of its citizens. Objectives for the war will have been publicized and generally accepted. Everyone hopes it is a short war—"get in and get out."

At this juncture, if the enemy engages in protracted war, the situation may be lost. As the war is prolonged and reports of casualties and atrocities begin reaching the major power, strains will develop in the public consensus. Once the elite of television begin to change their views on the war, there will begin a significant change in the view of the public at large. Over time, the citizens of the major power will demand a disengagement under the best possible terms. The original objectives for fighting the war will have been forgotten or will no longer make sense. At this point the war is at best stalemated, and most probably lost.

Robert Elegant has described the "Vietnam Syndrome" as the media's tendency to treat all foreign involvement as "another Vietnam." He used El Salvador as an example where television's portrayal of the situation has impacted public opinion even before the White House could establish a firm policy:

... the conclusion was not implied but hammered home time and again: United States policy [in El Salvador] was, presumably by direct intention, rendering tens of thousands homeless and killing hundreds of women and children. El Salvador, the viewer could not but conclude, was a deliberate replication of Vietnam. And "Vietnam" has become synonymous with absolute evil—practiced of course, by the United States.<sup>84</sup>

Consequently, the United States may never find itself in the scenario as described since the mass media will never allow the building of an initial consensus supporting any American intervention.

If opinion polls are any indication, Robert Elegant may be correct in his assessment. A survey was conducted in 1976 by Ole Holsti and James Rosenau on the foreign policy viewpoints held by people in a variety of occupations. The results found media personalities of all ages generally opposed to American military intervention throughout the world. The media tend not to believe in the "domino theory" or that the United States exists in a bipolar world.<sup>85</sup> Such views on the part of news people can definitely be carried over to the public at large.

Can a democratic power win a protracted war? Guenter Lewy thinks perhaps not:

The capacity of people in a modern democracy to support a limited war is precarious at best. The mixture of propaganda and compulsion which a totalitarian regime can muster in order to extract such support is not available to the leaders of a democratic state. Hence when such a war for limited objectives drags on for a long time it is bound to lose the backing essential for its successful pursuit. It may well be, as an American political scientist has concluded, that "unless it is severely provoked or unless the war succeeds fast, a democracy cannot choose war as an instrument of policy."<sup>86</sup>



The American experience in Vietnam as well as media coverage of events in Central America may well prove Lewy's assessment to be correct.

Finally, President Truman has been quoted as saying: "The biggest problem facing any president is to sell the American people on a policy. They have to be led forward."<sup>87</sup> With today's instant analysis of presidential speeches and the partisan viewpoint of many TV newscasters, the President's power to persuade has been dramatically altered. Although a nation's leaders determine national strategy and policy, they require the support of the people. When a

democracy chooses war as an instrument of policy, it must have this support. In the age of television, can a democracy successfully prosecute a protracted war? When one considers the number of Third World nations threatened by Communist insurgencies, the future of our democratic way of life may lie in the answer to this question.

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**Editor's note:** This article was adapted from Colonel Venanzi's Air War College thesis, which won the Orville Anderson Award from the National Geographic Society.

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An assumption, tenaciously held by both television's critics and its champions, is that the visual impact of TV nightly news "turned the American people against the Vietnam war" and, later, pushed Richard M. Nixon out of the White House. Yet there is no empirical evidence that TV news "shapes" mass public opinion—or that any news medium does.\*

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\*Critic Michael Arlen reminded us in the Aug. 16, 1982 *New Yorker* that "what a television viewer of the Vietnam war [usually] saw . . . was a nightly, stylized, generally distanced overview of a disjointed conflict which was composed mainly of scenes of helicopters landing, tall grasses blowing in the helicopter wind, American soldiers fanning out across a hillside . . . with now and then (on the soundtrack) a far-off ping or two, and now and then (as a visual grand finale) a column of dark billowing smoke a half a mile away, invariably described as a burning Viet Cong ammo dump."

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# AVOIDING THE BURDEN

*the Carter Doctrine in perspective*

DR. LAWRENCE E. GRINTER

*Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.*

President John F. Kennedy, 20 January 1961



In his inaugural address in 1961, President John F. Kennedy challenged a new generation of Americans to take up the torch of freedom. An exciting and vital period in American history began in which many young Americans translated idealism into energy by trying to better their world at home and abroad. The Peace Corps, the civil rights movement, and even the military offered avenues of service. In 1962, America reached its hegemony as a world power. The Soviet challenge in Berlin had been answered. At the Geneva Conference in July, discussions thwarted a Communist victory in Laos. In October, the United States put its word on the line, its military forces on alert, and demanded that the Soviets remove their missiles and bombers from Cuba. Faced with an overwhelming American superiority in nuclear weapons, the Soviets complied.

In late 1963, things began to sour. The United States became involved in a war in Southeast Asia that it could not win. At home the civil rights movement became bloody, and black power advocates forced young whites out of some organizations. Many of these whites turned to the growing antiwar movement. By the end of the decade, American policy in Southeast Asia devolved to "peace with honor" or what was termed by the commander of the Australian Army Advisory Team in Vietnam, "a shameless bug out." Watergate, Koreagate, perceived abuses of power by federal agencies, and, in Vietnam, defeat—all spelled a bitter end to muscular Americanism. With the torch of freedom extinguished in the rotor wash of the last helicopters leaving Saigon, Americans wondered if our nation could, or should, perform as boldly as it once had on the world stage. By the midseventies, disillusion and self-doubt had supplanted confidence and idealism in American society and in its government. Thus, the options open to the incoming Carter administration were delineated, and the tenuous course was plotted.

E.H.T.

ON 23 January 1980, in his State of the Union Address, President Jimmy Carter announced a new American policy that came to be called the Carter Doctrine. Referring to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Mr. Carter warned that:

An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.<sup>1</sup>

Although precipitated by the Soviet invasion, Mr. Carter's policy also followed eighteen months of turmoil in Iran, as the Shah's government, ambivalently supported by the Carter administration, collapsed and the radical Khomeini regime took power eventually imprisoning 53 United States personnel in the American embassy in Teheran.

Throughout the middle and late 1970s, the

West's security position in critical Third World areas had gradually deteriorated. From 1974 onward, there were Marxist takeovers in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Ethiopia, South Yemen, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Rhodesia, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua; attempted coups in Sudan, Somalia, and Egypt; Khomeini's revolution in Iran; the deterioration of Lebanon's security; two failed secessions in Zaire; and the spread of Libyan and Cuban extremism under Soviet support.

The Carter Doctrine, which took many foreign capitals by surprise,<sup>2</sup> came at the conclusion of these developments. In his statement, the President sought to persuade the world that American interests in and around the Persian Gulf were so vital that the United States would fight if necessary. Concurrent with Mr. Carter's pronouncement came an intensified search by Defense and State Department officials for new

military arrangements with Kenya, Somalia, Oman, Egypt, and Pakistan. Diego Garcia, the British territory in the Indian Ocean, also received new attention. On 1 March 1980, the United States Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) was formally established by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. Its primary mission was subsequently focused exclusively on deployment to the Middle East and Southwest Asia.<sup>4</sup> By early 1981, when Ronald Reagan took office as President, the RDJTF was estimated to have grown to more than 200,000 CONUS-based forces, including 100,000 Army troops, 50,000 Marines, and additional Air Force and Navy personnel.<sup>5</sup>

### Origins of the Doctrine

What caused the Carter Doctrine? It is clear that the immediate event which precipitated President Carter's new policy, and motivated him to develop a containment strategy for the Persian Gulf area,<sup>6</sup> was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. However, a careful reading of the President's public statements during the 18 months prior to the invasion reveals Mr. Carter's growing, though fluctuating, concern over mounting Soviet and Soviet client pressure in the Third World and the relentless Soviet arms buildup in Europe.

Unlike John Kennedy, Jimmy Carter did not take office ready to confront the Soviet Union. In fact, Mr. Carter had come to the Presidency pledging to remove American combat troops from Korea, seek substantial cuts in American and Soviet strategic weapons, reduce U.S. arms sales abroad, and elevate the human rights performance of our friends to a prime criterion in deciding on future levels of support. Indeed, as late as February 1978, Secretary of Defense Brown was explaining military assistance from the viewpoint that:

Military assistance can be used to promote human rights by altering the size or functions of our military representation, the level of training

grants, and the quantity and types of arms transfers.<sup>6</sup>

In their speeches in 1977 and early 1978, President Carter and his senior foreign policy and defense officials had emphasized the differences between their policies and those of the Ford and Nixon administrations. The contrast with the earlier Kennedy era was also evident. The United States, in the new President's view, was now "free of that inordinate fear of Communism." Interagency studies of U.S. military strategy and force posture ordered early in the Carter presidency, and resultant presidential decisions, codified these shifts from the Nixon/Ford/Kissinger focus. Particularly relevant was the study entitled "Comprehensive Net Assessment and Military Force Posture Review." It saw the United States and the U.S.S.R. in rough strategic balance, and U.S.-Soviet relations characterized by both competition and cooperation; the Soviet Union was found suffering from major internal disabilities, although capable of doing great damage to Western Europe should she attack, and also holding preeminent power in the Far East. President Carter was generally in agreement with the assumptions, and he authorized major United States initiatives in arms control while also directing that force modernization at the general-purpose forces level continue. In short the Carter administration saw global security trends as more sanguine and less ominous than the "clearly adverse trends" pointed to in the Ford administration's final assessments.<sup>7</sup>

However, by mid-1978, when the burgeoning Soviet threat and deteriorating Third World conditions had reached alarming proportions, Mr. Carter found it necessary to shift his views. But he also discovered that many of the officials he had appointed had not changed their views, nor would they.

The following details are noteworthy:

- In a speech at Notre Dame University in May 1977, the same month that he proposed cutting conventional arms sales, President Carter emphasized democracy, human rights, and

détente with the Soviet Union: a détente that would produce "reciprocal stability, parity, and security." Mr. Carter continued: "we are now free of that inordinate fear of Communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in our fear."<sup>8</sup>

- Ten months later at Winston-Salem in March 1978, following the destruction of Somalia's army by Ethiopia's Soviet-advised and Cuban-braced forces, the President acknowledged a new priority: "An ominous inclination on the part of the Soviet Union to use its military power—to intervene in local conflicts, with advisors, with equipment, and with full logistical support and encouragement for mercenaries from other Communist countries, as we can observe today in Africa."<sup>9</sup>

- In April 1978, a Soviet-backed Marxist coup d'état in Afghanistan brought down the civilian Daoud government. In Kabul the new Afghan leader was Nour Mohammed Taraki, a Soviet-oriented Marxist. Taraki's fractured and violent Communist party attempted several radical modernization programs which, coupled with the government's atheism, set off revolts among the Muslim tribes.

- At the Naval Academy in June 1978, Mr. Carter argued that détente remained important and that the Carter administration wanted to "increase our collaboration with the Soviet Union." However, after surveying Moscow's aggressive activities, the President stated: "The Soviet Union can choose either confrontation or cooperation. The United States is adequately prepared to meet either choice."<sup>10</sup>

- Throughout the fall of 1978, as demonstrations and violence shook Teheran and weakened the Shah's hold on power, the Carter administration oscillated back and forth between supporting him and pressing for reform. On 16 January 1979, with Iran's armed forces hopelessly demoralized as the radicals gathered strength, the Shah left Iran never to return.

- In February 1979, with Iran in chaos, Hanoi on the march across Indochina, and Cuban troops roaming about Africa, President

Carter spoke at Georgia Tech. He now saw turmoil and crisis in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. He proposed a real increase in the defense budget, still lobbied for the SALT II Treaty, but pointedly held open the possibility of modernizing the U.S. strategic triad.<sup>11</sup>

- In November 1979, Iranian mobs again stormed the U.S. embassy in Teheran and initially imprisoned 66 American personnel.

- On 27 December 1979, the Soviet Union, having presided over the installation of two previous Marxist governments in Kabul, invaded Afghanistan with 80,000 troops and installed a new puppet government headed by Babrak Karmal.<sup>12</sup> The Soviet actions evidently shocked President Carter, who commented that it had "made a more dramatic change in my own opinion of what the Soviets' ultimate goals are than anything they've done in the previous time I've been in office."<sup>13</sup>

- On 21 January 1980, Mr. Carter gave his State of the Union Message to Congress. The President cited "the steady growth and increased projection abroad of Soviet military power," the "overwhelming dependence of Western nations on vital oil supplies from the Middle East," and the "pressures of change in many nations of the developing world." The "Soviet attack on Afghanistan and the ruthless extermination of its government" constitute "a threat to global peace, to East-West relations, and to regional stability and to the flow of oil."<sup>14</sup>

- Two days later, in his State of the Union Address, Mr. Carter called for containment in the Persian Gulf.

Thus we see a President, pushed relentlessly by external events, abandon the basis of his initial policies. Ten months later he was soundly defeated for reelection.

### The Crisis in Southwest Asia

By late spring 1978, when it was clear that the Shah of Iran was in trouble, the Carter admin-

istration had before it three general policy options:

- Back the Shah to the hilt as the policeman of the Persian Gulf: The traditional U.S. policy.
- Disassociate the United States from the Shah and seek a dialogue with Khomeini and other radical Moslems in the region.
- Continue to support the Shah while pressing Teheran and other conservative governments for reform.

#### *back the Shah*

American governments had long viewed the Shah of Iran as one of the most dependable pro-West leaders in the whole Mideast and Southwest Asia area. Along with the Saud monarchy in Saudi Arabia, the Pahlavi dynasty in Teheran was the linchpin in the United States "two-pillar" policy in the Middle East—a policy that had brought Saudi Arabia and Iran into prominence as being critical to Western interests.

Following the Eisenhower and Kennedy commitments to the Shah and to the Saudis, the Johnson administration had pressed the Iranian monarch to carry out reforms—land redistribution, greater freedoms and rights for women, rapid improvements in education. These programs, it was felt, had to accompany Iran's rapid drive for industrialization and military strength. The Shah's power was known to be autocratic and at times arbitrary, nevertheless the monarch was seen as personally stable and generally enlightened if, at times, solitary and somewhat insecure. The fact that he made all the major decisions himself—was emperor, de facto prime minister, and commander in chief of the armed forces, as well as knowledgeable and supportive of (if not directly involved in) SAVAK's internal security activities—was taken into account. But the overall strategic value of Iran and the Shah to the United States was appreciated by every American administration from Eisenhower

through Ford. President Nixon had gone farthest, encouraging the Shah to cast himself in the role of regional policeman.<sup>15</sup>

In his state visit to Teheran at the close of 1977, President Carter had publicly and forcefully aligned himself with this traditional American policy and with the Shah. At a New Year's Eve banquet in Teheran on 31 December 1977, Carter expressed his satisfaction at finding himself on a stable island in a turbulent world sea:

I am proud and pleased to be able to visit at the end of my first year in office and begin another year with our close friends and allies.<sup>16</sup>

The toast would later come back to haunt the Carter administration. Nevertheless, in keeping with the verbal support, there was continuing military support—virtually all of the Shah's requests, paid for in cash, were granted by the Carter administration, sometimes at political cost in the Congress.

The Shah had been through difficult times before. He had been restored to his Peacock Throne in 1953. There had been revolts, assassination plots, and the exiling of dissidents. But as the crisis of 1978 developed and deepened, echelons in the Carter administration debated, wavered, and then splintered in their support of the Shah.

#### *abandon the Shah and realign with the moderate elements of the revolution*

During the Carter presidency, the State Department's Bureau of Human Rights was headed by Patricia Derian, a liberal political activist who had worked in Mississippi during the American civil rights movement of the 1960s. Once appointed to State, Ms. Derian publicly deplored aspects of the Shah's rule, particularly SAVAK, and issued low ratings for Iran's and other pro-American government's treatment of dissidents. Aligned with Derian in a general way was President Carter's Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, who on one occasion had referred to the Ayatol-

lah Khomeini as a "saint." The American Ambassador to Iran, William Sullivan, a veteran diplomat of many years experience and an acute observer of the stresses in Iranian society, sought to steer a middle course through the official U.S. debates on Iran. Nevertheless, when instructed, Sullivan also would remind the Shah of the State Department's concern (and presumably President Carter's) about the regime's treatment of its enemies.<sup>17</sup>

With the exception of Ms. Derian and members of her staff,<sup>18</sup> it is unlikely that other American officials were ready to dump the Shah immediately and cast U.S. policy in the Gulf to the revolutionaries. What is clear, however, is that when the voices of critics were added to the activities of the demonstrators in Teheran and Washington, all of it lavished with media coverage, new and destabilizing aspects to United States policy were set in motion. When these pressures were contrasted to the periodic expressions of support for the Shah still coming from the White House, it evidently created more confusion and indecision in Teheran.

#### *support the Shah while pressing for reform*

In fact, by the fall of 1978, events in Iran had moved so fast and U.S. intelligence on the situation was so inadequate that American policy was on the edge of a debacle. The Iranian armed forces—whose officer corps had been carefully cultivated by the Shah and had sworn a personal oath of allegiance to him—witnessed the growing disorder and violence in Teheran. Knowing of the Carter administration's discomfort at attempts to repress it, the generals nevertheless urged the Shah to crack down. The result, enacted on the 7th of September, was "martial law" without exactly being martial law. Opponents of the Shah quickly found they could challenge their sovereign's authority and court the foreign media.

As the crisis deepened, the pressures collided with the Shah's basic desire not to go against the Iranian people. The monarch alternated

between authorizing force and then making major concessions (what the skeptics termed "feeding the crocodiles"). His policy became paralyzed:

The Shah subjected himself to the worst of both worlds: the repression was sufficient to bring down upon him the antagonism of his enemies and their supporters, as well as those—in the media and even in the American government—who were genuinely concerned about human rights. But the imposition of martial law was not sufficient to stop the demonstrations or, ominously, the growing wave of strikes, particularly in the oil fields.<sup>19</sup>

Even by late 1978 few people in the Carter administration, including the American embassy staff in Teheran,<sup>20</sup> seemed to know much about the leaders or directions of the revolution. Khomeini's violent ideas and extraordinarily anti-American, anti-Zionist views apparently had not yet registered. U.S. policy appears to have straddled both sides. For example:

—Shortly after the Shah declared martial law, President Carter called him to voice support.

—Yet in October, after weeks of daily reports sent back to Washington on events in Iran, Ambassador William H. Sullivan "could detect neither high-level concern nor any comprehensive attitude toward the events that were in progress."

—On 4 November 1978, as rioters spread fires across Teheran, destroying banks, theatres, and the British embassy, security advisor Brzezinski called the Shah from the Iranian embassy in Washington to express his assurance that the United States would "back him to the hilt."

—Concurrently, certain high-level State Department officials evidently had concluded that the Shah was the major problem in Iran and that he had to go regardless of who replaced him.

—Energy Secretary James Schlesinger (a previous Defense Secretary in the Ford administration) argued that the Shah had to be saved, and proposed a U.S. show of force in the Indian Ocean.

—Late in December President Carter seems to have agreed, dispatching the aircraft carrier *Constellation* to the Indian Ocean. Then, possibly out of concern over risk to the carrier, the President countermanded his own order.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, as time ran out for the Shah and for Washington, the Carter administration split



between supporting the monarch, dumping him, or riding out the storm. Events, not policy, now determined American responses in Southwest Asia.

### Too Little, Too Late

In the last days of 1978, just before the Shah left Teheran and as the Soviet hand was deepening in Afghanistan, a series of proposals on the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia occupied President Carter's attention. The hawks, led by Brzezinski and Schlesinger and convinced that the Shah was through in Iran, favored a military takeover in Teheran to create a buffer between American interests and the mullahs. This, it was believed, would be a key move in restabilizing the region. Ambassador Sullivan also wanted to see a barricade built, especially against the far left, and he was sifting the alternatives in Teheran. President Carter, generally opposed to coups anywhere, heard out the many proposals. After much jockeying and tense debate in Washington, a temporary compromise was struck: U.S. policy would attempt to see fashioned a moderate civilian government in Teheran backed (not dominated) by the military.

The man chosen to convey this compromise position to Iranian authorities was an American Air Force officer serving in Europe, General Robert E. Huyser. Huyser was instructed to tell the Iranian generals that Washington would continue its logistic support of the armed forces but wanted them to transfer their loyalty to the centrist government of Shahpur Bakhtiar, provided that government had a good chance of survival.<sup>22</sup> The generals predictably wanted assurances for the future. Working closely with Sullivan, for three weeks Huyser met daily with the generals, discouraging a coup. After sending final reports to Washington which have been described as "upbeat," Huyser left Teheran on 3 February.<sup>23</sup> A very different picture of what was happening in Teheran was contained in Ambassador Sulli-

van's cables. Sullivan, whose reporting earned him the enmity of Brzezinski and possibly others in the White House, insisted that the military had lost its will, that important elements of the armed forces were defecting, that the mullahs were relentlessly gathering strength, and that the Bakhtiar government, some of whose ministers had left the country, had only the thinnest layer of support. The masses in Teheran were with Khomeini.<sup>24</sup> The religious leader returned to Teheran on 31 January. Ten days later mobs armed with machine guns attacked the U.S. embassy, and Iran's armed forces went to pieces. On 3 November 1979, the American embassy was stormed again, and 66 U.S. personnel were taken prisoner. Thirteen were released in a few days, but the remainder stayed captive in Iran until 30 minutes after Jimmy Carter had turned the White House over to Ronald Reagan at noon on 21 January 1981.

### Outcome

How do we measure the success or failure of the Carter Doctrine? One way of evaluating its effectiveness, or at least the acceptability of the doctrine, is to examine the Reagan administration's policies toward the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia. Clearly, in spite of the collapse of U.S. policy in Iran, the broader actions which President Carter finally ordered—a toughened stance toward the Soviets, a search for new military facilities in and around the Gulf, an increased emphasis on the Rapid Deployment Force, and the attempt to rescue the hostages—generally coincided with Mr. Reagan's thinking. Mr. Carter's reluctant shift toward an incipient intervention strategy in the Gulf also had the tacit approval of the American public.

Did U.S. policy achieve its goals? Measured by the ultimate criterion of no Soviet invasion of the Persian Gulf (so far), one may in this regard answer yes. The Carter Doctrine, the Rapid Deployment Force, and the Reagan administration's tough posture toward Soviet aggression are all part of the new deterrence

equation in the Gulf and Southwest Asia.

But the other side of the question involves why the attempt at regional containment embodied in the Carter Doctrine had to come *after* the collapse of Iran and *after* the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and whether, if it had been announced in 1977, it would have prevented the fall of the Shah and Soviet aggression. Clearly United States influence in Afghanistan—even before the April 1978 Marxist coup—was virtually minimal. Moscow acted there in what it saw as its own best interests. Moreover, did the Carter administration's general policies in the region—policies that downgraded threats from the left in favor of pushing friends and allies on human rights performance—contribute to Moscow's feeling that it could take direct action in Afghanistan, and possibly indirect action in Iran, without fear of retaliation from Washington? We do not know. But it is a relevant question given the Carter policies and the collapse of the American position in Southwest Asia. At the same time we cannot be sure that the Soviets would not have invaded Afghanistan anyway, Carter Doctrine or no Carter Doctrine.

And what of Iran and the Carter administration's response to the Shah's difficulties? After the Shah left Teheran in January 1979, he is reported to have remained convinced for weeks that the American government all along had a grand strategy that was simply beyond his ken. Given Iran's and the Gulf's strategic importance to the West, given the steady support by five previous American administrations, perhaps President Carter simply had reasoned that the Shah was expendable and a new stable, pro-West civilian regime was required. Or maybe Mr. Carter had decided to seek an alliance with radical Muslim nationalists in the area dedicated to igniting dissidence inside the Soviet Union's central Asian republics. What the Shah could not believe was that no plan, no strategic objective existed in Washington. Yet as events revealed, that in essence was what lay behind the administration's response to the cri-

sis in the Gulf. When on 23 January 1980, a year after the Shah had left Iran, eighty days after the humiliating imprisonment of American officials in Teheran, and a month after Soviet tanks had garrisoned Kabul, President Carter announced his containment doctrine, the world was surprised, as was the Shah.

## Implications for the Future

*first and foremost, every administration must have a clear, consistent policy toward the Soviet Union*

Perhaps the single most telling flaw in the Carter administration's foreign policy was its lack of a clear, consistent policy toward the Soviet Union. Administration policy seems to have oscillated between hard-liners and doves, between, for example, Brzezinski and Schlesinger on one side and Vance and Andrew Young on the other. Mr. Carter's revelation *after* the Soviets invaded Afghanistan that the action had done more to educate him about real Soviet motives than anything else was an extraordinary statement for an incumbent American President to make. Without the President's having clear views about Soviet motives, it is not surprising that fluctuations among bureaucrats—all with special interests—would fill the void.

*the American government did not have adequate intelligence on Iran, its leadership, and the opposition*

No other government but ours is to blame for our confusion about the situation in Iran. Executive and congressional branch confusion on Iran was, in part, a result of the hobbling of American intelligence services that began in 1974 during the Watergate affair. The dropping of area specialists from government service also played a role. The lesson: The intelligence curbs and the decline in area specialists during the 1970s went too far. Moreover, it is doubtful that the Iranian intelligence failure is an isolated case.

*if a President repudiates his policies,  
there will be costs*

Mr. Carter's about-face on the Persian Gulf situation and the Soviet threat was forced on him by events. The President rejected the rose-colored glasses that had been his administration's national security policy filter since 1977. But many of the officials that the President and his deputies appointed did not change their views. This seemed particularly true among the human rights advocates at State, CIA, and in the White House. It also seems to have been the case at the Mideast and African bureaus of State, where regional rather than global views naturally predominated. Mr. Carter found that his administration's inability to sustain a consistent and realistic foreign policy was one of the problems that cost him with the American electorate in November 1980.

*revolutions are nasty, unpredictable affairs;  
attempting to control or fine-tune them  
from the outside is risky*

Once a revolution reaches a critical point, temporizing in support for a beleaguered government—or oscillating between supporting the government and dumping it—is probably a fatal practice. Trying to force a Third World government to reform when it is being gutted

from within by a revolutionary totalitarian movement is a recipe for disaster. This, in essence, and after much uncertainty, is what the Carter administration's approach toward Iran finally came down to. The lesson is applicable to a variety of Third World countries where the United States has critical interests.

To cite a current example, opposition members of the United States Congress have pressed the Reagan administration to cut off aid to the government of El Salvador because of its human rights violations. These lawmakers evidently ignore or derogate the fact that the Salvador government is combating a Marxist revolutionary force directly supported by the Communist world. Thus the Carter experience with the Southwest Asia crisis suggests that American policy cannot have it both ways: we cannot press friendly Third World governments undergoing revolutionary attack to liberalize without destabilizing their power and possibly contributing to their collapse. The time for reform, if reform is relevant, is *before* the revolution reaches its crisis point. And that, of course, requires both advance warning and a genuine interest in the problem before it becomes a crisis—something few American administrations demonstrate a capacity to understand.

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#### Notes

1. President Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address, 23 January 1980, as cited by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, "US Foreign Policy: Our Broader Strategy," 27 March 1980, Department of State, Current Policy No. 153, as reprinted in *Case Study: National Security Policy under Carter*, Department of National Security Affairs, Air War College, AY 1980-81, p. 98.

2. Foreign capitals including our European allies evidently were not consulted on this new direction in American policy. Symptomatic was West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's reaction: "What we need today," said Schmidt after meeting with President Carter in March, "is a concept for a coherent, sustainable Western policy. . . . Consistency is a key element if you are seeking to stabilize the world." As cited in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Collapse of the Carter Policy," *Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 1980, p. 26.

3. Statement of Lieutenant General P. X. Kelly, USMC, Commander, Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, February 1980, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriation of Fiscal*

*Year 1981*, Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 96th Congress, Second Session, Part I, Defense Posture (Washington, D.C., 1980), pp. 440-41; and General David C. Jones, USAF, *United States Military Posture for FY 1982* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1981), pp. 55-56.

4. George C. Wilson, "Split Seen among Joint Chiefs of Staff over Rapid Deployment Force," *Washington Post*, February 3, 1981, p. 3.

5. It might be recalled that other American-encouraged containment efforts in the Gulf area had preceded the Carter Doctrine: the Allied Middle East Command, the Middle East Defense Organization, the Baghdad Pact, and its successor, the Central Treaty Organization.

6. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, *Department of Defense Annual Report, FY 1979* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, February 2, 1978), p. 252.

7. The "Comprehensive Net Assessment" study responded to tasking by Presidential Review Memorandum Number 10 (PRM-

10) of March 1977. The resultant Presidential Decision 18 (PD-18) was issued in the fall of 1977. See Hedrick Smith, "Carter Study Takes More Hopeful View of Strategy of US," *New York Times*, July 8, 1977, p. 1; Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, "Today's National Security Policy," a speech to the National Security Industrial Association Dinner, 13 September 1977, Washington, D.C.; and Richard Burt, "US Analysis Doubts There Can Be Victor in Major Atomic War," *New York Times*, January 6, 1978, p. 1.

8. President Jimmy Carter, "Address at Notre Dame University," Presidential Documents, May 22, 1977, in *Vital Speeches of the Day*, June 15, 1977, pp. 514-17, as reprinted in Department of National Security Affairs (DNSA), Air War College (AWC), Phase II Instruction Circular, AY 1980-81, pp. 317-20.

9. President Jimmy Carter, "Address at Wake Forest University," Presidential Documents, March 24, 1978, pp. 529-38, as reprinted in DNSA, AWC Phase II Instruction Circular, AY 1980-81, pp. 323-24.

10. President Jimmy Carter, "Address to US Naval Academy, Commencement Exercises, June 7, 1978," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, June 12, 1978, pp. 1052-57 as reprinted in DNSA, AWC Phase II Instruction Circular, AY 1980-81, pp. 330-35.

11. President Jimmy Carter, "Address at Georgia Institute of Technology," February 20, 1979, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, February 26, 1979, pp. 200-06 as reprinted in DNSA, AWC Phase II Instruction Circular, AY 1980-81, pp. 336-41.

12. *Afghanistan: 18 Months of Occupation*, Department of State,

Bureau of Public Affairs, Special Report No. 86, August 1981; and *Afghanistan: 2 Years of Occupation*, Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Special Report No. 91, December 1981.

13. From Mr. Carter's interview on 31 December 1979 with ABC television, as cited in Norman Podhoretz, "The Future Danger," *Commentary*, April 1981, p. 31.

14. President Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Message," January 21, 1980, Department of State, Current Policy No. 131 (Washington, D.C.)

15. An excellent political history is Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 1980.

16. As cited in Michael A. Ledeen and William H. Lewis, "Carter and the Fall of the Shah: The Inside Story," *Washington Quarterly*, Spring 1980, p. 14.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

18. William H. Sullivan, *Mission to Iran* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), pp. 147-48.

19. Ledeen and Lewis, pp. 18-19.

20. Sullivan, p. 160.

21. Ledeen and Lewis, pp. 20-23, and Sullivan, pp. 163, 168, 191-93, and 224.

22. Sullivan, pp. 228-30.

23. Ledeen and Lewis, pp. 36-37.

24. Sullivan, pp. 201-04 and 238-40, and Ledeen and Lewis, p. 37.

*What is freedom?* Freedom is the right to choose: the right to create for oneself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing.

*How shall freedom be defended?* By arms when it is attacked by arms; by truth when it is attacked by lies; by democratic faith when it is attacked by authoritarian dogma. Always, and in the final act, by dedication and faith.

Archibald MacLeish (1892-1982)

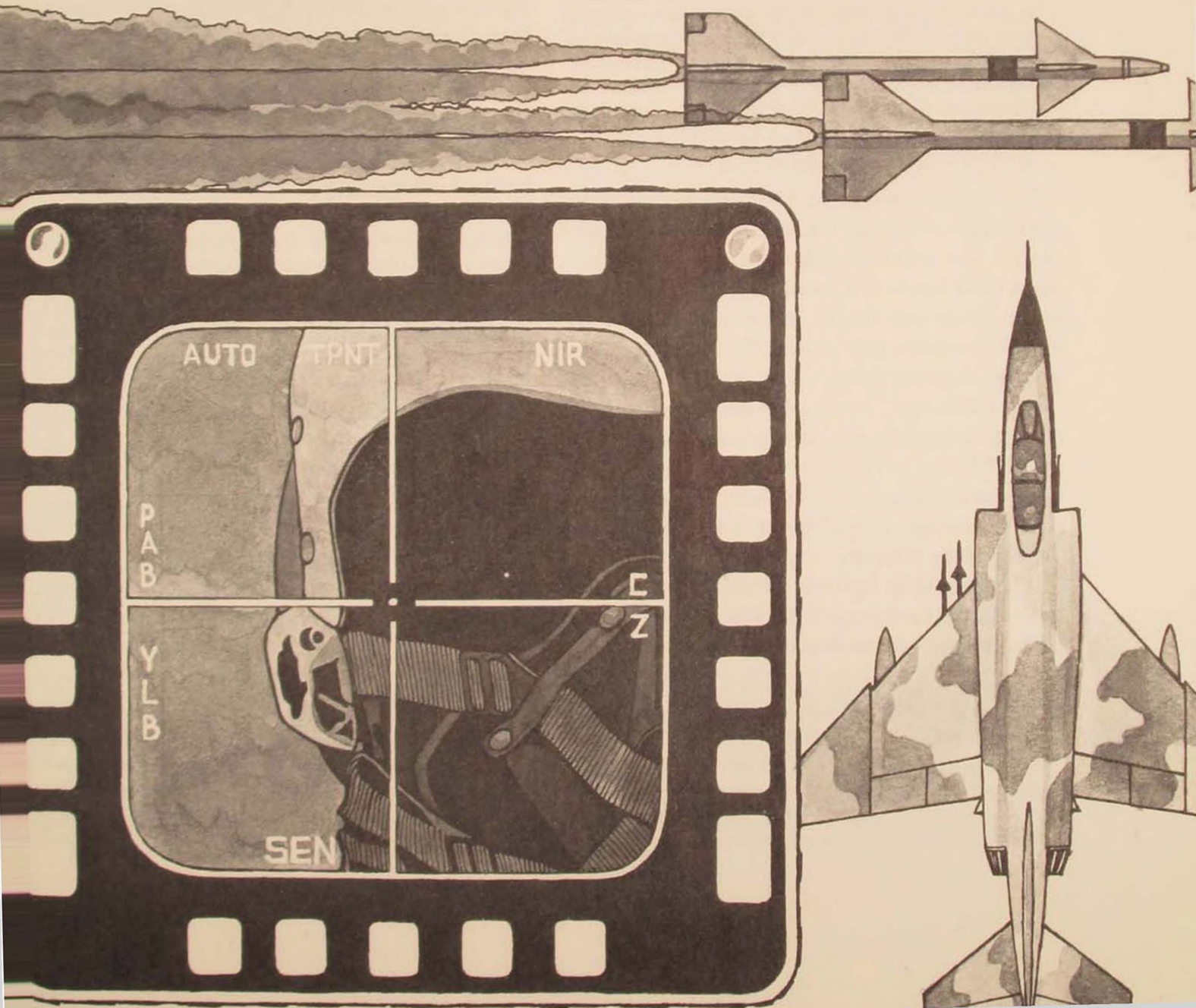
A Declaration of Freedom



**military  
affairs  
abroad**

## AIR WAR VIETNAM: WHAT THE SOVIETS LEARNED

YOSSEF BODANSKY



LOCAL wars such as the one in Indochina have unveiled the real face of contemporary warfare. That war drove the imperialist countries into rearmament. It also proved and fortified certain aspects of Soviet tactics, effecting changes and the development of others.<sup>1</sup> Learning the lessons of local wars and their implications points out the direction of developments and changes in military matters and affects future developments of new tactics and weapon systems.

American specialists who have worked to summarize the experience of the war came close to the truth when they remarked that the "birth of new tactics has always begun with the enemy." By constantly improving methods of operations and battle, North Vietnamese pilots posed complicated problems for the aggressors. In attempting to solve these problems the aggressors suffered great losses. The rejection of the commonplace in tactics has always entailed success in aerial battle. American fighter pilots, who were unable to achieve tactical superiority in the airspace over the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, learned of this firsthand in their initial experience.<sup>2</sup>

The prime lesson on the air-to-air activity over North Vietnam was the revival of the maneuver air combat.<sup>3</sup> The changes were thorough and included both aircraft and armament. In view of their anticipation of "the Soviet threat" and the "political tactless speculation permitted by the American military establishment," the Americans train and develop their new equipment on the "... basis of performances of the MiGs . . . [but] neither side has a large quantitative edge. As is known, interceptors of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam actively defended the airspace."<sup>4</sup>

The new U.S. fighters display a completely new set of priorities in the field of envelope of performance and in their weapon systems.

. . . maximum speed and service ceiling of the F-15 and F-16 airplanes which are intended to win air superiority and which arrived to replace the F-4 "Phantom" type of tactical fighters increased insignificantly. At the same time, primary attention was turned to increasing the thrust-to-weight ratio and maneuverability nec-

essary for the conduct of aerial battle of the classic forms. . . . Thus, tactics influenced the formation of requirements for new aviation equipment.<sup>5</sup>

Both the F-14 and the F-15 are, generally speaking, more interceptors than fighters. Both are equipped with a large number of long-range air-to-air missiles (AAMs) and are expected to fulfill their missions before the need to dogfight arises. The F-15, however, is highly maneuverable. (" . . . military circles believe that now light supersonic 'inexpensive' fighters are necessary. They should have minimum electronic equipment and a comparatively simplified sighting and navigation system. Their mission is support of troops on the battlefield and to engage the aerial enemy.")<sup>6</sup> The F-16, now mass produced for use by the NATO countries as well as the U.S. Air Force, is the solution that the Americans present for the post-Vietnam fighter-bomber. (" . . . the F-16 fighter has better turning characteristics at subsonic and transonic speeds. At the same time, the smaller dimensions of the F-16 fighter are also tactical advantages which decrease the probability of the aircraft's detection by radar.")<sup>7</sup>

The revival of the dogfight also posed new requirements on the air-to-air weapon systems. The nearly complete reliance on AAMs, developed during the pre-Vietnam period, was found to be erroneous. (" . . . guided missiles of this type were intended for interception, . . . with a straight-line attack of the target. But it was difficult for the pilot to use them in maneuver battle. [Thus], cannon were hastily installed on the 'Phantoms' . . . ; they are close range weapons.")<sup>8</sup>

Despite disappointing performances of AAMs, their development continues with an eye on their eventually becoming the core of air-to-air weapons.

Foreign military experts believe that achievement of air superiority would depend on aircrew proficiency, the combat capabilities of airplanes and, in particular, their armament. It is no accident that projects aimed at heightening the effectiveness of armament systems, especially of air-to-air guided missiles, are gaining increasing

scope in capitalist countries, making up an important part of the arms race.<sup>9</sup>

Aerial activity above Vietnam proved that the regions in which AAMs are of most value are the long- and medium-ranges. Thus, radar-guided missiles are the most common. "A guidance system in which the target is constantly illuminated by the onboard radar . . . is sufficiently effective when a fighter must strike a single aerial target from long range. But continuous target illumination restricts the fighter's capabilities [against] numerically superior forces."<sup>10</sup>

Infrared (IR) guided missiles which serve that purpose are both air-superiority missiles and capable of operating in close air combat.

Meanwhile, close combat remains a most important component of the fight for winning air superiority. Those abroad took to adapting guided missiles for close combat. . . . But foreign specialists still did not succeed in substantially improving the characteristics of these missiles and especially in obtaining the necessary minimum range of fire and increasing their effectiveness and reliability. [Then they concluded] abroad that guided missiles were not capable of completely crowding out cannon weaponry. . . . aircraft cannons retain their importance even under modern combat conditions.<sup>11</sup>

However, conditions and performances involved in modern air combat imposed new requirements on both aircraft and cannon. Modern fighter aircraft exceed the speed of sound by two or three times and have significantly better maneuverability. In addition, present aircraft cannon weaponry meets "new capabilities and demands of tactics, especially in close aerial combat."<sup>12</sup> The expanded performance envelope in which aerial combat might erupt and the increasing importance of aerial combat as a component in total warfare have caused American flying forces not to show preference for just one type of aircraft armament. In addition to new missile systems, ". . . they also are seeking more effective cannon weaponry which would meet the demands of tactics of modern aerial combat."<sup>13</sup>

Air-to-surface activity was at the core of the

air war in Vietnam. The majority of the sorties in the local wars were of this type. Under this term come both close and direct air support, deep bombing, as well as the defense suppression and electronic warfare activities that supplement deep bombing. The main problem in American defense circles was the wide gap between their anticipation of aerial warfare above Vietnam and the actual results. ". . . peacetime strategists often play at fabricated, unrealistic warfare, especially when they are confident that their armed forces are the most powerful. They [envision] an enemy who offers resistance only in the direction which they want."<sup>14</sup>

The whole aerial activity over North Vietnam was shaped by the growing intensity of the PVO (U.S.S.R. anti-aircraft defense) system. The relative success in the intensifying duel between the PVO system and the American electronic warfare (EW) activities determined the altitude at which the majority of U.S. bombers flew. Attempting to fly low, below the lethal envelope of the surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), the Americans were prevented from doing so by the growing efficiency and lethality of the anti-aircraft artillery (AAA). Therefore, they were compelled to fight their way in at midaltitude.<sup>15</sup> The growing reliance on electronic defense, either carried by special EW fighters or on each bomber, increased the dependence of the general completion of the mission on the efficiency of the EW equipment and its use.<sup>16</sup> As an integral part of the tactic of evasion, the role of electronic warfare was to create a camouflaging interference under which the various formations could either fly to their targets deep inside the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) or organize to attack the air defense (AD) systems themselves. Despite the growing number of EW fighters in an average assault formation, the loss of bombers mounted steadily. "The dynamic nature of this ever more complicated struggle does not permit either side to gain a final or long-lasting advantage."<sup>17</sup>

The governing factor in the efficient functioning of an AD system, or penetrating formation, is speed. Formations attempted to penetrate hostile airspace before the AD system discovered them or was able to fix their position and direct SAMs against them. PVO systems should be able to obtain a fix before being exposed to massive jamming or fire tactics. With regard to this trend and since airspeed cannot grow indefinitely, camouflage measures may soon again be the key to successful penetration and evasion tactics. "Therefore, it is considered . . . important to build and make intensive use of radio and radar countermeasure systems."<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the growing variety of anti-AD means—weapon and EW systems—creates a new compulsion on the PVO system: the integration of a whole system. "The fundamental principle has become one which states that various anti-aircraft defense forces and means should be used in such a manner that they mutually supplement and reinforce one another, forming . . . a system capable of parrying the air attacks under difficult combat conditions."<sup>19</sup> Aid to successful penetration can be found in meticulous preparation before takeoff. The survival rate of attacking bombers that saw the target was higher than that of bombers limited to "blind bombing." The availability of up-to-date and accurate data concerning the AD system is essential to relatively safe penetration—either through evasion or fire tactics. An assault operation requires constant attention and initiative from the crew despite fatigue, which is inevitable even where flying conditions are not complex.

The greatest probability of "survival" is envisioned where all methods and procedures to evade battle with air defense weapons are employed together: low flying elevation; anti-aircraft and anti-missile maneuvering; electronic countermeasures. It is recommended that these methods be varied skillfully depending on the situation and nature of the battle mission. For example, to achieve surprise it is sometimes better to use low elevation only, without support groups or jamming. In other cases the situation will demand that the assault group's flight along the "corri-

dor" toward the target be supported by neutralizing air defense means beforehand. A third variation may envision a diversionary maneuver to mark a false attack direction or it may have actions by diversionary groups combined with jamming done from the battle formations or from patrol zones in the air. American military specialists feel that correct selection of the variation is an art which must be learned by all aviation specialists who are involved in planning assault operations.<sup>20</sup>

The trend in EW development is to provide the individual bomber with a minimum of integral electronic equipment such as a "survival kit" but in a way that will not degrade its capability to carry bombs which is its main task. In the long run, a fully integrated PVO system cannot be completely neutralized. "When discussing the results of 'electronic warfare' in Vietnam, all foreign experts give a high assessment to radio counter-countermeasures conducted by the DRV anti-aircraft system. It is noted, for example, that addition of early warning to surface-to-air systems decreased the time radar stations needed to detect and track targets, owing to which their vulnerability to all types of interference decreased. Rapid deployment of radar stations, launching sites, and missile control systems from region to region promoted concealed deployment and unexpected commitment to battle of these resources."<sup>21</sup> Experience gathered during the Vietnam War indicates several promising techniques of electronic counter-countermeasure and other means of fighting attacking bombers. False electronic signals indicating a surface-to-air missile launch drive the bombers into executing an evasive maneuver, eject their bombs, and abort the mission. Concentration on non-radar guided AD weapon systems to cover the approach path of bombers on their way to attack a radar site. These means brought the problem of correct timings and execution of the preplanned tactics to a degree of utmost importance, the success of the mission depending not only on correct use of EW systems but also on the timing of their use.



One of the most important PVO concepts to emerge from the Vietnam War is the combined air defense system, a cooperative effort of the various anti-aircraft detection and weapon systems and the fighters and interceptors. What started as a mere mutual acknowledgment of moves and fields of fire to avoid friendly losses turned into using fighters to augment the AD system. Fighters were sent to areas where U.S. bombers concentrated before or after fighting their way through the AD system. Later, fighters were used to replace AD systems that were temporarily inactivated by United States fire tactics. With the introduction of the Shrike air-to-ground missile, one of the most efficient defensive measures was a "... periodic shutdown of stations prior to [U.S. bombers'] entrance into regions into which fighter-interceptors are sent."<sup>22</sup>

Under present military conditions, every PVO system has to include an integral force of fighter-interceptors that not only augments the AD system but also carries out independent tasks of its own.

The combat use of anti-aircraft defense means in the theater of war, in conducting defensive operations, is organized by lines. . . . The interceptors should operate at the distant approaches to defended objectives, that is 100-120 kilometers away [approx. 62.5-75.0 miles]. They have the mission of destroying a portion of the enemy aviation, and above all the low flying targets. The air defense fighters should disrupt the battle formation of the enemy air forces, that is, thwart the purpose of the strikes, and thereby create better conditions for the combat use of the SAM complexes.<sup>23</sup>

The fighters and interceptors are not only an integral part of the AD system but also fulfill the independent missions allocated to them as part of the defense of the country.

An analysis of the experience of "electronic warfare" in Vietnam permitted foreign experts to make three principal conclusions. First, the expenses of creating resources for radio reconnaissance and for producing radio and electronic interference are paid back by reduction in the number of aircraft lost to anti-aircraft fire. Second, the role of aviation in limited warfare and its achievement of tactical superiority in the air de-

pend in many ways on the effectiveness with which radio countermeasure resources are employed. Third, lack of coordination in providing interference would only decamouflage the assault aircraft, and they would not improve their survivability, while weak interference would make it possible to take a DF bearing on the source which would cause danger to the radio countermeasures aircraft itself.<sup>24</sup>

The growing intensity of attacks and the improving of the air defense system are the major reasons for the use of fire tactics. Bomber formations attack the AD system either as part of a greater raid or as a mission in its own right. In both instances, the attack is delivered by bomber formations flying in various paths and performances. "It is assumed that the attacks by tactical aviation will have a massed character, although strikes by small groups and even individual aircraft are not excluded. The actions of the assault groups, in turn, will be supported by the actions of groups which provide cover, neutralize the air defense airfields, create jamming as well as diversionary groups."<sup>25</sup> One of the most important factors that affect the outcome of the attacks on AD systems is the achievement of a certain degree of surprise, which can compensate for lack of firepower or ECM.

A correct combination of weapon systems and the surprise factor is the key to the neutralization of a PVO system.

The very existence of various types of aircraft, equipment and ordnance, all of which are interchangeable, allows in broad limits the change in the structure and character of the strikes. The experience of local wars shows that every attack of aviation was carried out in an exclusive manner. Strikes were not similar to one another, neither by the structure of forces nor by altitude or directions. Apart from that, various tactical methods were used: false ingress to the target, ingress to dummy targets, activation of diversion groups of aircraft and deception groups by imitation of flight of heavy bombers by tight formations of tactical interceptors. Strikes were launched in various hours of the day, including the second half of the night. Jamming was being operated in a similar way.<sup>26</sup>

It was only natural that during a prolonged conflict like the Vietnam War, a new generation of ordnance would enter into operational use. However, unlike in previous wars, its entrance did not stop the active use of older systems. The most noticeable was the introduction of "smart" munitions. Their use, however, did not eliminate the use of general-purpose bombs.

Conventional weapons—aerial bombs—were used most extensively in strikes against air defense facilities in Vietnam. It was only by the end of the war that the use of guided rocket missiles of the Shrike type with homing devices zeroing in on radar stations were used on an intensified scale. This is explained by the fact that the new means of destruction of increased accuracy (with laser, television and radio command guidance) required that the pilot, in approaching the target, maintain a steady flight regime over a rather large sector of the path. The vulnerability of the aircraft which does not perform missile or anti-aircraft fire evasive maneuvers is sharply increased. In addition to that, aerial guided bombs could be used only under conditions of visual observation of the target, which likewise limited the selection of a variant of bomb suspension. In connection with the widespread utilization of conventional bombs, it was necessary to constantly perfect the old attack methods with application to the counteraction of new air defense systems. The use of conventional bombs not ensuring a high density of hits required the allocation of a large contingent of forces for the purpose of destroying one air defense installation. The number of attack aircraft in an attack could be decreased only with the organization of reliable guidance (target designation) or with the ability of the personnel to fire and bomb accurately. In order to facilitate the designation of the subject of the strike and to determine the aiming mark, it was first necessary to designate the target using signaling devices and aircraft with more perfect navigational systems.<sup>27</sup>

An important factor in the success of an attack of tactical fighter-bombers, however, is the ability to choose the correct tactic and weapon system to reduce the vulnerability of the attacking bomber. This factor manifests itself in the timing of formation flight and the execution of single fighter-bomber maneuvers. Another com-

ponent is the choosing of a weapon system in order to achieve the highest degree of tactical surprise. Surprise has a growing importance in long conflicts such as the Vietnam War, when both sides get to know each others' major weapon systems and basic maneuvers. Since each weapon system implies the execution of an optimal maneuver, the choice of weapon system affects the degree of tactical surprise directly. Tactical aviation has adequate means for achieving surprise, and no doubt the possibilities will increase as aircraft equipment and ordnance become more perfect.<sup>28</sup> Still, despite a growing variety of weapon systems, even without the growing efficiency of the PVO, experience improves the effectiveness of PVO crews and forces tactical aviation to look for improvements, too. ". . . fire tactics must be changed periodically, . . . [for] delay in the introduction of new tactical techniques or attack methods was always accompanied by a sharp increase in losses in aircraft."<sup>29</sup> Thus, one of the most important lessons of local wars in general and of the Vietnam War in particular teaches that there is a trend toward the drastic reduction of the periods in which a certain tactic or weapon system of tactical aviation would be regarded as either tactical surprise or a problem with no feasible solution. However, the range of variations available to tactical aviation is far larger than that of the PVO.

The wide range of weapon systems and tactics employed in the Vietnam War makes it a prime source for future developments of air warfare. No wonder, then, ". . . that conclusions made on the basis of local wars are frequently utilized by reactionary circles in capitalist countries for a further development of the arms race."<sup>30</sup>

The losses inflicted on U.S. tactical aviation by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam PVO, and especially by air defense systems, indicate that at the moment the PVO seems to be on the winning side. "The extensively developed system of detection and guidance, including both mobile and stationary radar stations for anti-

aircraft missile complexes, considerably complicated the execution of strikes by attack aircraft for the purpose of neutralizing air defense facilities."<sup>31</sup> The efficiency and lethality of the AD system grew not only as a result of the introduction of new types of SAMs but as a result of growing mobility and flexibility of the system without hurting the integration and performance of the system. Thus, the initial condition in the conduct of efficient electronic warfare, the detection of components of the AD system became more difficult and more demanding.

On the basis of the experience of "radio electronic warfare" in Vietnam, urgent measures in the USA are being taken to increase the zone of operations of onboard systems of radar detection and warning of crews of the threat of destruction by gunfire or by fire from interceptors.<sup>32</sup>

The most promising tactics are low-level strikes. In spite of disappointments and relative inefficiency in Vietnam, it seems that future bombing raids will be flown in at very low level, thus enabling the pilot to fly below the lethal envelope of the SAM system while eluding the AAA by using high speed during the penetration. The deployment of F-111As to Vietnam should be regarded as a case study for low-level interdiction missions. During the first deployment in 1968, the F-111As performed a small number of missions and suffered a high loss rate. The fighter-bombers could not make use of the two governing tactical elements of low-level interdiction: high speed and low-level flight. During the first sorties, it was discovered that fuel consumption was far greater than predicted and, additionally, that the periods of use of afterburner were longer than anticipated. Thus, periods of "supersonic dash" were curtailed drastically. Electronic equipment also proved to be inadequate and unreliable as far as terrain-following flights were concerned. Pilots did not use the automatic pilot and preferred to fly as high as 90-150 meters (300-500 feet), thus entering into the operational zone of the air defense radar system. During its redeployment in 1972, 48 F-111As flew some 4000 sorties, losing 6 aircraft.

"In accordance with the American 'scorched earth tactics' on targets in the DRV, 7400 aerial bombs were dropped."<sup>33</sup> The majority of the sorties were deep penetrations performed during adverse and night conditions at very low altitude, with the F-111As using their terrain-following equipment. Aircraft safety was maintained by use of camouflage, nap-of-the-earth flying, and penetrations by a single F-111A or a pair without fighter cover. In spite of the shortcomings of the F-111As in Vietnam, it is clear that with the improvement of electronic and fuel-saving systems, a low-level bomber becomes a potent weapon system. The follow-up models and especially the new U.S. bomber—the B-1—are designed along these lines.

The B-1 is a supersonic, heavy strategic bomber designed to penetrate air defense systems and to carry out nuclear strikes at the most important targets in the enemy's rear area. . . . The radio electronic counteraction system has been given prominence in the development of the aircraft. Providing it with the possibility of flying long distances at extremely low altitudes was another important element for making the aircraft less vulnerable.<sup>34</sup>

The PVO system also considers the low-level penetration bombers its most challenging adversaries. At present the supersonic dash enables the bombers to elude the AAA while the terrain-following radar and other ECM systems enable them to fly below the lethal envelope of the SAMs. "At present the countering of low-flying targets is considered to be one of the most complex tasks of anti-aircraft defense . . . [because] the effectiveness of weapons designed for countering these targets substantially lags behind the combat capabilities of modern aviation."<sup>35</sup>

Another aspect of air-to-surface activity is close air support and participation in ground battle. "Postwar history does not know of a case in which aviation has not been used in local wars and military conflicts. Combat operations in Vietnam and in the Near East have shown that almost half of the combat flights were accounted for by direct ground support."<sup>36</sup>

The lessons of local wars, and especially the war in Vietnam, were the direct cause of the second birth of the *shturmovikiy* (ground support aircraft). The conditions of the modern battlefield made the previous attack planes too vulnerable while the supersonic fighter-bombers could not make use of their bombload or speed. A single sophisticated fighter-bomber that was shot down cost far more than the tanks it destroyed in its operational lifetime. The high losses and relatively small results of the attack aircraft made it clear that some thorough changes are inevitable.

The maintenance conditions of existing attack aircraft do not fit the requirements of the present-day battlefield. "Since in today's battle, the situation changes rapidly, flight time from base to target is an important factor. The shorter this time, the more effective the strike."<sup>37</sup> Contemporary attack planes require elaborate base facilities and thus cannot accompany the advancing troops. Within a short time, the period of flight to the battlefield grows alarmingly, which is actually the period that the data the pilot has on the position of the ground forces and their requirements is not up-to-date. Lack of up-to-date data imposed the need for visual identification of the target before strikes.

The airplane did not have sufficient maneuverability to ensure the pilot a strike from his first and subsequent approaches without the loss of visual contact with the target. Heavy assault planes overcame that anti-aircraft zone rapidly but were slow in deploying to the target. Light planes, on the other hand, were able to change their flight direction rapidly, but came out of the anti-aircraft zone slowly . . . Assault planes' pilots were given an impossible task—to perform three operations at the same time: seek the target, avoid anti-aircraft fire, and not lose sight of the front line. Under these conditions, pilots frequently made strikes against their own troops.<sup>38</sup>

Analysis of combat operations in Vietnam led to the development of a new generation of ground support attack aircraft. One of these, the A-7D, saw some combat service in Vietnam, while the other, the A-10, is an entirely new airplane. Their task is only direct and close air

support to the ground troops. The basic requirements for assault planes are defined:

—A high level of maneuverability, simple piloting equipment and a good view from the pilot's cabin which ensures a maximum visual search sector;

—Effective weapons for small and mobile targets;

—An acceptable combat action radius and flight duration which ensure the provision of direct ground support and patrolling in the zone for an hour before proceeding to the object of attack;

—Servicing simplicity under field conditions with a minimum expenditure of time for preparing the aircraft for a new flight;

—The possibility of being based on a small dirt airfield.<sup>39</sup>

The new deployment system of the West, using the new attack aircraft, has gone a long way toward meeting these requirements.

The proof that deployment locations are brought closer to the combat activity zone is the reduction of the flight time above "enemy" territory to 30 minutes, as compared with the 50 minutes characteristic to Vietnam. This diminishes the possibility of meeting fighters and increases the survival chances in the fire zone of the PVO means.<sup>40</sup>

Due to these improvements, ground support attack planes are gaining larger and more substantial tasks in the ground battlefield. "Tactical aviation . . . will perform important tasks in the continental theater in the future. Furthermore, it is attributed the role of one of the primary means for achieving the surprise component of the attack."<sup>41</sup>

The aerial warfare above the DRV was of utmost importance. It was an air war of unprecedented scale and intensity.

Until December 31st 1972, when the destructive air war ended, the [North] Vietnamese Air Force participated in more than 400 air battles. Over 320 American warplanes of 17 different types, including the B-52, were destroyed.\* As many as 88 pilots were captured. . . . The Vietnamese Air

\* Editor's note: The United States lost 67 aircraft in air-to-air combat while shooting down 137 North Vietnamese planes. No B-52s were lost to intercepting fighters.

Force together with the entire population and other branches of the Army delivered a mortal blow to the enemy and destroyed a large portion of the strategic and tactical aviation of the American invaders, and in this manner disproved the so-called "absolute advantage" of the USA Air Force. The crushing of the offensive carried out by the USA strategic bombers—B-52s—on Hanoi and Haiphong towards the end of October 1972 became an aerial Dien Bien Phu for the Vietnamese People. . . . Thus, Vietnamese aviation, together with the people and army, won a victory in the American war against North Vietnam. The defense of the Socialist Motherland supported the struggle of the courageous South Vietnamese people and fulfilled its international obligations. Numerous examples of pilots' bravery prove their determination to win this hard war as well as their willingness for self-sacrifice. Day by day, the skill of these flying warriors increased, and they won more, and more frequent, victories in

air combats and in strikes against the armies on the land and in the water.<sup>42</sup>

The war in Vietnam set a pattern for local wars, and it will undoubtedly shape the future conflicts that must, inevitably, erupt. "The experience of local wars testifies that the imperialists surreptitiously develop plans of invasion, and secretly prepare the forces which will carry out the surprise attack with huge forces of aviation and tanks. Hence the great importance of permanent vigilance in the armed forces, and of their high preparedness to repel the aggression."<sup>43</sup>

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## air force review

### A DIFFERENT BREED OF CATS

*the Air National Guard and the  
1968 reserve mobilizations*

DR. CHARLES J. GROSS

*We had a different breed of cats when we got the Guard over here. You know these airline pilots that you got, they have been flying instruments all of their lives. We have to spend a lot of time getting people the way they can fly. These kids [in the regular Air Force] we have to watch like hawks. We don't have to do that with the Air Guard. We can turn them loose. They can go on because they can understand how to fly. . . . Their average pilot time in the F-100 is 1,000 hours. In my squadrons here, my average time in the F-100 is 150 hours.<sup>1</sup>*

General George S. Brown

**T**ODAY, America relies heavily on its military reserves. In the all-volunteer era, they must fill the gap between active duty forces and military requirements until additional trained manpower becomes available in an emergency.



All policymaking, programming, and budgetary decisions within the Department of Defense are supposed to be based on an equal consideration of the capabilities of both active duty and reserve forces. The ambitious objective of this total force policy is to ensure the best mix of these forces in the event of war. To work, the policy requires high-quality reserve forces that can be employed immediately upon mobilization. However, America's reserve forces, historically, have been ill-prepared to play this demanding role. Plagued by materiel and manpower shortages, inadequate training, and the apathy of military professionals, the reserves have usually taken substantial periods of time after mobilization to prepare for combat. Despite the total force policy, many of these prob-

lems persist today, leading some observers to doubt whether the reserves could be relied on in the early stages of a conflict.

However, the Air National Guard is truly a "different breed of cats." It has emerged as an exception to the historic inadequacies of America's reserve forces. Since World War II, the Air Guard has evolved into a proficient military organization, relied on by the Air Force to help fulfill a broad range of demanding missions. For example, 65 percent of the fighter interceptor force, 57 percent of the tactical reconnaissance, 36 percent of the tactical air support, 30 percent of the tactical airlift, and 17 percent of the aerial tankers available to the Air Force in 1980 were flown by Air Guardsmen. During the limited reserve mobilizations following North Korea's seizure of the USS *Pueblo* and the Tet offensive in 1968, selected Air Guard units performed superbly while others had a difficult transition to active duty. An examination of their record in that period suggests some of the prerequisites and pitfalls for successful reserve programs under the auspices of the total force.<sup>2</sup>

The Air Guard is an anomalous military organization. Although controlled by the states when not mobilized, its missions are almost entirely federal. Its organization, training, and equipment are prescribed by the U.S. Air Force. Almost all of its funding is provided by Washington. Despite its professional military orientation, the Air Guard is also a highly political force. It owes its very existence to the politics of postwar defense planning during World War II. Under pressure from the National Guard Association and its political allies, General George C. Marshall had agreed that the National Guard would retain its prewar position as the Army's primary combat reserve force. The Army Air Forces, cultivating support for its goal of postwar independence, reluctantly agreed to General Marshall's plans. Against its better professional judgment, it had accepted a dual-component reserve system consisting of an Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard.<sup>3</sup>

Plagued by inadequate budgets, poor plan-

ning, active force neglect, and squabbles over command authority, the Air Guard was little more than a glorified flying club before the Korean War. These factors prevented it from molding the wealth of World War II combat fliers and relatively modern aircraft available to it into an effective military organization. However, that so-called Asian "police action" stimulated its evolution into a viable combat reserve force. Stunned by the mobilization fiasco in 1950 and prodded by the Guard's leadership, the Air Force moved to strengthen its reserve programs during the fifties. Abundant Air Force appropriations under the Eisenhower administration's New Look helped provide the means to implement this policy. The role of the National Guard Bureau's Air Division was especially critical. Led by Major Generals Earl T. Ricks and Winston P. Wilson, it pressed the Air Force to revamp the Air Guard's missions, training, and facilities. Gradually, the Air Guard evolved into a viable reserve program with a limited, albeit real, operational capability.<sup>4</sup>

The three most significant policy innovations in the Air Guard's long metamorphosis from flying club to air combat force were its participation in the air defense runway alert program, the gaining command concept of reserve forces management, and the selected reserve force program. The first of these was an outgrowth of discussions between the National Guard Bureau and the Continental Air Command, the Air Force command responsible for supervising all air reserve forces' training. It began in 1953 as an experiment designed to improve training by augmenting the Air Defense Command's runway alert program with Air Guard crews and aircraft from two fighter squadrons. Despite initial Air Staff doubts and resistance, the experiment was an outstanding success. It was expanded into a full-fledged permanent program that included 25 of the Air Guard's fighter squadrons participating on a round-the-clock basis by 1961. The runway alert program was the first large-scale effort to integrate reserve units into the regular peace-

time operating structure of the armed forces on a continuing basis. This limited integration with the active force during peacetime later served as a model for the total force.<sup>5</sup>

The second major innovation, the Air Force's gaining command concept of reserve forces management, was grudgingly adopted in 1960, primarily because of budget cuts and public criticism of the air reserve programs by General Curtis E. LeMay, then Air Force Vice Chief of Staff. The gaining command concept was implemented after years of Air Force opposition. Essentially, it made organizations such as the Tactical Air Command responsible for the training and operational readiness of all reserve units assigned to them in contingency plans. These units would be held accountable to the same rigorous standards as their active duty counterparts. Previously, Air Guard and Air Force Reserve units had all been trained by the Continental Air Command (CONAC), an organization having no direct stake in their wartime performance. The gaining command concept contributed significantly to the Air Guard's operational readiness by giving Air Force commanders direct personal incentives to enhance its performance. Furthermore, it signaled the beginning of across-the-board Air Guard peacetime support of Air Force missions. The gaining command concept established firm precedents for the total force by integrating reserve units into the daily operations of the active Air Force.<sup>6</sup>

The final major innovation reflected Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's determination to create an elite force of immediately deployable reserve units that could support DOD's flexible response policy. Unlike his predecessors, McNamara was convinced that a prolonged and massive World War II-style mobilization was somewhat unlikely. To improve readiness, he sought to shrink America's large reserve establishment as well as merge its National Guard and reserve components. When Congress frustrated these proposals, McNamara ordered creation of the selected reserve

force. It provided a major segment of America's strategic military reserve in the continental United States while the active duty establishment was increasingly tied down by the escalating war in Southeast Asia.<sup>7</sup>

The Air Guard's portion of the selected reserve force consisted of nine tactical fighter groups, four tactical reconnaissance groups, and one tactical control group. Like other elements of the force, these Air Guard units had priority access to equipment, could recruit to full wartime strength, and were authorized additional paid training periods each year. Their objective was to develop the ability to deploy overseas within 24 hours of a mobilization. Despite some substantial problems, the program proved its value in 1968.<sup>8</sup>

On 23 January 1968, the North Koreans seized the USS *Pueblo*, an electronics surveillance vessel collecting intelligence data along its coast. The seizure was a painful setback for the United States. Already struggling to balance military commitments against inadequate resources and hold together declining public support for the Vietnam War, President Lyndon B. Johnson had no wish to be drawn into another inconclusive conflict for murky purposes in Asia. Unlike the response to the capture of the United States Embassy in Teheran years later, low-keyed official statements signaled that the U.S. would rely on quiet diplomacy to free the *Pueblo* hostages.<sup>9</sup>

Despite President Johnson's desire to downplay the *Pueblo* crisis, the South Korean government had to be reassured by an overt display of American resolve. Fearing that the capture of the *Pueblo* was a prelude to a North Korean invasion, the South Korean government proposed withdrawal of its troops from South Vietnam. To placate our ally, the President dispatched some 350 Air Force tactical aircraft to South Korea and mobilized approximately 14,000 naval and air reservists. The reservists replaced regular units from the depleted strategic reserve in the continental United States. Although war was avoided on the Korean pen-



insula, the Communists' Tet offensive in South Vietnam during February 1968 soon placed additional pressure on U.S. military resources. In March, the President decided to mobilize 22,200 more reservists.<sup>10</sup>

The *Pueblo* crisis confronted the Air Guard with its third partial mobilization since World War II. Its performance in 1968 was demonstrably superior to its showing either during the Korean War or the 1961 Berlin crisis, the Air Guard's only other mobilizations. Without warning, the President issued Executive Order No. 11392 on 25 January 1968, mobilizing 9343 Air Guardsmen. Within 36 hours, approximately 95 percent of them had reported to their units. They manned eight tactical fighter and three tactical reconnaissance groups. The fighter units were members of the selected reserve force. Unlike their counterparts in 1950 and 1961, they were rated combat-ready by the Air Force when activated and could have been deployed overseas within a few days. The reconnaissance units were not immediately classified combat-ready, primarily due to equipment shortages, but within one month they could have been deployed abroad.<sup>11</sup>

For nearly three months, the fate of the mobilized Air Guardsmen remained uncertain. The *Pueblo* crisis failed to escalate into a war. In South Vietnam, the Tet offensive devastated Communist forces on the battlefield but enabled them to score a stunning victory with American public and elite political opinion. Tet caused a palpable shift of popular sentiment in the United States against the war. This encouraged a furious policy debate within the Johnson administration. Meanwhile, military planners scrambled to find new uses for the mobilized Air Guardsmen who languished in limbo at their home stations.<sup>12</sup>

In late April, the fate of the mobilized Air Guardsmen was finally resolved. Four Air Guard fighter squadrons were alerted for deployment to South Vietnam. The first stage of this movement ended on 3 May when 20 F-100 Super Sabres from Colorado's 120th Tactical

Fighter Squadron landed at Phan Rang Air Base in South Vietnam. By 1 June, all of its pilots were flying combat missions. Meanwhile, three other Air Guard fighter squadrons—Iowa's 174th, New Mexico's 188th, and New York's 136th—had also deployed to that war-torn nation. Moreover, 85 percent of the personnel in the Vietnam-based 355th Tactical Fighter Squadron, nominally an active Air Force unit, were Air Guardsmen.<sup>13</sup>

Air Guardsmen were quickly and effectively integrated into Air Force operations in South Vietnam. Their tactical fighter squadrons saw combat there from June 1968 through April 1969. Air Guard pilots flew 24,124 sorties and 38,614 combat hours during that period. If the preponderantly Air Guard 355th Tactical Fighter Squadron was included, those totals climbed to approximately 30,000 sorties and 50,000 combat hours. Scheduled missions included close air support, aircraft escort, and landing zone construction (i.e., bombing landing sites so helicopters would have places to set down in the jungle). Air Guard squadrons also maintained aircraft on alert to respond quickly in emergencies. During their active duty service in South Vietnam, seven Air Guard pilots and one intelligence officer were killed by enemy fire; fourteen aircraft were lost. Each of the five guard-manned fighter squadrons completed its combat tour without a reportable accident due to pilot, materiel, or maintenance failure.<sup>14</sup>

The Air Force was highly impressed by the Air Guard's combat performance in South Vietnam. The 35th Tactical Fighter Wing's official history praised their professionalism and skill. The *Air Reservist* magazine reported that Air Guardsmen were:

... flying more combat missions than other [i.e., regular Air Force] squadrons at their bases, and in-commission rates, bomb damage assessment, and other criteria by which tactical fighter units are judged, rate higher than other F-100 squadrons in the zone.<sup>15</sup>

SHORTLY after the Air Guard units arrived, General George S. Brown became Sev-

enth Air Force Commander in South Vietnam in 1968. Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee during his confirmation hearings as Air Force Chief of Staff in 1973, General Brown gave a glowing assessment of those units. He emphasized that:

I had . . . five F-100 Air National Guard squadrons. . . . Those were the five best F-100 squadrons in the field. The aircrews were a little older, but they were more experienced, and the maintenance people were also more experienced than the regular units. They had done the same work on the same weapons system for years, and they had [personnel] stability that a regular unit doesn't have.<sup>16</sup>

Two Air Guard fighter squadrons—the 166th from Columbus, Ohio, and the 127th from Wichita, Kansas—were dispatched to Kunsan Air Base in South Korea with their 50 F-100Cs during the summer of 1968. These squadrons, together with Air Force Reservists and individual Guardsmen who had been split from their own units after mobilization, formed the newly established 354th Tactical Fighter Wing. It replaced three regular Air Force tactical fighter squadrons that had been withdrawn after the *Pueblo* crisis cooled.<sup>17</sup>

In some respects, Air Guardsmen in South Korea had much more difficult assignments than their counterparts in South Vietnam. With the exception of personnel in the two fighter squadrons, most Air Guardsmen in South Korea were individuals who had been transferred from their original units after mobilization and reassigned to new organizations. This wholesale violation of unit integrity had a severe impact on morale and required time-consuming reorganization. Furthermore, these new units inherited dilapidated bases almost entirely devoid of the elaborate support organizations that sustained their counterparts in South Vietnam. Ironically, they had to rebuild the support service units that had been stripped from them in the United States after mobilization. This caused many public complaints by disgruntled Air Guardsmen. Although these problems were gradually resolved, many Air

Guardsmen believed that they could have been avoided if their original units had deployed overseas intact.<sup>18</sup>

Aircraft maintenance and flying operations in South Korea also posed major challenges. Maintenance for F-100Cs was a problem because the Air Force had not stationed those aircraft in Korea for several years and no longer stocked spare parts for them there. Consequently, many items had to be shipped from Japan and frequently from the continental United States. Although the 354th was able to keep 84.4 percent of its aircraft operational in July, spare parts and the strain of heavy flying schedules made it impossible to sustain that rate. By December 1968, the wing's readiness rate fell below the 71 percent Air Force minimum. Due to an afterburner maintenance problem, all of the 354th's F-100 Super Sabres were temporarily grounded that month. Meanwhile, the wing had been forced to drop its original operational mission. The Air Force rediscovered that the F-100C was not a good air defense aircraft. It was slow in attaining altitude and lacked an effective all-weather, air-to-air combat capability. Consequently, the 354th's aircraft were redesignated fighter-bombers and began supporting ground forces training in Korea.<sup>19</sup>

Maintenance and operational problems continued to plague the 354th early in 1969. Spare parts shortages persisted. From January through March, four Super Sabres crashed, and one pilot was killed. The wing failed an operational readiness inspection (ORI). Although extremely cold weather and spare part shortages contributed to the failure, the inspection report highlighted operational problems that implied lax training. For example, aircrews had flown nonstandard formations and were achieving poor bombing scores. Ground crews failed to load aircraft munitions within prescribed times. Air Force inspectors rated the 354th only marginally prepared for combat.<sup>20</sup>

With the return of the *Pueblo's* crew, Air Guardsmen in South Korea were scheduled for

release from active duty. Their final months overseas concluded on a positive note. The 354th passed a second ORI. Both of its fighter squadrons regained the fully combat-ready ratings they had brought to Korea. Air Guardsmen returned home in May and June. Although they had not enjoyed the same unalloyed success as their counterparts in South Vietnam, the Guardsmen had performed a valuable military service when America's military and political resources had been stretched thin. Their deficiencies could have been minimized by better Air Force planning. Adequate stocks of F-100 spares should have been obtained by Air Force when it became evident that those aircraft were going to be assigned to South Korea. More significantly, the deployment of cohesive Air Guard units, including support organizations, might have minimized many of their morale and operational problems.<sup>21</sup>

The active duty performance of the Air Guard's 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing was also mixed. The wing was mobilized on 26 January 1968, but its three flying squadrons had not been included in the "Combat Beef" program. They were not rated combat-ready primarily because of equipment shortages. The Air Force created additional problems for the 123rd when it directed three separate reorganizations of the wing after mobilization. These actions stripped many personnel from the organization and contributed to the wing's unsatisfactory showing during an ORI in October. At that point it received a marginal combat readiness rating from Tactical Air Command inspectors. The 123rd finally passed an ORI and obtained an acceptable combat readiness rating in January 1969. However, it got a marginal rating during a no-notice inspection by the Twelfth Air Force's Inspector General the following month. Thus, one year after mobilization, it had not fully measured up to Air Force standards.<sup>22</sup>

Despite these difficulties, the 123rd made substantial contributions to the Air Force during active duty service in 1968-69. Shortly after

its mobilization, it became the primary working tactical reconnaissance wing in the continental United States. Its three operational squadrons flew photo missions throughout the country. In July, each of those squadrons began rotating responsibility for temporary duty tours at Itazuke Air Base, Japan, and a forward element at Osan Air Base, Korea. They provided photo reconnaissance for U.S. forces in Korea and Japan. The Guardsmen continued flying these missions until April 1969.<sup>23</sup>

The 123rd's mobilization performance fell short of the rapid response capability claimed for the Air Guard. This was primarily because the wing had not shared the manning, training, and equipment priorities established for selected reserve force units. Its sweeping post-mobilization reorganizations had further delayed the 123rd's achievement of operational readiness. Nevertheless, it flew a total of 19,715 tactical hours, launched 11,561 sorties, and processed 841,601 feet of aerial film. The wing was commended for its service in South Korea by Lieutenant General Thomas K. McGehee, Fifth Air Force Commander. Although part of the wing was demobilized in December 1968, the bulk of its personnel returned to civilian life the following June.<sup>24</sup>

THE Air Guard's mixed mobilization performance during 1968-69 illustrated many of the strengths and pitfalls of air reserve programs. Guard fighter units deployed to South Vietnam had consistently equaled or surpassed their active force counterparts. They had deployed as cohesive units and were quickly integrated into the existing Air Force support structure. Because F-100s were already being flown by active Air Force units in that combat theater, adequate spare parts and maintenance services were readily available. Furthermore, there was an enormous amount of Air Force combat expertise with the Super Sabre in Vietnam which the Guardsmen could easily tap.

More significantly, the Air Guard units in

South Vietnam had been ready to assume operational roles when they were mobilized in 1968. Policy initiatives including the selected reserve force and the gaining command concept had enabled the Air Force to build some extremely well-equipped and well-trained reserve organizations. By providing adequate resources and training, the Air Force had been able to exploit the greatest latent strength of these units, the experience of their personnel.

The cutting edge of any tactical air unit is its pilots. Most of the Air Guard pilots had learned their trade in the Air Force. Many of them were airline pilots or flew their own private planes. In general, they were much more experienced fliers than their active Air Force counterparts in Vietnam. These pilots, like other Guard personnel, had gone to the same schools and trained according to the same demanding standards as active Air Force personnel. They continued to do so when they became Air Guardsmen. In effect, the Air Guard program enabled the Air Force to maintain their expensive skills at relatively low costs.

Maintenance was another key element in the success of these units. The Air Force was extremely impressed with the high quality of Air Guard maintenance in Vietnam. This was mainly due to the skill and leadership of Air Guard technicians. Technicians were full-time, quasi-military members of the Air Guard who had been responsible for the daily operations of their units prior to mobilization. They accounted for 20 percent of each unit's total manpower. Most of them were concentrated in the critical aircraft maintenance function. Like the Air Guard's pilots, most of these technicians were Air Force veterans. As a group, the maintenance technicians in South Vietnam possessed a level of experience with the F-100 unmatched in active Air Force units. Moreover, technicians, whether they were maintenance, supply, administration, or flight supervision specialists, provided continuity seldom found in regular units. They were the heart of Air Guard cohesion, expertise, and esprit de corps.

Despite the sterling performance of its units in South Vietnam, the Air Guard had its problems and limitations. Difficulties encountered by some Air Guard flying units during the 1968 mobilizations suggested the importance of adequate materiel support, full integration of reserve units into active force operations, and better understanding of reserve capabilities by military professionals. Air Guard fighter units deployed to Korea suffered from the absence of established support services and inadequate stocks of spare parts. If active Air Force units had been flying the Super Sabres in Korea, many of these problems could have been ameliorated or avoided entirely. The 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing had not benefited from the selective reserve force program prior to its mobilization. Consequently, its active duty performance was degraded by inadequate training as well as personnel and equipment shortages. Both the Korean-based fighter units and the 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing were hampered by sweeping postmobilization reorganizations that stripped them of key personnel and vital support organizations. Wholesale violation of unit integrity slowed the development of those units into combat-ready organizations. The F-100s assigned to Air Guardsmen in South Korea were aging and clearly unsuited to the most pressing operational responsibilities in the event of an attack by the North Koreans.

DESPITE problems encountered by some of its units during the *Pueblo* mobilization, the Air Guard had clearly emerged as a first-line combat reserve force with units capable of rapid global deployment. The performance of selected Air Guard units in 1968-69 suggested the prerequisites of effective air reserve programs and paved the way for adoption of the total force policy in 1970 by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird. Air Guardsmen demonstrated that well-trained, well-equipped units firmly integrated into the Air Force's daily peacetime operations performed up to the professional

standards of their active force counterparts. Although the Air Guard could not necessarily serve as a total model for ground forces' programs, its experience during the *Pueblo* crisis

brought to light some premobilization prerequisites of successful reserve programs under the total force.

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#### Notes

1. As quoted by Major General Winston P. Wilson in Air Force Logistics Command Oral History Interview #19 conducted by Charles J. Gross, 17-18 December 1978 at Forrest City, Arkansas. General Brown was U.S. Air Force commander in South Vietnam when Air National Guard units arrived in 1968; General Wilson was Chief of the National Guard Bureau at that time.
2. "The Air National Guard," *Air Force*, May 1980, p. 128.
3. Charles J. Gross, "Prelude to the Total Force: The Origins and Development of the Air National Guard, 1943-1969," pp. 9-35, monograph to be published in 1983 by the Office of Air Force History, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. Hereafter cited as Gross, "Prelude to the Total Force."
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-67.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 177-80, 213.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-9.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 261-66. Department of Defense, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, July 1, 1965 to June 30, 1966* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 30. Hereafter cited as DOD, *Report for FY66*. Abott A. Brayton, "American Reserve Policies since World War II," *Military Affairs*, December 1972, p. 141.
8. DOD, *Report for FY66*, p. 31. Letter, Lieutenant General J. B. Lampert, Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of Defense, to Congressman William T. Cahill, 2 August 1967, Re: President Johnson's Decision Not to Mobilize the Reserves For Vietnam, Box 182, ND 13 FG 13, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Texas, U.S., NGB, *Annual Report of the Chief, NGB for the Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1966*, p. 40. Untitled news item, *Air Reservist*, February 1967, p. 4.
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10. Johnson, *Vantage Point*, pp. 385-87. Hoopes, *Limits*, pp. 136-37. DOD, *Report for FY68*, p. 39.
11. U.S., NGB, *Annual Report of the Chief, NGB for the Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1968* (Washington, D.C.: Departments of the Army and Air Force, 1968), p. 7. Hereafter cited as NGB, *Report for FY68*. "The Air Guard in the Korean Crisis," *National Guardsman*, March 1968, p. 2. 140th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), *History of the 140th TFW, 26 Jan. 1968-30 April 1969* (Buckley ANGB, Colorado: 140th TFW, June 1969), p. 1. Hereafter cited as 140th TFW, *History, Jan. 1968-April 1969*. Memo., Assistant SAF (Manpower and Reserve) to Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and

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12. Johnson, *Vantage Point*, pp. 385-422. Hoopes, *Limits*, pp. 159-81.

13. 140th TFW, *History, Jan. 1968-April 1969*, pp. 1, 5. NGB, *Report for FY68*, p. 7. U.S., NGB, *Annual Report of the Chief, NGB for the Fiscal Year 1969* (Washington, D.C.: Departments of the Army and Air Force, 1969), p. 11. Hereafter cited as NGB, *Report for FY69*.

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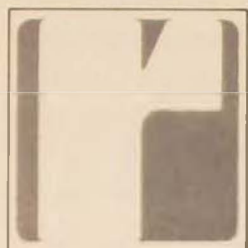
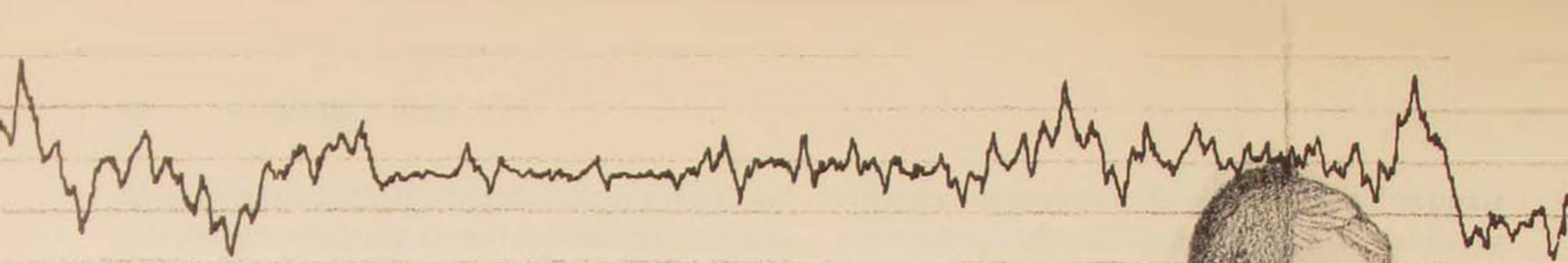
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22. *History of the 123rd TRW, 1 July-31 December 1968* (Richards-Gebaur AFB, Missouri: 123rd TRW, undated), pp. 6-9, 21. Hereafter cited as 123rd TRW, *History, July-December '68*. *History of the 123rd TRW, 1 January-9 June 1969* (Richards-Gebaur AFB, Missouri: 123rd TRW, undated), pp. 10-12. Hereafter cited as 123rd TRW, *History, January-June '69*.

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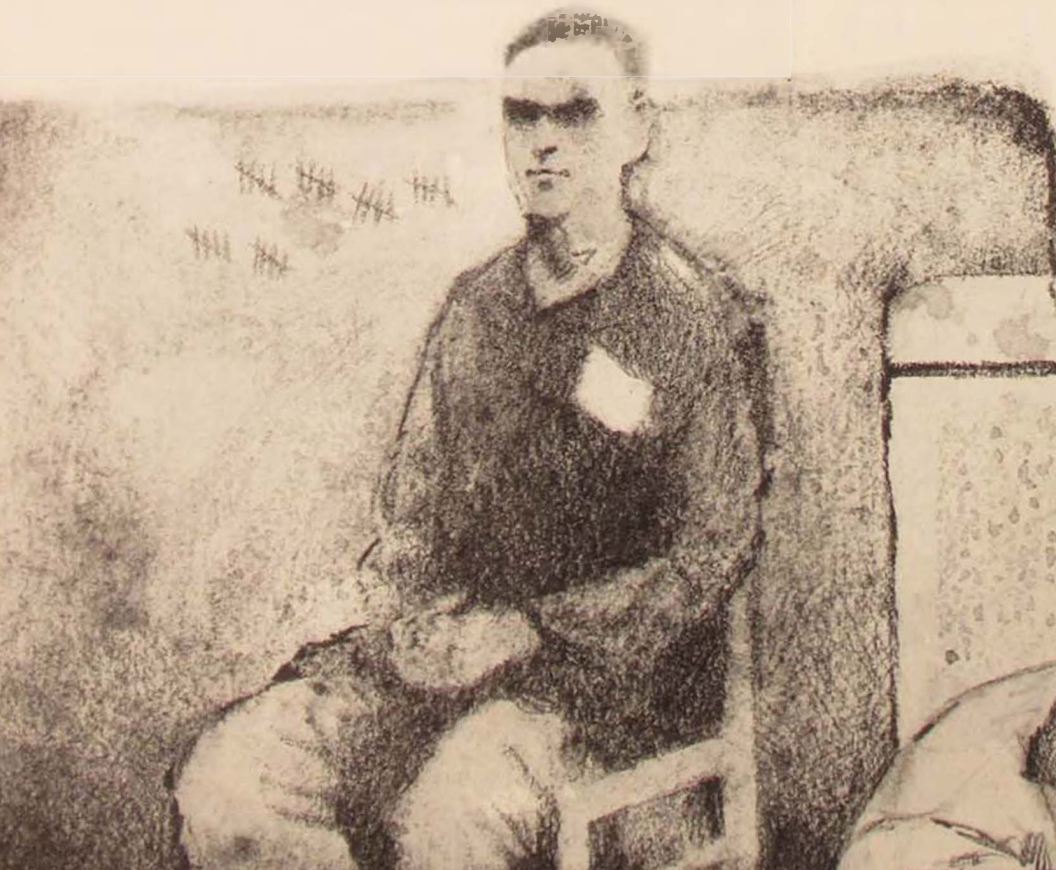
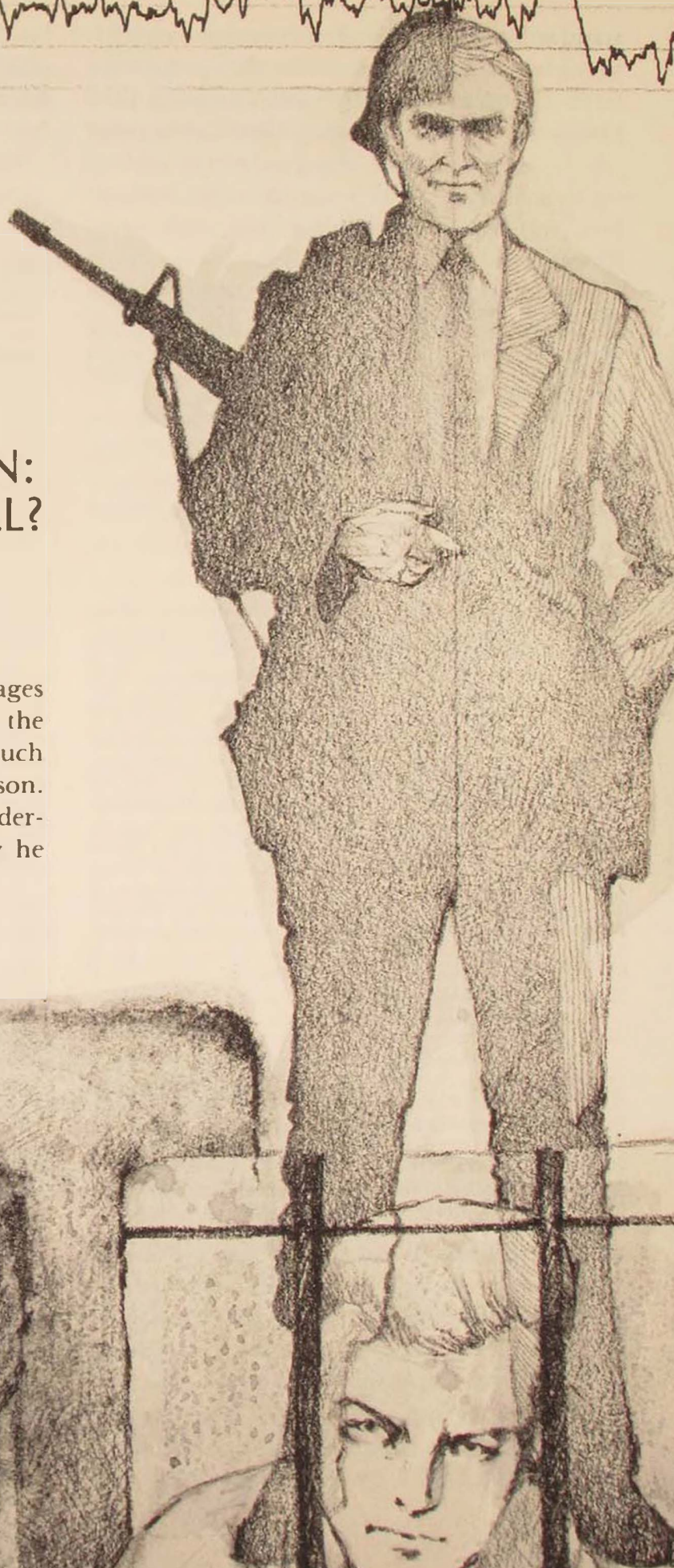


## fire counter fire

# COERCIVE PERSUASION: THE MYTH OF FREE WILL?

DR. EDNA J. HUNTER

**A**LTHOUGH there have been hostages and prisoners of war (POWs) since the beginning of recorded history, fortunately such experience is beyond that of the average person. Thus, it is difficult for most people to understand what a captive goes through, how he



cope with a no-way-out situation, and what effects it has on him in the future.

For the past fourteen years I have studied stressful conditions: life aboard ship and under the sea, and sleep-deprived, sensory-isolated, and socially deprived environments, such as prisoners-of-war experience. I have been either directly or indirectly involved with the survivors of the concentration camp experience, the prisoners of war of Germany and Japan during World War II, the *Pueblo* crew, the prisoners of war and the missing in action of the Vietnam conflict, the Patty Hearst case, the Iranian hostage families, and, most recently, the U.S. Marine Corps Private First Class Robert Garwood trial.

Two major research questions—one medical and the other legal or ethical—underlie all these situations. The first is a medical question: *Are there physical or psychological residuals of prolonged extreme stress?* The answer is yes. In fact, as a result of our Vietnam POW studies and other earlier studies, when the revised *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 1980) was published, for the first time it contained a category called the "Chronic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." Inclusion of this disorder was recognition that prolonged severe stress can indeed leave permanent scars on the victim. Specifically, *chronic traumatic stress disorder* is defined as a cluster of symptoms resulting from a psychologically traumatic event, such as coercive persuasion (brainwashing) or being held captive or hostage, that is outside the range of usual human experience. The disorder is characterized by recurrent painful recollections of the traumatic event, a psychological numbing or blunted effect, and a variety of psychosomatic disorders, primarily anxiety, masking an underlying depression.

The second is a legal/ethical question: *If there are residuals of extreme stress, are these effects such that they actually diminish one's ability to distinguish right from wrong and thus remove responsibility for behavior that*

*might otherwise be considered criminal?* This question came up in the Korean turncoat situation, the Patty Hearst abduction, and most recently in the Garwood court-martial. We still have no definitive yes or no answer to the question, primarily because it is an ethical one. The answer requires a judgment; thus, there can be differences of opinion based on the same set of so-called facts.

This article will review some of the major findings from the seven-year POW/MIA study carried out at the San Diego Center for Prisoner of War Studies,<sup>1</sup> explain how the Southeast Asia experience differed from the recent Iranian hostage crisis, and also comment on the Garwood trial, in order to present new insights into the implications of the prisoner of war hostage trauma.

RESEARCH carried out at the Center for Prisoner of War Studies from 1971 to 1978 was prompted by humanitarian concerns, but it also offered a unique opportunity to study the effects of prolonged extreme stress that could never be duplicated in a laboratory. Additionally, this research effort made it possible to understand better the etiology of the excessively high morbidity and mortality rates reported for POWs of other wars. For example, former prisoners of war of the Japanese during World War II and those of the Korean conflict showed significantly higher mortality rates the first ten years after their return than those veterans who had not been captured.

Some of the questions asked by the Center's research remain pertinent today to military planners, as well as to the State Department and large international corporations that send their employees into nations where the risks of terrorism are high. These research hypotheses included such questions as the following: What factors determine who dies and who survives? Why are some individuals able to cope with extreme prolonged stress and still go on to lead productive lives while others curl up in the

fetal position shortly after capture and succumb to "give-up-itis"? What are the typical coping techniques used by both captive and family members in dealing with the situation? Are the stresses created for POW/MIA spouses reflected in their (the wives') physical health? What are the effects on children of prolonged, indeterminant father absence?

It is impossible to summarize seven years of research in a few pages. Thus, only a few of the major contributions of that first-of-a-kind study can be mentioned. Among other things, we learned the following:

- Most human beings can cope with much, much more stress, both physical and psychological, than they ever thought they could.
- The physical stresses of captivity have fewer long-term effects than the psychological ones.
- Military families experience their own form of "captivity," a process of grieving over the loss of POW/MIA husbands analogous to the process experienced by the captives in coping with their loss of freedom.
- While data on the impact of the prolonged absence of a family member on parents, adult siblings, and male spouses are sparse, it is clear that the ability of children to cope with extreme stress in the absence of a father is a reflection of the mother's ability to cope effectively.
- There is a whole range of coping abilities. Although older, more mature, intelligent, and highly educated committed individuals are likely to cope better, personality factors definitely enter into the ability to cope and resist coercive persuasion by the captor.
- The person who typically feels that everything that happens to him is due to luck or fate, does less well in a stress situation, particularly a sustained stress situation, than the one who has built-in self-determination.
- The length of time in captivity, harshness of treatment, and the whim of the captor determine not only who is given favored treatment but who survives. Thus official reaction to the prisoner on his return, from reception as

a hero to being court-martialed, is to some extent determined by the conditions of captivity and the captor's treatment of him.

- Aside from the event of capture itself and actual physical torture, solitary confinement is perhaps the most stressful of captor treatments.
- Debilitation resulting from sleep deprivation or physical illness lowers one's ability to cope or resist.
- Virtually every POW can be made to do something he did not think he could be made to do if the treatment is sufficiently harsh and prolonged.
- The period of time one has the power to refrain from behaving in ways which could be viewed as collaboration lasts for a much shorter time than most POWs would have guessed prior to capture, usually one-half hour to three hours, at the most.
- If treatment is sufficiently harsh and lasts long enough, the narrow dictates of the Military Code of Conduct—giving only name, rank, serial number, and birthdate—are impossible to follow strictly.
- Training and knowledge acquired prior to capture can help one survive prolonged extreme stress. In other words, knowing what to expect and knowing that others have survived helps. Knowing that the body heals itself reduces anxieties; so does knowing that one will not die from blood poisoning just because streaks begin emanating from that open wound. Knowing Grandma's home remedies also helps, as does knowing what to do for heat rash when there is no talcum powder, or for an excruciating toothache when there is no dentist. Certainly, knowing that *everyone*, under certain conditions, can be "broken" can alleviate long-term guilt feelings subsequent to release.
- Support of the group (those in a similar situation) is very crucial for survival for both the captives and their families.
- The first two or three months following capture are the most difficult; after that one adjusts to some degree. It is the ambiguity, for both the POW and the families, and especially



the MIA families, that makes the long wait so very stressful. It is the *not* knowing.

- Both captives and their loved ones at home find themselves on an emotional roller-coaster. Repeatedly, good news gives them hope, only for them to sink to the depths of despair when hope dims again. As these cycles of hope and disappointment continue month after month and year after year, both tend to level out their emotions and develop what has been called "psychological numbing" or a blunted effect. It is too difficult to go up and down like an emotional yo-yo. Controlled emotions may help one cope at the time but can result in a subsequent inability to show spontaneity, which may hamper family adjustment after release.

- There may also be benefits. Who else but a POW or detainee has months and months to contemplate who he is, what he has done, and what he would like to do in the future? Many former POWs have said they learned who they really are and what is really important to them in life while in captivity.

- Because of the separation, many wives found they are really capable, independent persons who can make decisions.

- The families that survived—and most mature, well-established ones did—also look back and perceive some benefits. They report that their marriages are more mature and more cohesive and that their children are more responsible than they would have been had not the long stressful separation intervened.

**T**HERE are both similarities and differences between the Vietnam POW experience and that of the Iranian hostage with regard to time in captivity, treatment by the captor, the process of coping, and the later effects of the experience.

With respect to differences in the length of captivity, the Vietnam POWs were captive an average of five years; some were gone 6, 7, 8,

almost 9 years! The Iranians held their hostages for 14 months.

As for differences in captor treatment, most POWs held in Vietnam were methodically tortured for the first months of captivity; there was no medical treatment, at least only in extreme cases; those in South Vietnam also had to contend with mosquitoes, malaria, and leeches. Injuries were left untreated, broken bones left unset; those with open head wounds usually did not survive to return. For the most part, in Southeast Asia, the food consisted of pumpkin soup and a bit of wormy rice month after month. On the other hand, those hostages held by Iran were provided with medical treatment when ill; one man was actually returned to the United States because of his illness. In Iran, food may have been substandard, but it was adequate to meet basic bodily needs.

The two experiences also differed with regard to the amount of group support they had. Those POWs held in Vietnam were kept in solitary confinement, at least prior to 1969; some were kept in a cell alone the entire time. Communication was forbidden, although the men usually conversed by tap codes through the walls. There was no lack of communication in Iran, except for a few hostages who were segregated from the others, and for those few more long-term effects from the experience can perhaps be anticipated.

As for mail communications, many of the families of the Vietnam POWs did not know for three years whether their husbands, sons, and fathers were dead or held captive. The first mail for the families of men captured early in the conflict did not reach them until three years after capture, and then it was only a six-line letter once a month, if that. Some families did not know whether their POW was alive until the time of release in 1973. One wife had had no word for almost nine years and presumed her husband dead; she was planning to remarry within the immediate future when the imminent release was announced and her husband's name was on the list. In contrast, many letters

were allowed to pass between the hostages in Iran and their families, although with little consistency, and the hostages themselves were allowed to talk with each other, at least after the initial few weeks subsequent to the takeover of the embassy.

There were also similarities in both experiences. The event of capture and subsequent confinement were extremely stressful. Even in the absence of brutal treatment, captivity *per se* is stressful—the verbal abuse, being accused of being a criminal or a spy; and being threatened with trial and/or execution. Both the POW in Southeast Asia and the hostage in Iran experienced these stresses. In both, captives experienced the emotional roller-coaster effect mentioned earlier.

All captives and hostages experienced the powerlessness, the denigration, the humiliation, the lowering of self-esteem that occurs when one must cope with a parent-childlike situation, where he must depend on his captor for even the most basic of needs, even the privilege of going to the bathroom.

Guilt feelings, during and after captivity, occurred as a result of a combination of factors: the captor's verbal barrage, the powerlessness and loss of self-esteem ("I'm being punished, thus I must be guilty."); guilt over the family being left to cope alone; guilt, perhaps over not behaving up to one's own standards or of being made to say or sign something while under duress that one did not think he could be made to say or sign; guilt over coming back when others did not live to return, perhaps because they resisted harder, or were killed trying to effect the hostage's rescue.

**T**HERE are essentially two dichotomous ways captives cope with a POW/hostage experience: by resisting vehemently or, especially where the captive or hostage is first threatened with death and then treated nicely and spared, by identifying with the captor and actually feeling favorably toward him, the so-

called Stockholm syndrome.<sup>2</sup> Both ways are valid and effective coping mechanisms for dealing with the anxieties caused by such a powerless, life-threatening situation.

But what about after captivity? Can persons who cope by resisting, or conversely by identifying with the captor, both cope with freedom equally effectively? Certainly it is easier to resist if one is treated very harshly, but the one who resists vehemently is less likely to come back. It is dangerous to show one's hostility overtly toward a captor! If, however, the captor treats one nicely (and that is *his* option), it is normal to identify with him. Both captor and captive have something to lose if the prisoner is not released eventually. It almost appears that the captive unconsciously reasons, "He's not so bad after all; he didn't kill me." In fact, research shows that upon release, the former hostage is more likely to voice hostility toward his rescuer than toward his captor, especially if he was isolated from other captives during his confinement.

**O**F considerable interest is the case of Marine Corps Private First Class Robert Garwood, the former Vietnam POW who suddenly showed up after 14 years. According to Garwood, he was still a prisoner of war in 1979 when he managed to slip a note to a Finnish diplomat in Hanoi, whom he overheard speaking English. Garwood was captured in 1965; those who testified against him at his subsequent court-martial in the United States first saw him in late 1968 or 1969, *almost four years after he was captured*. Those few who did see him during those long years from 1965 to 1968 could not corroborate his story because they were no longer alive; they all died in captivity.

What happened to Garwood during those years? The psychiatrists who examined him prior to his court-martial all said they had no reason to doubt that he was telling the truth. According to Garwood, while on duty as a G2 driver, he was sent to pick up a senior officer.

He overshot his destination, encountered the enemy, and exchanged fire with them. He was wounded in the right arm and then captured. For 13 days, virtually naked, he was marched from small village to small village. He was made a spectacle; villagers poked him with sticks. He was tied and beaten. Often he was caged and tormented. His right arm became badly swollen and infected. Today, he still has a scar from the swelling and the wrist thongs. His right forearm bears evidence of a clean pass-through bullet wound.

During the next three months, he was kept caged in a bamboo tiger cage. He made two escape efforts, but both failed. He began to fast in a suicidal fashion and lost considerable weight. He learned to handle pain through disassociation in the same fashion described by other POWs who testified against him as a method they had also used to cope with extreme pain. Garwood was beaten and held in stocks. He was put in a hole and defecated upon. On one occasion he was forced to observe a "play" that involved a number of South Vietnamese POWs. Two of those prisoners were forced to play Russian roulette with a revolver until one blew off the top of his head. After that incident Garwood was certain that his captors had the power of life or death over him. Thus, according to his report, he became defeated and submissive, and he signed his first propaganda sheet.

All those POWs who testified against him also signed propaganda sheets by their own admission; one even told the North Vietnamese at one point that he would join their side. Garwood continued to be alone for the next three months, except for one other POW with whom he developed a close, almost father-son, relationship. Garwood watched that man die and remorsefully buried him. The officer who befriended Private Garwood in those early months gave him a command (of course, he did not live to verify the story, so we only have Garwood's report as to what he was told): "Your duty as a Marine is to survive. To help you survive, you

must learn to speak Vietnamese." So, as the officer was dying of injuries and illness, he taught him ten words of Vietnamese a day until Garwood was able to get by.

Almost four years passed, and eventually Garwood learned to speak the language fluently. When he finally came in contact with other American POWs, he said he felt that by serving as an interpreter for them—none of them spoke the language well—he could make their existence easier for them; he could help them. But they did not trust him; he spoke the enemy's tongue and was dressed in their attire (they had stripped him of what remained of his uniform four years earlier).

Even when he stole from his captors, endangering himself, and brought the other POWs chickens or medicine, they would not allow him access to their group. They labeled him a nonperson, an outcast.

Much of this, of course, is based on Garwood's own words. However, the tone and content of what he reported is consistent with the experience of other POWs. Finally, those psychiatrists who examined him indicated they believed he was reporting events truthfully as perceived by him. Moreover, he was consistent each time he related what had occurred.

When Garwood's court-martial ended, he was found guilty on two charges: collaboration and physically abusing another POW. What did he actually do according to the account given? The collaboration charge included that he had interpreted for the captors. There was never any testimony, however, that he had any authority on his own or that he gave any "orders"; he merely translated what the North Vietnamese told him to tell the other POWs.

As for the physical abuse charge, he backhanded another POW in anger. Why? One night very late, four hungry POWs decided to steal the camp commander's pet cat. They killed it, skinned it, and were boiling it in a pot when they were discovered by one of the guards. The guards rushed in and demanded to know who had killed the cat. One man stepped

forward and claimed that he had done it. The man who courageously took all the blame was rushed off and severely beaten. When Garwood found out what had happened, he rushed into the hut in anger, shoved one of the men down, demanding, "Why are you letting *one* man take all the blame?" That, according to testimony, was in essence the physical assault of another POW for which Garwood was found guilty. On the orders of the Vietnamese captors, the beaten man was repeatedly verbally harangued by the very POWs who had taken part in the cat incident, and he died a short time thereafter.

There is no doubt that Garwood interpreted for the enemy, but was that *collaboration*? Nor is there any doubt that he pushed another POW down in anger, but was it intentional *physical assault*? Or is it mere labeling?

When the hostages came back from Iran, the country needed heroes, and they were made heroes. The entire country joined in, just as they had done for the POW heroes who returned in 1973. When Private Garwood came back in 1979, alone, apparently an example was needed. If the Marine Corps let him go unpunished, the reasoning went, how could they maintain discipline during wartime? The fact is that the official policy in 1973 was that *no returned POW held in Southeast Asia would have charges preferred against him by the government for his behavior while a captive*. However, individual POWs *could* prefer charges against other POWs, if they chose to do so. Two senior POWs in fact did so in 1973, but the charges against the eleven men they accused of collaboration (two were officers) were immediately dropped after one man committed suicide rather than face the charges and more years in prison.

It is noteworthy, I believe, that the charges against Garwood were not initiated by any of the former POWs held with him in Vietnam. Although they did not necessarily condone some of Garwood's actions, many of them were quite vocal in expressing their opinions that to

try Garwood was unequal justice, since almost every man held in Southeast Asia found that he was made to do something that could have been labeled as collaboration. The eleven men previously accused in 1973 had all had the charges against them dropped. I firmly believe that Garwood would never have faced court-martial had he been allowed by North Vietnam to return with the other men in 1973.

According to his own words—a story which is difficult to discount—Robert Garwood was "ordered" to learn the Vietnamese language to survive. When he finally returned 14 years later, this ability became a liability instead of an asset. He survived to be court-martialed. He is a survivor and yet a victim, much like the treatment accorded many rape victims. The celebrated kidnap victim/"collaborator" Patricia Hearst was also a survivor as well as a victim.

**I**N closing, the question is again posed: When one is subjected to extreme stress, does one really have free will, or should coercive persuasion relieve one from the responsibility for acting in a manner that ordinarily would be considered criminal behavior? Clearly, an individual can control some of his reactions and actions. It is equally clear that there is a limit to the degree of control which one can exercise. Where do we draw the line—or can a hard line be drawn at all? Under circumstances such as those experienced by Robert Garwood, can an individual separate right from wrong? Our research as well as the testimony of the POWs who took the stand against Garwood show that there is absolutely no way to adhere to a strict interpretation of the Military Code of Conduct in a situation like that which they experienced. In fact, shortly after the return of our prisoners of war in 1973 a change was made in teaching the code. It is now instructed that military persons . . . "will give name, rank, serial number, and birthdate" . . . and then . . . "resist to the best of one's ability." Perhaps

Garwood really did resist to the best of his ability.

There continue to be reports that some of our men are still to this day, 18 years later, being held POW in Southeast Asia. As of August 1982, there had been 426 live sighting reports since our 566 men were released in 1973. These reports would bear investigation, except that there is as yet no way to investigate the matter thoroughly (although a group of mercenaries sent into Laos recently tried and failed). One recent report from a Vietnam refugee was that a number of our pilots are still being held in Laos to teach their pilots how to fly the planes we left behind. Still another report states that a Scandinavian construction crew in North Vietnam recently saw a road gang made up of American prisoners. The crew members were told to leave the area immediately, and as they left, one prisoner was reported to have shouted,

"Tell the world about us!"

If and when these men finally come home, if they ever do, are we going to court-martial *them* for aiding the enemy? I feel very strongly that the Robert Garwood case was not quite as black and white as many would have us believe, and the issue of coercive persuasion as a defense to criminal liability is not yet resolved. Also, the decision of the Marine Corps courts-martial board is still being reviewed, so the final outcome of Garwood's trial is enigmatic.

One point is, at least in my mind, very clear: The issues raised by the Garwood case are real and compelling ones that have wide applicability. In a world where armed violence plays an uncomfortably large role and terrorist kidnappings and detentions have become a routine fact of life, we ignore them at our peril.

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#### Notes

1. The San Diego Center for Prisoner of War Studies, a joint Army, Navy, Marine Corps activity, was disestablished in September 1978. The medical follow-up of former Navy POWs has continued for a second five-year period, however, with annual medical follow-ups being done at the Navy Aerospace Medical Institute (NAMI), Pensacola, Florida. Follow-up studies of the hostages held by Iran are also being undertaken at NAMI.

2. The Stockholm syndrome first received widespread public attention through media coverage of a bank robbery in Stockholm in 1974. When the robbery attempt miscarried, the robber retreated with hostages to the bank vault where he barricaded himself and attempted to barter the hostages' lives for a series of demands. To

the astonishment of the authorities, police spike microphones tapped into the vault revealed considerable affection for the robber by at least one hostage. The captives subsequently went to the defense of the very person who had threatened their lives; they also exchanged letters with him and visited him in jail. This process of transference had been mentioned much earlier in the research literature on brainwashing, prior to the Stockholm incident.

**Editor's note:** This article is adapted from a paper presented at the 89th annual American Psychological Association Convention in Los Angeles, California, on 24 August 1981.

## THE CODE OF CONDUCT: A GUIDE TO MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD E. PORTER

**D**R. Edna Hunter's article raises some interesting questions about free will and the ability of captives to distinguish rightful ac-

tion during hostile captivity. She poses the following questions: "When one is subjected to extreme stress, does one really have free will, or

should coercive persuasion relieve one from the responsibility for acting in a manner that ordinarily would be considered criminal behavior?" Referring to Private First Class Robert Garwood, Patricia Hearst, and the Korean turncoat experiences, she suggests that some "threshold" may exist where harsh treatment of captives blurs their ability to distinguish right from wrong. The major issue Dr. Hunter raises is whether captives "step" or are "pushed" across this threshold.

Dr. Hunter suggests that the captor may be able to push captives beyond the threshold. She affords the captor much greater influence over the captive than the military services have acknowledged. She asserts that the captor can, acting beyond the captive's ability to influence events in any significant way, determine who gets favored treatment, who survives, and, to some extent, who will be welcomed home as heroes or collaborators. She also implies that strict interpretation of the Code of Conduct's guidance contributes to a captive's difficulty by confronting him with obligations that may be humanly impossible to meet. This implication is tied to the inferred conclusion that any captive can be "broken" regardless of the code's dictates. While there may be some truth in each of these premises, there is also some omission and misinterpretation.

To support her thesis, Dr. Hunter presumes that one's ability to determine rightful action is closely tied to his psychological state and thus susceptible to prolonged psychological stress. She justifies this assumption by noting that the American Psychiatric Association has recently recognized a new category of mental disorder called "Chronic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." Partially based on conclusions from Vietnam prisoner-of-war (POW) studies, this category represents the "cluster of symptoms resulting from a psychologically traumatic event, such as coercive persuasion (brainwashing) or being held captive or hostage, that is outside the range of usual human experience."

Dr. Hunter does not present sufficient evi-

dence in her article to support what may be a plausible thesis. Her thesis appears to offer some explanation for the conduct of PFC Garwood, Patty Hearst, and the Korean turncoats but does not explain the conduct of the great majority of POWs and hostages who honorably survived harsh captivities and steadfastly refused to cooperate voluntarily with the captor. The possibility exists that Garwood and the others may have cooperated with the enemy because they did not understand their moral obligation to resist or lacked the proper training on how to conduct themselves. It is also possible that they lacked the character to stand by their moral responsibilities in the face of mental and physical punishment. There is ample evidence in the experiences of Korean POWs to support both of these possibilities. Finally, the whole issue of free will and the ability to determine rightful action may be better addressed in terms of moral responsibility. Dr. Hunter admits that acceptance of her thesis will inevitably require an ethical and moral judgment.

Moral responsibility is outlined by the code. It provides the goal and general guidance for all military captives. It is founded on the most honored values of the military profession and the principle of eternal free will. In a hostile captivity, these two concepts provide the captive the ability to distinguish right from wrong. It permits them to disassociate forced external compliance from voluntary internal acceptance. It places responsibility for crossing the threshold with the captive and not the captor.

There are few military documents more widely interpreted and perhaps more profoundly misunderstood than the code. To some it is a new set of commandments to be rigidly followed. To others, it is a set of philosophical guidelines that point the way but do not plot the course. All the services have officially acknowledged that the code is a moral guide, yet many officers and enlisted personnel still perceive it as a directive or a legally enforceable standard.

In order to propose an alternative to Dr. Hunter's thesis, it is necessary to clarify the code's objectives, its role in outlining moral responsibility, and its contribution to protecting personal values and free will. Key to any such discussion, however, is the forthright acceptance by the reader that the code is a moral guide and not a vehicle for judgment or retribution. Recognizing the service affiliation of the majority of the readers, the subject is approached using an Air Force interpretation of the code.

The U.S. Air Force has taken the formal position that the code is comprised of its spirit and intent and its supporting guidelines. The spirit and intent or goal is simply to *Survive with Honor*. The guidelines are the articles of the code applicable in wartime and the expanded guidance provided for peacetime.<sup>1</sup> The services' responsibilities for preparing their personnel for possible captivity are properly limited to explaining to them their individual moral obligations under the code and providing them adequate guidance and training to meet those obligations.

Moral responsibility relates to how well a captive lives up to the tenets of the code. It is primarily the product of the captive's will and determination rather than of the captor's maltreatment. The key concern is not the number of violations of the code but how hard each captive tried to meet his or her moral obligations. One of the complex and unfortunate characteristics of modern captivity is that there are too few black and white alternatives open to the captive. The captor's motivations and the circumstances of detention, especially in peacetime, are so diverse that attempting to follow a rigid interpretation of the code can work unrealistic results which are unwarranted by the code's goal to *Survive with Honor*.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that the three USAF hostages in Iran admirably met their moral responsibilities yet followed separate courses of resistance. Each determined proper conduct based on slightly different interpretations of the code's

guidance and their individual situations.

One of the common arguments made against the code is that it provides the captor a lever with which to "break" the captive. In the case of a determined captor, it often asks the captive to resist beyond human limits. Dr. Hunter notes that virtually any POW can be "broken." The services accept that any captive, submitted to sufficient physical and mental stress, can be forced to comply with a captor's demands against his or her will. It is an improper conclusion, however, to assert that captives having resisted to their full ability but forced to submit have been "broken" and have violated the code. This again attaches to the code the quality of a strict legal standard rather than a flexible moral guide. It suggests that the captive has been forever pushed across the threshold of voluntary compliance. The code is not a bridge that can be burned. It is always "there" as is the moral obligation to follow it. The captor may "bend" his prisoners but not involuntarily "break" them. A captor may *force* conduct on a prisoner, but as long as the prisoner *resists* and is not a volunteer, he has not been broken.

In this light, it is difficult for the services to address the question of free will outside the context of moral responsibility. First, the services are strongly attached to the code for no less reason than that it is based on the cherished concepts of duty, honor, country. Second, experience indicates that the code's positive aspects far outweigh its negative ones or the prospect of no code at all. Finally, the code may offer the best assurance that crossing the "threshold" requires voluntariness, not a forced submission.

This latter prospect can be better explored if we presume that the roots of one's ability to distinguish right from wrong are in the belief structure or system of values that provides the underlying basis for all personal decision-making. There has been enough work done in cognitive processes to justify this approach. The actual processes are too complex and too speculative to detail here, but generically we can say that individuals who act contrary to

their belief structure induce varying levels of guilt and anxiety with which they must subsequently deal. The induced stress can vary widely, depending on such factors as the degree of divergence from one's beliefs, the severity of the threatened punishment, the attractiveness of the promised reward, or the inability to choose between alternatives. Whether compliance is forced or voluntary, captives will experience psychological stress unless they have altered their belief structure to match the captor's own concepts of right and wrong.

Traditionally, Communist interrogators have been adept at exploiting this psychological phenomenon in their efforts to gain information and use their captives politically. Simply, the process involves continually confronting the captive with Hobson's choice of refusing the captor's demands and receiving "external" punishment or complying with them and inducing "internal" punishment. For the interrogator, the grand prize is the captive's voluntary submission and cooperation. This objective goes far beyond forced compliance. It entails a conscious attack on the captive's belief structure. The common technique is to use moral arguments, which if accepted will alter the captives' value systems and subsequently their concepts of right and wrong. In reality, success has been extremely difficult to achieve without the conscious and voluntary cooperation of the captive.

A serious attempt was made in Southeast Asia to alter the belief structures of a select group of American POWs. Despite some of the most brutal treatment ever suffered by U.S. captives, the effort failed, primarily because the captives refused to alter their existing concepts of right and wrong and continued to resist the captor's every attempt. In this endeavor, the captor appeared capable of inducing traumatic psychological stresses within each captive for considerable periods of time but was not able to force compliance except with the continual threat or use of punishment. The determined and successful effort of this select group of

POWs suggests that crossing the threshold is the captive's personal decision—an act of free will.

Although we know little about what happens at the threshold, we can logically presume that voluntarily crossing it requires the individuals to alter their belief structures more in line with that of the captor's in order to reduce the psychological stresses induced by their actions. One of the important functions of the code is to help captives preserve their belief structures regardless of the mental and physical pressures placed on them. The code offers in succinct language an indelible standard of right and wrong based on the very values the captive has sworn to uphold. Moral responsibility does not turn on a single event or an outwardly forced act. It is a state of mind not always revealed by the captive's actions. The code seeks to preserve and strengthen free will, not constrain or weaken it.

How does one fulfill moral responsibility without established guidance as to what one's obligations are? The answer is with great difficulty and considerable uncertainty. The civilian hostages in Iran had no such guidance, and their experiences indicate that individually and collectively they paid a higher price than their military colleagues. They did so precisely because they, as civilians, lacked a consensus as to what constituted proper conduct. Each had to probe the "mine field of survival and personal dignity" using intuition. Each had to agonize over which of the captor's demands justified compliance and which did not. Demands determined as justified by one hostage were viewed by others as demoralizing and unacceptable. Military hostages appear to have had a discernible advantage because they understood their overall moral responsibility and could channel their efforts accordingly. In light of the Iranian experience, the State Department has recently published moral guidelines for its foreign service personnel to use in future hostage situations.



THIS discussion suggests an alternative hypothesis to the one proposed by Dr. Hunter. The relationship between moral responsibility and criminal culpability is inexact and is largely shaped by judgments regarding the presence or absence of free will. Specific conduct is morally unacceptable if the individual's undesirable conduct was undertaken voluntarily. It could also be criminally culpable if the act violated appropriate legal statutes and the individual possessed the requisite state of mind. The loss of one's ability to determine rightful action indicates either the altering of the individual's belief structure or a deterioration of one's mental capabilities. Morally undesirable conduct may or may not warrant legal action depending on the requirements of the law for prosecution, but it is fair to say that legal prosecution always consists of morally undesirable conduct. The requirements for legal prosecution exceed those for morally acceptable conduct.

The majority of experience indicates that inducing changes in a captive's belief structure requires considerable effort by the captor and may even be impossible without the individual's cooperation. The code when properly understood and followed makes the captive's belief structure increasingly resistant to any external efforts to alter it. Under the code, the individual never loses free will. The military, therefore, often has difficulty understanding

how captives can enjoy excessive privileges denied their comrades without voluntarily surrendering their moral obligations under the code. If they are incapable of knowing that such acceptance is wrong, wouldn't this indicate a major deterioration of their mental state and be easily discernible by other abnormal behavior? Wouldn't these individuals require major psychological treatment when they return from captivity? It is hoped that Dr. Hunter and her colleagues will be able to shed more light on these questions. Until then, it is difficult to ignore past experience, which says that captives who enjoy special favors denied their comrades have generally earned them. It is difficult to accept such favors without also forfeiting moral responsibility.

In her article, Dr. Hunter has shown a keen knack for highlighting the really tough questions. This review suggests only a few answers while raising more questions, and it may encourage others to join the discussion. Today, hostile captivity is a dynamic problem that is becoming increasingly complex and difficult. Hostile revolutionary governments and terrorist groups are confronting military captives with major new challenges. These challenges demand moral guidance that is flexible and suited to both armed and subnational conflict. Such guidance can come only with an enlightened application of the Code of Conduct and a much deeper understanding of the whole captivity problem.

*Hq USAF*

#### Notes

1. The Air Force has long been concerned about the suitability of the Articles of the Code of Conduct in peacetime hostile detentions and has published expanded guidance. The most recent policy guidance, 23 July 1982, expands the code's guidance to cover illegal

hostile detentions by foreign governments and terrorist groups.

2. For examples of this, see Lieutenant Colonel Richard E. Porter, "Military Hostages: What They Need to Know and Don't," *Air University Review*, January-February 1982, p. 95.



## commentary

To encourage reflection and debate on articles appearing in the *Review*, the Editor welcomes replies offering timely, cogent comment to be presented in this department from time to time. Although content will tend to affect length and format of responses, they should be kept as brief as possible, ideally within a maximum 500 words. The *Review* reserves the prerogative to edit or reject all submissions and to extend to the author the opportunity to respond.

## ON POLAND AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

P. H. Bering

AS A CLOSE neighbor to Poland, I read "The Restoration of Control in Poland" with more than ordinary interest.\* The article is an excellent contribution to the understanding of the present Polish situation. The closing remarks, however, seem to be especially pertinent, not only to conditions in my unfortunate neighboring country but also to the present stage of the evolution of human conflict in general.

Our era is one of psychological warfare by means of subversion and extremist-terrorism against populations not yet subject to Soviet control; but mostly by means of absolute control of news media and police-terrorism against populations that have given in to the crusade of Soviet imperialism.

In this struggle, the Roman Catholic Church and many other religious and spiritual movements and organizations may well play a role of decisive importance. As Major Hasek puts it:

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\*Major John Hasek, The Royal Canadian Regiment, "The Restoration of Control in Poland," *Air University Review*, July-August 1982, pp. 68-71.

"The long-term struggle in Poland is not for democracy or for freer trade unions; it is between the Roman Catholic Church and the secular church of Russian communism, and ultimately it is for the survival of the Poles as a nation." (p. 71) Not only the Poles, I might add. It is no coincidence that in Russia religious people and religious organizations outside KGB control are persecuted and repressed with a fury out of all proportion to their apparent political importance. This significant fact is amply documented but is generally overlooked by the Western public and media.<sup>1</sup> This neglect is probably due to the fact that the great majority of the Western public is epistemologically founded in the same coarse materialism that is the basis of Soviet communism.

To my mind there is no doubt that the struggle first and foremost is a spiritual one. This is one of the reasons why psychological warfare has such a decisive importance; another obvious reason being the development of new means of communication. The main objectives of the armed forces are to ensure that the strug-

gle remains at the spiritual/psychological level and to deny the Soviets the opportunity to draw political advantages from their vast military potential.

One practical consequence of this is that governments in the free world should do all they possibly can to give support to the religious groups working in Communist territory—protest when arrests are made and direct financial aid whenever it is desirable and politically possible. Needless to say, this must be done with due consideration of the fact that the

KGB-controlled official Soviet church has a very large influence in such international organizations as the World Council of Churches.

In a defensive situation, one should keep the enemy busy with something else!

*Aalborg, Denmark*

**Note**

1. See, for example, Thomas and Bianca Adler, *Live Not by Lies* (Beersheba, Israel).

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### Airpower Research Institute

Airpower Research Institute (ARI), a part of the Air University Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education, is recruiting military and civilian research associates for the 1983-84 academic year.

ARI began operation in October 1981. Its primary purpose is to produce detailed background studies and monographs that can address fundamental issues affecting the Air Force. Its efforts are focused on: (1) past, present, and future air power employment concepts in terms of doctrine, strategy, and technology; (2) technical, politico-economic, and military trends that can contribute to the long-range planning efforts of the USAF and its component elements; and (3) military professionalism and the challenges of military officership in a changing environment. The unifying theme is the search for more effective Air Force war-fighting capabilities across the spectrum of conflict.

ARI is a predominantly blue-suit organization that seeks to bridge the gap between the operational Air Force and thorough academic research. The majority of ARI researchers are one-year military research associates (sponsored by a major command, the Air Staff, or some other Air Force organization); four officers serve a full three-year tour, and four civilian research associates complete one- or two-year research projects of interest to the Air Force. These military research associates have the opportunity to satisfy a professional military education requirement. Interested officers may complete a specially tailored program leading to the award of an ARI-designated Air Command and Staff College or Air War College diploma.

For more information about the Airpower Research Institute, call 205-293-5202 (AUTOVON 875-5202) or write to Colonel Kenneth J. Alnwick, AWC EDY, Maxwell AFB, AL 36112.



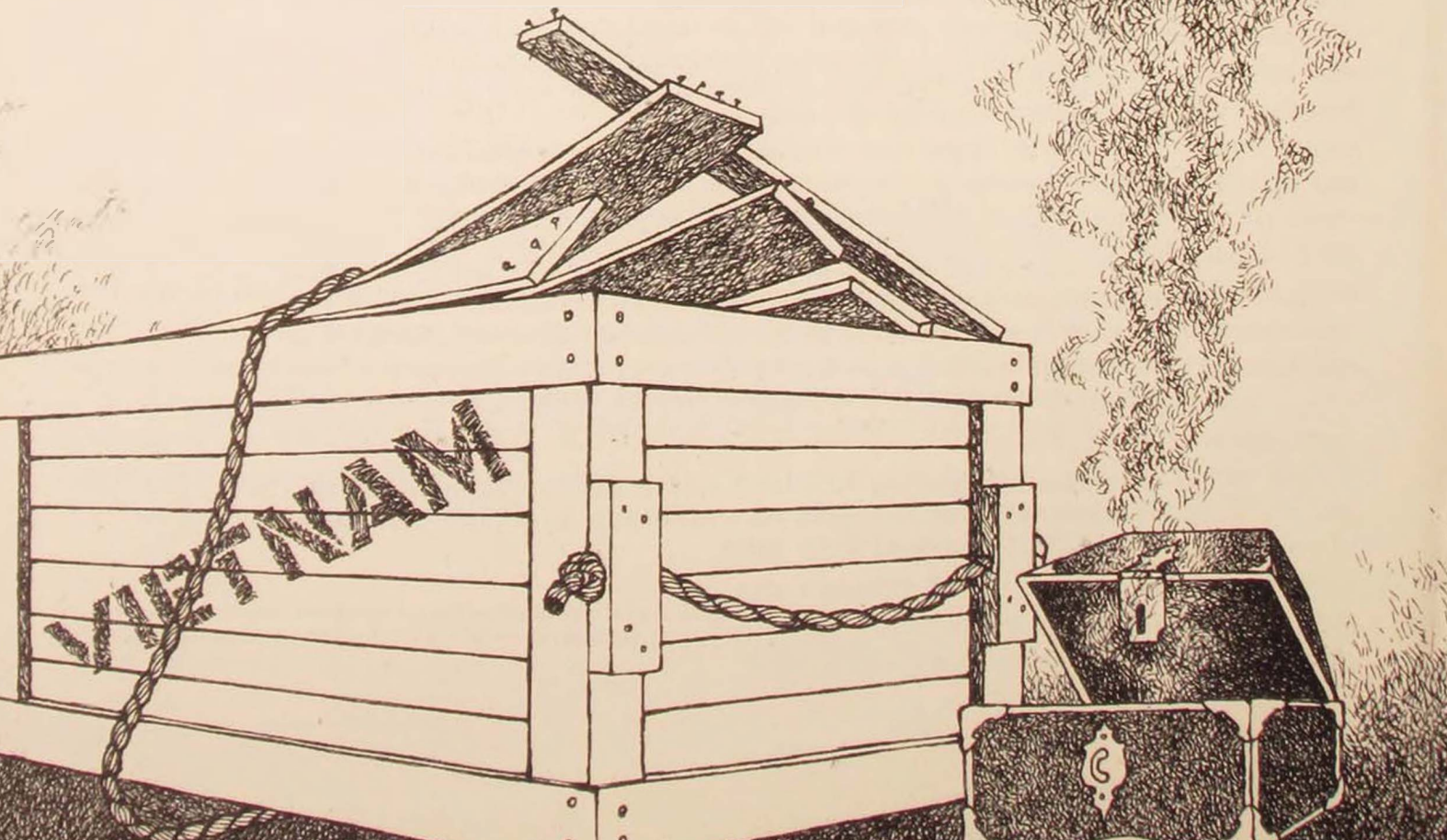
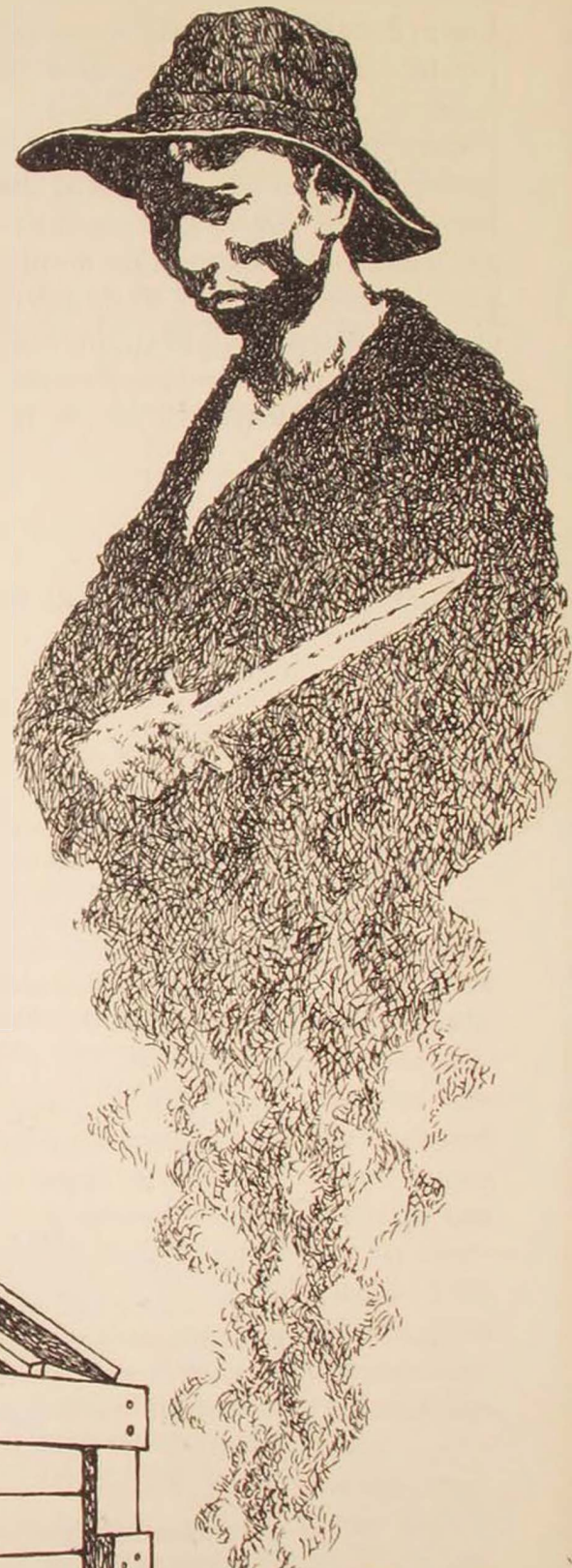
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## VIETNAM: WHAT MANNER OF WAR?

DR. RUSSELL F. WEIGLEY

**I**T IS a heartening development that both the American public and the armed forces seem to be showing a new willingness to think about the Vietnam War and its meaning. It is not clear whether we have yet achieved a new and better understanding.

For nearly a decade after American withdrawal from Vietnam, the principal inclination even of the military was to repress the unpleasant Vietnam experience, to seek es-



cape from the war's various traumas by treating the unconventional conflict in Vietnam as a military aberration not likely to recur, while returning to preparations for supposedly more satisfactory kinds of conflict against major conventional military powers. The main trouble with this latter tendency is the likelihood that it is further unconventional wars in the Third World that are, in fact, more probable.

NEVERTHELESS, the simple promise that we may be ready for renewed study of and thought about Vietnam has been more encouraging so far than the actual quality of many of the new writings about the war. Michael Maclear's *The Ten Thousand Day War*, for example, one of the most widely heralded of the new books, is also one of the most acute disappointments.† Labeled by its publisher as "the first authoritative, documentary account of the Vietnam War, bringing together the testimony of the principals of both sides as well as vividly telling the stories of the combatants, and including material based on exclusive interviews," it is indeed based on a wide variety of testimony from major participants on both sides. But the testimony and the narrative and analysis rise too rarely above the inherent limitations of television journalism. This is not surprising, since the origins of the book lie in a Thames television series; but a book might have permitted something more than the brief vignettes that are the staple of television.

Still, greater depth rarely appears. For example, neither moral insensitivity nor a hawkish attitude toward the war is required to arouse qualms about the single-dimensional quality of Maclear's account of one of the major incidents of war protest at home, the Kent State shootings, when we are told no more than that:

On 4 May the Ohio National Guard, with loaded rifles, surrounded the campus at Kent State. As the guardsmen lined up on a slope overlooking the massed group of young demonstrators, a witness recalls a sudden volley of fire: Some kid yelled, "These are live bullets," and this guy says "My God, this girl is hurt" and he picks her up and she has this bloody spot on her jacket and there was blood coming out of her mouth.

Four students had been shot dead, two of them girls. Eleven others lay bleeding; a scene of carnage on green lawns. In a sorrow that reached across America, the father of one dead girl said, "My child was not a bum." Within a few days 450 colleges closed in protest. (p. 297)

There is not a word about the obscene insults that were being chanted at the young, nervous, inadequately trained guardsmen. Maclear's version reflects as little comprehension as the equally young and immature protesting students showed at the time that most Americans can hardly be expected to be goaded indefinitely by insults to their country without being provoked into occasional violent outbursts. The students were not bums, but they were recklessly inviting trouble. The shooting was wrong, indefensible, an outrage; but the circumstances were not so simple as the book would make them.

For all its variety of testimony, there is in fact an overarching simplicity about *The Ten Thousand Day War*. Yet the simplicity is also the root of such strength as the book attains, and it offers the main reason why the book has to be taken seriously despite its flaws. The simple unifying threat is the idea of the inexorability of the triumph of Vietnamese nationalism against any intruders: Japanese, French, or American. The Canadian author regards Ho Chi Minh as the unchallengeable embodiment of that Vietnamese nationalism. Any Vietnamese rival to Ho was by definition a doubtful patriot, no matter what his pretensions. Anyone who questioned Ho's leadership in effect

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†Michael Maclear, *The Ten Thousand Day War: Vietnam: 1945-1975* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981, \$17.50), 368 pages.

questioned the Vietnamese people's right to their own country. Because Vietnam obviously was and is their country; and because the Vietnamese were there to stay and any invader must eventually go home, Ho and his people were bound to prevail. These ideas are hardly new, but Maclear's contacts with Vietnamese who fervently believe them permit him to advance the argument with considerable force and sometimes with moving eloquence.

IMPLICIT in this argument, furthermore, is the belief that the struggles of the Viet Minh against the French and the Vietcong against the Americans were parts of a single war. With Maclear, this interpretation is not only implicit but explicit, and he draws frequent parallels between the French and American experiences and argues that the Americans continually repeated the mistakes the French had already made. In perceiving the post-World War II conflicts in Vietnam as a single *Ten Thousand Day War* extending from 1945 to 1975, Maclear shares common ground with the authors of an otherwise very different book, the first volume of the official Air Force history of the war, *The Advisory Years to 1965*, by Robert F. Futrell with the assistance of Martin Blumenson.† By tracing in a wealth of detail events in Vietnam from 1945 onward, long before the United States Air Force took on even an advisory role, the official historians also treat Ho Chi Minh's struggle for leadership of his

own kind of independent Vietnam as a continuous succession of episodes: the war against the French blending seamlessly into the war against Ngo Dinh Diem and his successors in South Vietnam in which the American military role became increasingly conspicuous and less merely advisory.

THE concept of a single Vietnamese struggle for independence in a continuous war, always at least a debatable concept, has become a renewed focus of controversy with the publication of *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* by Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., of the Strategic Studies Institute at the Army War College.†† Making an impressive effort to define the place of the Vietnam War in the mainstream of military history and particularly to set the war's strategy into the context of Clausewitzian strategic thought, Colonel Summers argues that it is a historical error now as it was a strategic error during the war to regard the French and American wars in Vietnam as a single, continuous conflict.

Ho Chi Minh necessarily mounted the uprising against the French by unconventional means, following the model of Communist revolutionary war. But the United States in its Vietnam War, Colonel Summers contends, committed the basic strategic error of beginning with the wrong answer to Carl von Clausewitz's first question for statesmen and military commanders in any war, "to establish

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†Robert F. Futrell with the assistance of Martin Blumenson, *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia: The Advisory Years to 1965* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air History, 1981, \$15.00), 398 pages.

††Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1982, \$12.95), 225 pages. Essentially the same work was also published in a limited-circulation edition as *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, n.d.), 137 pages. A summary of its major arguments appeared as Harry G. Summers, Jr., "Vietnam Reconsidered," *The New Republic*, July 12, 1982, pp. 25-31.

... the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."<sup>1</sup>

Mesmerized by Nikita S. Khrushchev's proclamation of "wars of national liberation" and caught up in the fascination with unconventional war that marked the early 1960s and especially the military attitudes of the John F. Kennedy administration, American strategists assumed that the conflict in Vietnam was a new kind of war and sought to fight the war in terms of Khrushchev's paradigm, as on our part a counterinsurgency struggle. But in fact, Summers argues, not only was guerrilla insurrection an old rather than a new kind of war to begin with, but altogether the Vietnam War could and should have been waged by the United States in accordance with the classical principles of war. The final triumph of North Vietnam in 1975, resembling the German blitzkrieg of 1940 more than any unconventional mode of war, revealed the true nature of the conflict that the Vietnamese Communists had been waging against the United States from the beginning of the American phase of the war.

Colonel Summers poses a fundamental question for strategists and historians alike. If he is correct in his contention that the North Vietnamese waged primarily a classical kind of war with insurgency secondary against the Americans, then *The Ten Thousand Day War*, to a less conspicuous extent the first volume of the Air Force official history, and many other books about the Vietnam War are as wrong in their diagnosis of the nature of the war as Summers thinks our basic strategy was—and therefore the country stands all the more in danger of repeating the error by misjudging the nature of some possibly similar future war. Did the Communist proclamation of wars of national liberation so cast a spell over American policymakers and strategists that, believing they were fighting a new kind of war in Vietnam, they ignored what was conventional in the conflict and therefore failed to apply basic principles of war? Does such a history as *The*

*Ten Thousand Day War* with its theme of the continuity of the Vietnamese war of national liberation from 1945 to 1975 tend to perpetuate the delusive spell?

There is surely a degree of merit in Summers's interpretation. It is clear enough that some sort of bundle of misperceptions caused the Americans to ignore, if not the strategic profundities of Clausewitz, then at least the elementary principles of war. Here *The Advisory Years to 1965* is helpful, because in this official history a theme yet more central than the continuity of the war from its French through its American advisory phases is the failure through the Americans' advisory years to heed the principle of unity of command. Futrell and Blumenson are not so rash as to suggest that with the simple addition of unity of command the advisory process to 1965 might have been a success, which finally it was not; but their book strongly suggests that the lack of unity was severe enough to be a virtual guarantor of failure.

For the first major Air Force unit to go to Vietnam, the chain of command was chaotic. Assigned to Vietnam late in 1961, the unit was Brigadier General Rollen H. Anthis's 2d Advanced Echelon (ADVON). In operational matters, General Anthis was responsible to Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and thence to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC). For Air Force administrative and logistical matters, however, and even for operational matters that could be construed as strictly Air Force, Anthis was responsible to Thirteenth Air Force. At the same time, Anthis was Air Force section chief of the Vietnam Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). He wore his separate hat as 2d ADVON commander because by law MAAGs could not command operational forces; but despite the complexity added to the command structure so that Anthis could command operations anyway, in the sequel he merely provided base logistic support to the principal Air Force operational activity at the time, Operation Farm Gate, without actually commanding it;

MAAG seemed to command Farm Gate after all, so far as these knots could be unraveled.

The Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), was created in February 1962 largely to unscramble the perplexities, but it was not altogether helpful. General Anthis continued to represent both PACAF and Thirteenth Air Force. Furthermore, MAAG/Vietnam continued in existence, and Brigadier General Robert R. Rowland replaced Anthis as MAAG chief of Air Force section, adding another complication. And as an example of the continuing anomalies, Air Force liaison officers with Vietnamese army divisions instead of being under Anthis's command were assigned to MAAG. To aggravate all the other command problems from the Air Force perspective, finally, neither MACV nor MAAG Vietnam ever included adequate Air Force representation; so the key Vietnam commands never fully appreciated what the Air Force might have contributed.

It is possible, of course, that violating the principle of unity of command may have had many causes—such as traditional interservice jealousies—not at all connected with Colonel Summers's idea that the whole nature of the Vietnam War was misperceived. Yet the official Air Force history seems to support consistently the implication that command arrangements went awry because Washington persisted in regarding the Vietnam War as a different kind of war from World War II or Korea and therefore went on failing to do certain things that would probably have been done almost automatically if a mind-set attuned to the 1941-45 and 1950-53 experiences could have been generated. One such thing left undone was the creation of a unified command located in the theater of war and possessing ample strategic and operational autonomy and ample representation of all the armed forces. But a mind-set attuned to the World War II experience never developed in Washington during the course of the Vietnam War. Instead, command arrangements were improvised on the assumption that somehow this war was fundamentally different—

and at the root of this assumption was the misperception focused on by Colonel Summers. Mesmerized by the faddish notion that the Communists were challenging us with a new kind of insurrectionary war, we neglected to install the kind of command system that American experience would otherwise have demanded as appropriate to any war.

To say that the Vietnam War was not a wholly new kind of war, however, is not necessarily to deny that it was in important dimensions truly different after all. For example, Colonel Summers in insisting that it was a mistake to regard the American phase of the Vietnam War as different in kind from World War II goes on to argue that it should have been possible for our government to generate sustained public support for the struggle in Vietnam just as there had been such public support for World War II. He appears to be suggesting that it was largely a misguided public relations approach that soured the public.

In order to smooth our relations with the American people we began to use euphemisms to hide the horrors of war. . . . We did not kill the enemy, we "inflicted casualties"; we did not destroy things, we "neutralized targets." These evasions allowed the notion to grow that we could apply military force in a sanitary and surgical manner. (pp. 35-36)

When it turned out that people died horribly nevertheless, Summers contends, then the American public felt betrayed and came to regard the war as perhaps the cruelest war ever. Yet Summers's argument here is much too facile. World War II generated sustained public support because it clearly involved vital national interests, not because the public imagined that its killing was sanitary. World War II generated sustained public support also because through most of it, there was visible progress toward victory. No mere skill in public relations could have maintained support for the war in Vietnam when those crucial ingredients were missing.

To be sure, Summers's argument is that at least the second of the crucial ingredients, the



visible progress toward victory, should not have been missing, if the war had been properly understood. If the American government had not been obsessed by the idea of a Communist revolutionary war and instead had recognized that it ought to have been applying classic strategic principles, then the war could have been won. More specifically, Summers pursues his argument to suggest that to the extent that there were in fact elements of unconventional-ity in the Vietnam conflict, the South Vietnamese forces should have been assigned, and properly prepared, to cope with subversion and insurgency, while the American forces focused on fighting and defeating the enemy's conventional forces and strategy.

Naturally, Summers's argument is a good deal more sophisticated than this brief summary can suggest. His effort to perceive the Vietnam War within the whole context of military history and classic, particularly Clausewitzian, strategic thought is wholly admirable and merits careful study. And yet—I suspect that Michael Maclear's *The Ten Thousand Day War*, notwithstanding its journalistic simplicities and its romanticization of Ho Chi Minh and his cause, comes closer to some basic truths about the Vietnam War than does Colonel Summers's much more rigorous probing. If the Vietnam War was not a wholly new kind of war for Americans, it was not by any means a repeat performance of World War II or Korea either, and thinking about it in classic Clausewitzian strategic terms would have produced no magical means to attaining American objectives. In particular, Maclear is essentially correct in depicting Ho Chi Minh and his cause as embodying Vietnam nationalism. Even for as embodying Vietnamese nationalism. Even for those Vietnamese who fought against Ho, were fighting against part of themselves. The enemy with whom America contended in Vietnam confronted us with what was for America a new kind of war after all—in that to win, it was the United States that would have had to dam up the flow of nationalism in a country so

distant that Americans could not remain indefinitely, yet if we failed not only to stop the flow but to dry up its source, the nationalism against which we contended would break free and then reach flood strength once more as soon as we departed.

This review began by describing the new willingness to think about Vietnam exemplified by the recent books on the war as a heartening development. Notwithstanding its large merits, however, Colonel Summers's *On Strategy* represents almost a subtle kind of reversal of that willingness. In its insistence that the Vietnam War was after all a classical armed struggle to which the experiences of World War II directly applied and for which the United States should have developed a classical, Clausewitzian strategy, the book looks not so much at the real war in Vietnam as at the war that the American armed forces would have liked it to be. There is, as I have conceded, a measure of truth in Summers's insistence that the Vietnam War was not a new kind of war; but the measure is not full enough to sustain the book. If we are not to repeat the mistakes of Vietnam, we must face up more candidly to what was distinctive about Vietnam among American wars and learn to deal better with the distinctive problems of revolutionary wars in the Third World. We must be sure we are not simply kidding ourselves when we dream up retrospective schemes whereby American public support for the war might have been sustained. We must be candid with ourselves particularly about whether some other country's nationalism can be redirected if not repressed and about whether the United States ought to try to do such a thing in the first place.

As a corrective to some lines of wishful thinking into which Americans are especially liable to fall, *The Ten Thousand Day War* thus remains worth reading even if it will sometimes infuriate the Air Force reader. Worth reading also, I must finally emphasize, is the first volume of the official Air Force history. Here the problem is not that the book will

infuriate but that it may prove sleep-inducing. *The Advisory Years to 1965* bears the names of two authors who have often written with superb readability, even under the constraints of official history. But readability has somehow been squeezed out of this volume, and even the Air Force specialist in any given topic that it covers will have to force himself to stay with it. Nevertheless, staying with it will be rewarded. In its analysis of the repetitive, endless frustration of the early years of American involvement in Vietnam—in its unblinking analysis of American mistakes, partly, of course, those of ignoring classical principles of war, but in large part also those of trying to wrestle the Vietnam War into a classical American conception of war and failing—the Air Force volume is exactly the sort of hard look at unpleasant truths that we need. We can hope, however, that subsequent volumes of official history can continue to look hard without requiring the reader to work quite so hard in overcoming stylistic deficiencies.

A HIGHLY detailed reference volume and a very different type from those so far reviewed is Shelby L. Stanton's *Vietnam Order of Battle*.† It should prove exceedingly useful, nevertheless, to those who in the future try to take a hard, analytical look at the military history of Vietnam but want to make sure that they keep their facts straight. The compiler, a retired Army captain and Vietnam veteran of the 82d Airborne Division, emphasizes identi-

fying and summarizing the Vietnam service records of Army units, but he includes data on all military units, the other American armed forces as well as allied forces, that made up the anti-Communist order of battle. He includes maps of deployment locations, illustrations of badges and insignia both official and unofficial, and pictures of and data concerning weapons and equipment. Where appropriate, the units and their dates and places of deployment are carried down to the company level. All major code names of operations are defined, and so are many military acronyms and colloquialisms of the war era—a valuable contribution in itself, because making sense of the slang and jargon of the war will be a daunting task for future historians.

Not since World War I has an order of battle publication been part of the official history programs of the American armed forces. When working on World War II history, I have often wished for a reference work on that war comparable to Stanton's on Vietnam. *Vietnam Order of Battle* may look at first glance like a coffee-table book or "buff's" book; but the historians and military analysts who we hope are about to expand further the serious study of the war ought to leave their libraries' copies of it dog-eared.

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#### Notes

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton University Press, 1976). Book I, Chapter 1, p. 88.

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†Shelby L. Stanton, *Vietnam Order of Battle* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. News Books, 1981, \$49.95), 396 pages.

# HOLLYWOOD AND VIETNAM

DR. LAWRENCE H. SUID

UNLIKE World War II and Korea, Vietnam has not provided Hollywood any great stories of aerial combat. Perhaps the planes flew too fast, the targets lacked apparent significance, the dogfights ended too quickly. Whatever the reasons, no epic movies portrayed the Air Force in glorious battle over Vietnam as did *Air Force* (1943), *Twelve O'Clock High* (1950), and *The McConnell Story* (1955) for the earlier wars. Instead, the air war in Southeast Asia has provided only prisoners of war (POWs) as subjects for Hollywood to use in making a comment on the American experience in Vietnam.

*Limbo* (1973), released just as the POWs returned from North Vietnam, focused on fliers' wives waiting for news of their husbands lost in combat. *Rolling Thunder* (1977), the first film dealing with Vietnam to reach the screen following the traditional waiting period Hollywood has observed after every war, told the story of a returned POW who wreaks vengeance on a gang of thugs who have brutalized and robbed him and killed his wife and son. Most recently, Clint Eastwood's *Firefox* (1982) portrayed the actor/director as a former POW suffering from post-Vietnam stress syndrome and pressed into service to steal a top-secret Russian fighter.

To Hollywood, the allegedly unfaithful wives of POWs, the mental aberrations that the men suffered as a result of their experiences in captivity, and their antisocial behavior on returning home symbolized the perceptions Americans came to have of the war. Except for John Wayne's *The Green Berets* (1968), filmmakers have chosen to portray only the worst things real and imagined, and usually imagined, about Vietnam and the men who fought there. But even before most people concluded that the United States was losing the war, Hol-

lywood had little reason to make pro-Vietnam, wartime propaganda movies as it had done during World War II and Korea.

The growing controversies surrounding the war and the televised combat every evening during dinner made any combat movie a poor financial risk. In addition, the possibility of a negotiated settlement meant that any film in production would immediately become obsolete. As a result, only John Wayne supported his views of the war by making a movie about Vietnam while the fighting continued.

Writing to Lyndon Johnson in 1965, Wayne told the President it was "extremely important that not only the people of the United States but those all over the world should know why it is necessary for us to be there. . . . The most effective way to accomplish this is through the motion picture medium." He explained to Johnson that the

kind of a picture that will help our cause throughout the world [would] tell the story of our fighting men in Vietnam with reason, emotion, characterization and action. We mean to do it in a manner that will inspire a patriotic attitude on the part of fellow-Americans—a feeling which we have always had in this country in the past during times of stress and trouble.

Wayne himself freely admitted that in making *The Green Berets* he was doing more than playing his usual soldier role. He saw his work as "an American film about American boys who were heroes over there. In that sense, it *was* propaganda." But it was propaganda for a different kind of war than Wayne had fought in his earlier movies, the good guys versus the bad guys with the good guys winning in the last reel. In Vietnam, the United States had become the powerful bad guy picking a fight with the small, weak guy.

To solve this dilemma, Wayne became the leader of a Special Forces unit that is ultimately

surrounded by an overwhelming Vietcong force. The resulting siege resembles a typical John Wayne Western with an Air Force gunship representing the cavalry. Wayne's ultimate failure to create the patriotic feeling of the triumph of good over evil and find a meaningful direction for his movie is best symbolized by the closing scene in which he tells a Vietnamese orphan: "You're what it's all about" as they walk into a sun that sets in the east, into the South China Sea, rather than in the west.

Despite its lack of drama or visual excellence and burdened with almost universally bad reviews, *The Green Berets* enjoyed success at the box office. Nevertheless, no other filmmaker took a chance that a Vietnam combat story would appeal to audiences either during the war or in the years immediately following the American withdrawal from Vietnam. In fact, *Limbo* (1973) was the only other major Hollywood movie to explore any aspect of the American experience in Southeast Asia until 1977.

*Limbo* attempted to make an antiwar statement by focusing on POW wives as victims of the Vietnam conflict. Not knowing when or if they would ever see their husbands again, the women find themselves shunted aside by a seemingly unfeeling Air Force while caught up in their own desires to live normal lives. The Air Force refused to have anything to do with the production, claiming POW wives seldom committed the infidelities dramatized on the screen. The service further argued that the completed movie would immediately be spirited off to Hanoi for showing to the POWs, thereby affecting their morale. The film itself suffered an unlamented demise, not so much because of its dramatic shortcomings as because its release coincided with the repatriation of the POWs in early 1973.

Ironically, *Limbo* made a direct visual connection to the first Vietnam film to appear in the postwar period, *Rolling Thunder*. *Limbo* ended in a freeze frame of a returned POW reaching down an airplane ramp to greet his wife while her lover watches from the shadows.

*Rolling Thunder* opens with an Air Force officer disembarking from a plane to greet his wife after eight years in captivity. The officer, played by William Devane, becomes the symbol for the destructive impact that the war had on individuals and the nation. On his first night home, as he tries to comprehend the changes in his wife—her job, miniskirt, and bralessness—she informs him that she has been with another man and wants a divorce. The film explains Devane's apparent lack of reaction, either of pain or of anger, by juxtaposing scenes of North Vietnam torture sessions with a scene of his demonstrating to his wife's lover the techniques used by his captors.

The impact of his captivity is even more fully illustrated when he is brutalized by a gang of Mexican-Americans seeking the \$2000 in silver dollars local citizens had given him on his return home. The film intercuts Devane's silence in the face of beatings and torture (putting his hand in a garbage disposal in a final effort to make him talk) with scenes of his silence during torture sessions in Vietnam. When the gang kills his wife and son, they become the enemy he had not been able to fight in Vietnam, an enemy against which he can vent his pent-up rage for eight years of torture and deprivation.

The Air Force flatly rejected the producer's request for limited assistance, and the Pentagon advised him, "There are no known cases of Air Force officers becoming schizophrenic as happens . . . in the story. Yes, there are cases of returnees coming home to marital problems, but there is nothing beneficial for the Department of Defense in the dramatization of this situation."<sup>1</sup> The Pentagon did acknowledge that there were positive elements in the officer's stoic behavior while he was a POW and conceded that he is portrayed as a loyal, dedicated officer. But the military clearly wanted nothing to do with a story that conveyed the idea that Devane's Vietnam experience contributed to his vengeful pursuit and carefully orchestrated slaughter of the gang.

Reviewers found the violence excessive, and audiences ignored the film. But if *Rolling Thunder* passed quickly from sight, it undoubtedly deserved a better fate. Its carefully choreographed and tightly edited images of violence combined with a soundtrack that emphasized the dramatic tensions of the story to create a powerful, if bloody, visual impact. More important, its sparsely written script made telling insights into the changes the Vietnam War had made on its participants and American society as a whole.

Both *Heroes* (1977) and *Who'll Stop the Rain* (1978) used the same veteran-as-victim thesis to make their antiwar statements. But while the filmmakers visualized the connection between Vietnam and the characters, the stories themselves only indirectly derived their plots from the war. *Heroes* was simply an off-beat love story starring Henry Winkler as a Vietnam veteran who is "a little touched." Although the war clearly contributed to his mental instability, Winkler was undoubtedly more than a little mixed up before his tour of duty. In any event, most people probably ignored the impact the war had on Winkler's character and instead viewed the film as a light romance. Similarly, *Who'll Stop the Rain* began with a brief combat sequence, but the story had a largely metaphoric connection to Vietnam, focusing more on the war's aftermath than any direct impact the conflict had on its characters or the nation.

WITH the release of *Coming Home* in 1978, however, Hollywood finally indicated a willingness to deal directly with the ramifications of America's experiences in a losing war. At the film's end, the protagonist, Jon Voight playing a paralyzed veteran, launched a bitter tirade against the war and what it had done to him. While acknowledging that the story was "interesting and will undoubtedly result in an entertaining and controversial film," the Marine Corps felt that *Coming*

*Home* would "reflect unfavorably on the image of the Marine Corps."<sup>2</sup> In turning down the producer's request for assistance, the service particularly objected to the script's portrayal of the widespread use of drugs by officers and men and the comment of an officer about how his men cut heads off enemy bodies in Vietnam.

In using such images, the filmmakers clearly intended that *Coming Home* make an anti-Vietnam statement. But they managed to dilute the message rather badly somewhere along the way. Most obviously, the message came at least ten years too late. No one in the country, even those who had protested the war most strongly, really cared about the conflict in 1978, at least as a "cause." Even as an antiwar film, using the "victim" theme to create its message, *Coming Home* failed to convey the harsh reality that the paralyzed veterans' injuries were irrevocable and must be accepted, that they will never walk again and never be able to perform sexually again. Instead, viewers often miss the reality that Voight is impotent, expecting him to jump out of his wheelchair à la *Dr. Strangelove* and yell, "I can walk! I can make love!" In the end, therefore, *Coming Home* stands as a trite love story with a happy ending rather than a significant portrayal of how the Vietnam War affected its participants and loved ones.

If *Coming Home* and these other films focused on the returned veterans to create their antiwar statements, two movies released in 1978 took the more traditional approach of using images of combat to convey their "war-is-hell" messages. In the end, however, both movies fell victim to the paradox that blood and violence as portrayed on the screen tend to create a sense of excitement and become escapist entertainment instead of stimulating a revulsion against war.

Although it followed a group of young men from their Marine boot camp training to combat in Vietnam, *Boys in Company C* contained at best only a superficial denouncement of Vietnam. Its newspaper advertisements (that proclaimed "To keep their sanity in an insane

war, they had to be crazy") provided more insights into the filmmaker's perspective of the war than anything in the movie. In the film, boot camp training consisted of a stream of four-letter words and a drill instructor mishandling recruits. As a logical extension of such absurdities, all sense of discipline and the military chain of command is lost once the unit reaches Vietnam. And because the movie resembled countless other war films of earlier eras and imitated the ending of *M\*A\*S\*H* while saying nothing unique about Vietnam, audiences generally ignored it.

Given the content of *Boys in Company C*, the producers did not even bother to request cooperation from the Marines. By way of contrast, the makers of *Go Tell the Spartans* did submit their script in hopes of obtaining military assistance. The Defense Department found the story "unusual" in that it showed American advisors in Vietnam in the early 1960s "heroically carrying out their assignment."<sup>3</sup> The Army, however, had problems because the script presented "an offhand collection of losers" making up the American unit at a time in history when advisors in Vietnam "were virtually all outstanding individuals, hand-picked for their jobs, and quite experienced."<sup>4</sup>

Given DOD regulations requiring historical accuracy and plausibility in stories qualifying for cooperation, the Army indicated that the filmmakers would have to revise the script if they wanted assistance. Although factual inaccuracies could have been corrected, the script contained an irreconcilable problem. The Army could not accept the Burt Lancaster character of an aging major who explains that his failure to be promoted was due to his being caught making love to a general's wife by the general and the President of the United States. For their part, the screenwriter and producer refused to change the sequence because they liked Lancaster's portrayal. As a result, *Go Tell the Spartans* received no cooperation.

The film's authenticity resulted from unofficial technical advice given by the deputy direc-

tor of the Army's Los Angeles Office of Information; he liked the script so much that he took a leave from his job and worked with the director during the shooting. With this assistance, the film did in large measure become a tribute to the Army's advisors in the early days of the Vietnam War. The climactic firefight created the feeling of real combat, unlike the major battle in *The Green Berets* that looked like a John Wayne shootout with the Indians. But although it became the closest of any Vietnam film released up to that time to capture the American experience in the war and received praise from critics and even the military, *Spartans* quickly passed from view.

NOT until the release of *The Deer Hunter* did Vietnam become a financially rewarding subject for filmmakers. By its very size and epic sweep, the movie would have commanded attention. Perhaps impressed by the effort, perhaps equating excellent performances and camera work with meaningful insights, reviewers rushed to acclaim the movie as one "of great courage and overwhelming emotional power. A fiercely loving embrace of life," "the great American film of 1978," and "one of the boldest and most brilliant American films in recent years."

Such initial praise notwithstanding, *The Deer Hunter* stands as a sham, as a false portrayal of the American experience in Vietnam, a bloated, self-indulgent exercise in filmmaking. In his defense, director Michael Cimino argued that he did not intend to make a historically accurate movie about Vietnam: "It could be any war. The film is really about the nature of courage and friendship."<sup>5</sup> He described the film as "surrealistic. Even the landscape is surreal. . . . And time is compressed. In trying to compress the experience of the war into a film, even as long as this one, I had to deal with it in a nonliteral way."<sup>6</sup>

Cimino acknowledged that he used My Lai and the fall of Saigon only as reference points

and argued that if critics attacked the movie "on its facts, then you're fighting a phantom because literal accuracy was never intended."<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, audiences did perceive that *The Deer Hunter* dealt with the Vietnam War, and to the extent that Cimino distorted the history of the war, his reference points fail to make a comment either on his characters or on the events he portrays.

Ultimately, the film fails to capture the essence of the American tragedy in Vietnam, not only because it presents just a subjective portrayal of the war but because its central metaphor, the recurring game of Russian roulette, bears no resemblance to anything that occurred during the American presence in Southeast Asia. Along with its other inaccuracies, this moved the Army to suggest, after reading a script, that the filmmaker "employ a researcher who either knows or is willing to learn something about the Vietnam War."

However, the Army did not even make that suggestion in refusing to assist in the production of *Hair*, simply stating, "No benefit to the Army is apparent in the script," adding the service "is not presented realistically."<sup>8</sup> If *The Deer Hunter* failed to provide meaningful insights into America's Vietnam experience, *Hair*, to a large extent, did capture the ambience of the antiwar sentiment of the late 1960s. More important, without drenching the audience in blood, pieces of brain, or false metaphors, *Hair* succeeded in making the comment about friendship that Cimino failed at in *The Deer Hunter*.

In *Hair*, the friendships become sincere and meaningful, and in the end, one man gives up his life for another out of love. Like *The Deer Hunter*, *Hair* closes with a song. But in *Hair* it becomes a song of hope, "Let the Sun Shine In," sung by young people who do not mourn the past or support the nation right or wrong. In contrast to Cimino's film, in which the characters sit like zombies singing "God Bless America," the friends in *Hair* look to a better future based on the experience of past failures.

ALTHOUGH *Hair* was more pro-life than antiwar or antimilitary, it required long negotiations at the highest levels of the Pentagon before officials worked out a compromise by which the film's producers received some cooperation from the California National Guard to lend authenticity to the few military training sequences. No such compromise was ever worked out between Francis Coppola and the Defense Department during the making of *Apocalypse Now*. Hollywood had completed and released its series of Vietnam films, but the movie that had initiated the cycle remained bogged down in a quagmire as deep as the one in which the United States had found itself during the war in Southeast Asia.

Coppola's odyssey had begun in the spring of 1975. Having completed his second *Godfather* film, the director told an interviewer that his next movie would deal with Vietnam "although it won't necessarily be political—it will be about war and the human soul. . . . I'll be venturing into an area that is laden with so many implications that if I select some aspects and ignore others, I may be doing something irresponsible."<sup>9</sup>

As the vehicle for his exploration, Coppola selected Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*, shifting the story of civilization's submission to the brutality of human nature from the jungles of Africa to the wilds of Vietnam. Throughout the film's tortuous production, Coppola shifted his intended focus from an antiwar film to an action, adventure movie and back again. At one point, he stated that *Apocalypse Now* (ultimately dubbed *Apocalypse When*) was "not antimilitary. It is not anti-U.S. It is prohuman."<sup>10</sup> Later, he described the movie as "an anti-lie, not an antiwar film. I am interested in the contradictions of the human condition."<sup>11</sup>

To show this, Coppola traced an American officer's search for a Green Beret colonel who had defected to Cambodia where he waged war against both American and Vietcong forces.

The Army found little basis even to discuss giving assistance to the director, describing the script as "simply a series of some of the worst things real and imagined, that happened or could have happened during the Vietnam War."<sup>12</sup> Apart from its portrayal of soldiers scalping the enemy, a surfing display in the midst of combat, and an officer obtaining sexual favors for his men, the Army objected strongly to the script's springboard of having one officer sent to "terminate" another officer.

Because of the service's negative reaction to the script, Coppola made no serious attempt to obtain U.S. assistance. Instead, he arranged to obtain cooperation of the Philippine military and began a three-year struggle to complete *Apocalypse Now*. During production, however, he found that the Philippine Army could not fulfill all his requirements, and the director twice sought assistance from the Pentagon.

At one point, Coppola even telegraphed President Carter, claiming that the Defense Department "has done everything to stop me because of misunderstanding original script which was only a starting point for me." The director described his film as "honest, mythical, pro-human and therefore pro-American." He told the President that he needed "some modicum of cooperation or entire government will appear ridiculous to American and world public." Without explaining his threat, Coppola concluded that *Apocalypse Now* tries "its best to help America put Vietnam behind us, which we must do so we can go on to a positive future."<sup>13</sup>

Despite his demands, Coppola himself never considered revising his script, even though the change of "terminate" to "investigate" would undoubtedly have led to the Army's providing some cooperation. Yet whether *Apocalypse Now* with its images of violence could put Vietnam behind the American people remains highly debatable. Without question, the film contained magnificent scenes of the evils that man perpetrates on his fellow man during war.

But in creating his images, Coppola visualized all the worst incidents, real and imagined, that he associated with Vietnam rather than provide any significant insights into the total American experience in the war.

Indeed, if the United States had fought in Vietnam as Coppola depicted the war, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese would have driven American forces off the beaches long before the United States actually ended its involvement in Vietnam. Moreover, because his film contains only evil, Coppola fails to create any dramatic tensions in the ultimate confrontation between the two American officers. Consequently, *Apocalypse Now* lacks a meaningful climax as well as the statement Coppola had hoped to make about war in general and the Vietnam War in particular.

**D**ESPITE its long delays during production and huge cost overruns, *Apocalypse Now* did ultimately begin to make money. But the lack of any overwhelming box office success for it or the other Vietnam films cooled Hollywood's interest in using the war as a subject. *Born on the Fourth of July*, based on Ron Kovic's book about his love affair with the Marines and the aftermath of his crippling wound in Vietnam, never got beyond the script stage. *Knights of Nam* became the first script to receive enthusiastic Army approval, but the producer failed to find sufficient financial support to begin shooting.

Even *Don't Cry, It's Only Thunder*, a low-budget production made in the Philippines with Air Force assistance, took almost a year to reach the nation's theaters because the filmmakers could not arrange for distribution. *Don't Cry*, the story of a GI who supports a Vietnamese orphanage, became the first movie since *The Green Berets* to portray an American soldier positively in Vietnam. Nevertheless, the producer had great difficulty in developing a viable advertising campaign because of the movie's subject. Although it received good re-



views, the film met with only limited success.

The return to a negative portrayal of the impact of Vietnam on the American fighting man in *Firefox* received little attention since the film remained simply a vehicle for Clint Eastwood to capitalize on his box office appeal. Nevertheless, the image of Eastwood broken by his captivity in North Vietnam suggests that Hollywood is still more comfortable with simplistic portrayals of the American experience in the war.

If filmmakers are to produce a definitive statement about Vietnam, they will have to find ways of depicting individual Americans performing bravely and with perseverance in the context of a losing effort while still capturing the essence of the excitement and challenge

of combat. In addition, a classic Vietnam War movie will have to depict the enemy as determined human beings, at least as skilled as their opponents, rather than as slant-eyed torturers like those seen in *Rolling Thunder*, *The Deer Hunter*, or *Firefox*.

Only when the courage and atrocities on both sides are portrayed can the ambiguities and complexities of that war become three-dimensional. And only then will the American people have a film that truly provides insights into the nation's experiences in Vietnam. Yet, filmmakers will never be able to show the United States winning glorious victories and making the world a safer place as they could with the nation's earlier wars.

*Alexandria, Virginia*

#### Notes

1. DOD memorandum to Lawrence Gordon Productions, 22 August 1975.
2. Marine Corps memorandum to Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, 13 October 1976.
3. Donald Baruch to Audio Visual Branch, OCPA, Department of the Army, 6 July 1977.
4. Army Office of Public Affairs to Donald Baruch, 28 July 1977.
5. "Stalking *The Deer Hunter*: An Interview with Michael Cimino," *Millimeter*, March 1978, p. 34.
6. "Ready for Vietnam? A Talk with Michael Cimino," *New*

*York Times*, December 10, 1978, Section II, p. 15.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Army Public Information Division to Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), 26 April 1977.

9. *Playboy*, July 1975, p. 65.

10. Francis Ford Coppola to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 22 April 1976.

11. "Coppola Storms Philippines for Re-Creation of Viet War," *Los Angeles Times* Calendar, June 6, 1976, pp. 37, 39.

12. Army memorandum to DOD Public Affairs, 16 June 1975.

13. Francis Coppola to President Jimmy Carter, 12 February 1977.



## ON FINALLY COMING HOME

CAPTAIN SUZANNE BUDD

**M**ANY of us in Vietnam shared a secret fantasy about coming home to a hero's welcome from a joyous family, a proud hometown, and a grateful nation. Most veterans of that war, however, know that reality was more like this:

I went home straight from California to O'Hare Airport in Chicago. I got home about three in the morning. Everybody in the house got up and said hello. Then they all went back to sleep. At 8:30 when my father left for work, he woke me up to say, "Listen, now that you're home, when are you going to get a job?"

I packed up and left. I haven't been home since.<sup>1</sup>

Between these images of joyous homecoming and bitter return lie the experiences of more than two million Americans who came back from Vietnam. Contrary to the media's image of the "crazed Vietnam veteran," most of us managed to pick up with our families, studies,

and careers and move out purposefully to make up for the 365 days we "lost" in Vietnam.

Nevertheless, the journey back has been a long one. It took only a few days at home for most of us to realize that our descriptions of Vietnam, told in the mystic/cryptic jargon we learned there—metaphors that unconsciously integrated killing and dying with C-rations and mail call—frightened our families, embarrassed our friends, and sometimes provoked hostility. In tacit agreement with society, we negotiated the price of our reentry—silence. We rarely talked about what happened to us in Vietnam. For some of us, silence turned to welcome forgetfulness; for others, however, silence only transferred the conflict from the jungles and rice paddies to the terribly personal battlegrounds of the heart and mind. The Vietnam War continued there because an essential and purifying ritual of coming home had been short-circuited by a society that did not want to hear about a war it had disowned.

Most of the post-Vietnam literature of the last decade, welcome for its attempt to assess "policy failures" in Southeast Asia has, of necessity, been analytical and therefore lacking in compassion. As military and political thinkers try to understand the problems of limited war in the nuclear age, they should not forget the human costs of fighting wars that have unclear goals and may, like the Vietnam War (which we seem to have neither won nor lost), come to an inconclusive end. To address this second issue, we need to search from the ground up, examining the multifaceted and contradictory views of the people who did the fighting. Except for a few novels, this personal battleground has been largely unexplored; that is, until now.

In two recent books, *Nam* and *Everything*

*We Had*, authors Mark Baker and Al Santoli attempt to reconnoiter the sere and dreadful terrain of the mind where so many of our veterans, shunned into silence by our national distaste for lost causes, still fight the Vietnam War. Both authors refer to their edited collections of taped interviews as *oral histories*. The purist may find fault with this term, but not with what these books try to do—tell the story of the Vietnam War "in the words of the men and women who fought there."

Both Baker, a Vietnam-era college student and peripheral protester, and Santoli, a combat veteran who fought with the 25th Infantry Division during Tet, traveled throughout the United States compiling their interviews. For all the differences in style and approach, the authors have a common purpose in their efforts: to end the barrier of silence between those who fought the war and the society that dispatched them to Vietnam. Here, the similarities end, though, because Baker and Santoli have chosen two very different means to effect this reunion.

THE book *Nam*, edited by Mark Baker, who never served in Vietnam, is the more successful.† It is the less ambitious of the two books because for Baker it is enough that his veterans confront society with their stories, which for the most part reek of death and brutality. Baker feels that when the psychological wounds are drained, the process of healing can begin and the Vietnam veterans can truly come home. Lancing wounds is not a pleasant process, however, and Baker's veterans pull no punches. It is no wonder that they remain anonymous.

Tightly edited into eight chapters, *Nam*

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†Mark Baker, *Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of Men and Women Who Fought There* (New York: William M. Morrow & Co., 1981, \$12.95), 324 pages. Reprint. (New York: Quill, 1982, \$6.00 paper), 324 pages.



stalks its subjects through the only meaningful measurement of time there was in that war—the 365-day cycle of a year in “the Nam.” Baker’s veterans come from places like Brooklyn, San Jose, and Johns Hopkins University. They went into the Marine Corps because the Army wouldn’t take them and into the Army because, as one nurse put it, “Vietnam was the professional chance of a lifetime.” For the most part they were young. Not yet old enough to vote in California or drink in New Jersey, they were old enough to die in Vietnam. Their attempts to articulate this frightening dichotomy give Baker’s *Nam* its surreal, childlike quality. Like Alice, they all stepped through the looking glass.

The Vietnam War was different for almost everyone who served there. For many Air Force officers, especially the aircrews, it was a grand and glorious game. For some it was boredom punctuated by short periods of stark terror. For Baker’s veterans it seems to have been a chance to play war with the big guys. In their first few

*War at the grunt level. Troops preparing for patrol in Vietnam, like soldiers in any war, experienced fear, weariness, danger, and the possibility of death.*

weeks in Vietnam, these veterans saw themselves as John Waynes in green berets, Sergeant Rocks pulling grenade pins with their teeth, Vic Morrows outwitting the enemy in a tropical version of “Combat.” This innocence did not last.

In a chapter entitled “First Blood,” Baker’s veterans tell of their first confrontations with death: friends blown apart by mines, disemboweled by bayonets, ripped by shrapnel—men killed by an enemy they rarely saw; men who died for purposes even their officers could not explain. Because no one could tell these soldiers what “winning” meant, they discerned, with the wisdom of clever children, that it made no sense to die. They changed the rules so that Vietnam became a new kind of war, a game

that had as its goal surviving by whatever means. Winning meant getting out of "the Nam" alive. The enemy for the grunt was anyone—Vietnamese or American, man, woman, or child—whose actions might endanger that survival. Thus, for these soldiers, Vietnam became "a brutal never never land . . . where little boys didn't grow up, they just grew old before their time." Through a series of stark, oddly detached narratives, Baker's soldiers give us a glimpse into their nightmares:

- A rifleman, street-fighting in Saigon during Tet, stops to sever ears from a slain Vietcong. He carefully threads them on his dogtag chain because they were badges of "an effective soldier."

- A young Vietnamese woman smiles and is shot dead by a Marine machine gunner. "She had to pay" for an earlier ambush, in another place, by others of her kind who had maimed two of the Marine's friends.

- Two soldiers caught smoking pot on watch are given extra duty. Mad and bored, they spend the day taking potshots at an old woman harvesting rice. When they get tired of this game, they kill her.

These are little boys trapped in Baker's vicious never-never land. They don't grow up because to do so would entail acting sanely in an insane war. "I w s crazy the whole time I was in Vietnam," testifies one of Baker's vets. Self-styled insanity had become the only camouflage that worked in the moral jungle of Vietnam.

*Nam* reinforces the My Lai stereotype of the Vietnam vet—sadistic, crazed, morally bank-

rupt, and culturally unconscious. Baker chose to interview men who served as young combat veterans; nearly all were drafted. This reflects his bias, and it is a flaw. However, while *Nam* is a limited book, it is also one of unlimited anguish. It exposes a very real and very frightening side effect of the war—the dehumanization of our own soldiers.

Most of Baker's veterans acknowledge this



*War from above and afar. The use of a large variety of helicopters in many different missions was unique to Vietnam. The OH-6A Cayuse (above) was used to spot for artillery covering the ARVN retreat from Laos at the end of Lam Son 719. . . . In a war of attrition with the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, the United States frequently opted for massive firepower instead of risking American lives. Frustrations generated in the war are typified by the nickname on this 105-mm howitzer, "Calley's Conscience."*

loss of human feeling in retrospect, but they do not take full responsibility for it. They blame the war for changing them. Still, in their narratives, they expose the terror that they felt, and we can see that they are still human. Some of the veterans are still afraid—not of the memories of killing but of the pleasure they found in it. More than policy failure, more than tactical error, this could, and should, be considered one of the real social tragedies of the American experience in Vietnam.

WHILE *Nam* dwells excessively on the *Apocalypse Now* version of the war, *Everything We Had* makes an honest effort to do just the opposite.† Al Santoli's book is dedicated to restoring purpose and humanity to "... the nameless soldier on the TV screen." Although Baker's vets are nameless and faceless, Santoli has identified his people by name and unit and by the time and location of their tours. Santoli tells us not only what his veterans did during the war but what each is doing now. As faded photographs show, Santoli's soldiers were then and are now very real human beings.

Consequently, *Everything We Had* is the more balanced of the two books in that it explores the whole range of human experience in the Vietnam War—honor, love, sacrifice, and even humor are to be found in the recollections of Santoli's veterans. Often these shade quickly to reflections on death and survival, but the topics are discussed with little of the brooding intensity of *Nam*. By offering the whole of the soldier's experience, Santoli strives to find "the war's truth," claiming with no little certainty that his veterans will deliver, bound as they are to him, and to each other, by the "combat soldier's bond of trust."

With this commitment, Santoli gives us glimpses into the wartime experiences of a breed of veterans who stand in refreshing contrast to Baker's burnt-out teenagers. From a rifleman we get a wryly humorous look at the First Cavalry's amphibious assault on the beautiful Vietnamese coast. The soldier and his comrades are stopped in midcharge by a lineup of generals headed by General William Westmoreland himself "... saluting the Cav on the way." The only thing missing, recalls the rifleman, "... was the hula girls ... what a letdown." Humor, remorse, and compassion are facets of wartime experience that Baker ignored but which *Everything We Had* deals with gamely if only falteringly.

In his search for "the war's truth," however, Santoli sacrificed depth of emotion for breadth of experience. Several of the narratives are obscured with trivia and self-conscious historiography. Poignant, insightful commentaries are mixed in chronological order (1962-75) with several frankly pointless, overlong anecdotes. The result is a frustratingly uneven book.

The shortcoming in *Everything We Had* can be attributed to Santoli's aim of letting the soldiers tell their story. He actively entered the narrative only once, to add his story to the collection. By contrast, Baker never took himself away from *Nam*, providing sharp, searing transitions that interlock the chapters and heighten the cohesiveness of the book. The result is that *Nam* succeeds, despite its narrow emotional and intellectual range while the wider-ranging, more ambitious *Everything We Had* seems to hobble along. One feels with Baker's book; one observes with Santoli. Given the lessons, of the human kind, I think we Vietnam veterans prefer to feel our way home.

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† Al Santoli, *Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by 33 American Soldiers Who Fought It* (New York: Random House, 1981, \$12.95), 265 pages.

TOGETHER, do these two books tell the "real" soldier's story of Vietnam? Is it possible for any edited collection of individual reflections on war, even one larger than the 140 or so stories told in these two books, ever to produce the normative experience of men and women at war? I doubt if a national poll of Vietnam veterans could do that. There is one reality test, however, that both these books pass—my own. The veterans whose anguish *Nam* reflects so powerfully and the veterans who speak with shades of caring and concern in *Everything We Had* are different facets of each of the thousands of soldiers I worked with during my 18 months in Vietnam. They are also different facets of myself during and after the war. I would suggest that any Vietnam veteran, while reading either of these books, will find one passage, one reflection that perfectly echoes, for a moment, the way it was in Vietnam.

For all their limitations, these two books do add something critical and something heretofore missing from our efforts to learn from the agony that was Vietnam: the recollections of some of the "men and women who fought there." If the social dimensions of limited war are worthy of study, and I believe that they are, it might be well to mesh these experiences from the soldiers at the bottom with the documents and testimonies of the leadership at the top.

IT IS TIME for the survivors of the Vietnam War to come home. We can help those who still live and fight the war in their minds and hearts. All we have to do is listen—to them and to ourselves.

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#### Note

1. Mark Baker, *Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There* (New York: Quill, 1982), p. 285.

## STRATEGIC CHOICE, NATIONAL WILL, AND THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

COLONEL KENNETH J. ALNWICK

RECENTLY, in conversation, a distinguished colleague challenged the utility and relevance of Carl von Clausewitz's writings for contemporary Air Force officers. U.S. Army Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., answers this

challenge in his new book, *On Strategy*, published under the auspices of the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute.† The book demonstrates the power of Clausewitz's theories about war and the enduring utility of the

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†Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1982, \$12.95), 225 pages.

principles of war as analytical tools. Colonel Summers skillfully uses these analytical tools to assess the U.S. Army's experience in Vietnam and place that experience in its political and strategic context. In so doing, he provides a convincing argument for the notion that we, in the Air Force, would be well served if we used these same tools to assess our own involvement in that conflict.

The book is well written and short enough to be read in one or two sittings. Indications are that *On Strategy* will be much discussed in Army circles, having generated controversy in the Army even prior to its publication. It is openly critical not only of the way that we as a nation prosecuted the war but also of the U.S. military leadership that must bear a major share of the blame for its unhappy result. In addition, our problems associated with Rolling Thunder notwithstanding, it helps lay to rest the myth that the military was "stabbed in the back by the politicians." Colonel Summers's scholarly effort is an instructive work that contributes much to our understanding of the dynamics of the war.

In essence, *On Strategy* is a book about strategic choice and national will—on both sides. It is organized into two major sections. Part One focuses on the environment and draws heavily on Clausewitz to explore the dimensions of national will, leadership, and the concept of "friction." Part Two focuses on the engagement, using the principles of war as a framework for analysis. Two major themes provide a continuous thread throughout. First, the United States never articulated a concept of victory but instead built a strategy that centered on "avoiding defeat." Second, instead of making victory over North Vietnam ("the source of the war") our primary task, we allowed ourselves to be diverted to what should have been our secondary task, defeat of the insurgency in the South.

Colonel Summers displays a keen mastery of the theoretical aspects of war and their relationship to the American experience as he at-

tempts to place the Army's Vietnam experience in its proper context. His analysis spans the gamut from our earliest experiences as a new nation to the Korean War and the great debates of the '50s concerning the role of military force in the atomic age. Particularly revealing is his discussion of the American view of war as it evolved in the post-World War II period and the corresponding changes in Army doctrine prior to our involvement in Vietnam. Colonel Summers demonstrates that, prior to our entry into the war, the Army lost its focus on the relationship between military strategy and national policy—the objective. Conversely, North Vietnam steadfastly pursued one objective, the total conquest of South Vietnam by either force or subversion or both. Meanwhile, the United States experienced extreme difficulty articulating a comprehensive termination strategy. Colonel Summers concludes that we pursued a strategy of graduated response which gave the initiative to North Vietnam and placed the United States and South Vietnam on the strategic defensive throughout the war.

Nor is Colonel Summers shy about taking the United States military leadership to task where he feels it is appropriate. In perhaps his most severe criticism, he says, "Because they made the cardinal military error of underestimating the enemy, our military leaders failed in their role as 'the principle military advisors to the President.' . . . In failing to press their military advice they allowed the United States to pursue a strategic policy that was faulted from the start." (pp. 74-5)

As much as one may admire Colonel Summers for his candor and overall treatment of the subject, *On Strategy* does suffer from a certain bias as well as some questionable assumptions, and the underlying assumptions are ultimately where the case for any analytical effort must rest. First, the issue of assumptions. Two related critical assumptions in Colonel Summers's analysis are: (a) that U.S. concern about Chinese intervention in support of North Vietnam was unfounded and (b) that by declaring



war on North Vietnam and carrying the war to the North through conventional means, the war was somehow winnable.

On the issue of China's entry into the war, Colonel Summers states,

Instead of seeing that it *was* possible to fight and win a limited war in Asia regardless of Chinese intervention, we . . . accepted as an article of faith the proposition that we should never again allow ourselves to become involved in a land war in Asia. (p. 37)

This, he claims, "allowed us to be bluffed by China throughout most of the war." (p. 37) But how real was the threat of Chinese intervention, and was it in the U.S. strategic interest to confront China directly? Colonel Summers claims that we should have taken the offensive in November 1965 after the North Vietnamese regular forces had been defeated in the Ia Drang Valley by the 1st Cavalry Division. But there is strong evidence that China was prepared to intervene had the United States pressed on to attack the North.

By June 1965 Chinese and North Vietnamese fighters were conducting joint exercises twelve nautical miles south of the Chinese border, and they had developed a common grid pattern for air defense extending to the seventeenth parallel.<sup>1</sup> One year later, in response to a growing U.S. force buildup in the South, China placed 50,000 troops in North Vietnam without making any real effort to conceal their presence. There, Chinese soldiers fought U.S. air attacks and died in defense of North Vietnam.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, this action raises the interesting but disturbing question of what we would have done if China opened a second front in Korea and perhaps a third in Taiwan. Surely no experienced Chinese analyst could have said with absolute confidence that China would not react militarily. How, then, could any responsible political leader accept the risk of a major war with China given the penalty for guessing wrong? Indeed, one could say that the strategic wisdom of not engaging China has been vindicated to a substantial degree by today's atmos-

phere of cautious friendship and cooperation between the United States and China.

Had our national leadership been willing to take the risk, would invading the North have achieved its purpose? The struggle was tough enough in the South where the population was at least ambivalent toward the American presence. We escalated the war in 1965 because the situation in the South was falling apart and the advisory effort was unable to stem the tide. Invasion of the North would have greatly complicated the problem of population control. Also, such a large-scale assault even then could not have assured a political settlement for what was always, and predominantly, an ongoing political revolution within Vietnam, controlled from North Vietnam but deeply embedded in the fabric of South Vietnamese rural society.

This leads us to the related assumption that the war was indeed winnable. I contend that the war was essentially unwinnable because the essential ingredients for victory, the "key assumptions," were not there. This war was unwinnable for several reasons, including the fact that the Saigon government, a creature of the United States, consistently demonstrated its inability to resolve its internal contradictions, to govern South Vietnam, and simultaneously to prosecute a protracted war against a dedicated, determined enemy. But had the Saigon government been able to overcome these obstacles, one could still argue that the war would have been unwinnable since the United States, with good reason, was unwilling to undertake the tremendous costs and risks involved in totally defeating North Vietnam's government, people and ideology.

The war was also unwinnable because, to paraphrase Colonel Summers, we consistently underestimated the enemy and could not produce a coherent military strategy that was in consonance with the realities of the war.

Turning now to the problem of bias, we find that throughout *On Strategy* the importance of counterinsurgency and nation building activities is consistently denigrated. Colonel Sum-

mers scores our "continued fascination with counterinsurgency" (p. 53) and hammers at the theme that it was, ultimately, a conventional invasion from the North that brought about the collapse of resistance in the South. As a close student of Clausewitz and the North Vietnamese, Colonel Summers must acknowledge that for the North, military and political activity formed a seamless web, reinforced by their unshakable determination to win by any available means. The United States never had a choice between counterinsurgency and nation building on one hand and conventional warfare on the other; to have any chance of winning or even of avoiding defeat, we had to devote equal energy to both tasks.

Why, then, does Colonel Summers come down so hard on the counterinsurgency effort? While I can agree that the immediate cause of the collapse of South Vietnam was four divisions, the preconditions for this defeat were shaped by almost two decades of relentless guerrilla warfare. I fear that Colonel Summers's search for a winning strategy and concern for the future role of the Army have tended to color his analysis in favor of conventional solutions.

However, the nation's military forces cannot allow this bias (and Summers is not alone here) to obscure the need for the capability of fighting a counterinsurgency war, if called on to do so. In the Army, and even more so in the Air Force, our experience base in this most difficult form of warfare is rapidly eroding. It has been said that Mars is a cruel and unforgiving master. We in the military do not have the luxury of choosing the wars we will fight—and the days of clean "declared wars" may be forever behind us. Given the nature of war (Clausewitz) and its demonstrated characteristics since World War

II, we cannot allow our distaste for counterinsurgency and all its attendant uncertainties to affect our ability to respond effectively when called.

ALTHOUGH I have taken issue with Colonel Summers for some of his assumptions and his bias, I would be remiss if I did not return to my original observation that this is, indeed, a very good book. It deserves close reading by those who are concerned about the impact of the Vietnam experience on our contemporary understanding of the theory and practice of war. Its value as a treatise on strategy alone makes it well worth the price of admission. In a letter that accompanied my copy of the book, Major General Jack N. Merritt, Commandant of the U.S. Army War College, states that the purpose of the book is to "provide and stimulate military strategic thinking so as to better prepare us to meet the challenges that lie ahead." *On Strategy* serves this purpose in spades. Even now, we in the Air Force still do not fully comprehend the role that air power had in shaping the character of that war, or the extent to which our perceptions about war as a grand and dangerous game differ from those who had to slug it out on the ground. Colonel Summers has given us an approach and a standard against which we airmen can measure our own ability to conduct a critical analysis of what we accomplished, or failed to accomplish, in the only war most of us have known firsthand.

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#### Notes

1. Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), p. 172.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

# THE AIR FORCE IN VIETNAM: OFFICIAL HISTORIES

DR. JOE P. DUNN

**E**ARLY in the Vietnam War, the military services determined that this undertaking was a monumental venture that would produce innumerable lessons for future conflicts. The services set out to chronicle a wide variety of activities, and tons of paperwork resulted. With the Army's massive World War II history of more than eighty volumes as the model, all four services began early in the war to plan their Vietnam historical projects. Unit historical detachments in every major command sought to write the history of the conflict as it unfolded. Valuable source material was compiled and a large reservoir of participant interviews secured, but such instant history lacked perspective and was, at best, preliminary.

Moreover, not enough trained historians were available. Individuals with advanced degrees in history were more likely to end up as grunts or functionaries than in historical detachments. In the Army, the historical detachment officer often served the last months of his tour in this position as reward for a good record in the field, or for just the opposite reason. Enlisted assignments were more chance than design. Thus, the quality of the historical records compiled varied considerably. And one theme dominated all retrospects: everybody had done everything right; progress and improvement were the official universal.

While historical detachments generally were viewed as peripheral accessories, historians at times played significant roles during the war. General William C. Westmoreland constantly evoked the French experience in Indochina. During the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968, Bernard Fall's and Jules Roy's depictions of Dien Bien Phu became bibles, and Westmoreland ordered his historical detachment to produce comparative analyses of the two battles.<sup>1</sup>

When he became Army Chief of Staff in late 1968, General Westmoreland determined that the military professional schools could not wait for another decade or more to assess the lessons of Vietnam. He commissioned a series of Vietnam studies, monographs that addressed various aspects of the war, particularly innovative ventures. Twenty of these volumes, more the memoirs of commanders and staff officers involved in certain activities than actual histories, were published under the imprint of the Army Adjutant General.<sup>2</sup> The Air Force added seven monographs as a joint venture between the Office of Air Force History and Air University.

The official history programs began after the war. The Army's proposed twenty-one-volume project is the most extensive, although the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps programs are also ambitious. The Coast Guard outlines a more modest endeavor consistent with their lesser role in the conflict. The Office of Air Force History plans approximately 16 volumes, mostly topical studies of various Air Force missions and activities. An illustrated overview and the first three official volumes are now in print.

The official histories constitute a particular genre of scholarship. The services defend the significant public expenditures necessary to maintain the programs by the didactic values of the studies: to preserve lessons, to assess successful and unsuccessful tactics and strategy, to ensconce military tradition, and to produce early objective accounts suitable for use in military professional schools and for civilian academics. The volumes tend to be highly narrative and quite detailed with little theoretical base or analytical framework. Often the subjects of the books are rather esoteric, and the

study is likely to be the definitive, indeed the only, treatise on the topic. The volumes are found in major research libraries, but few make their way into civilian academic classrooms.

Official government historians enjoy enviable research support—ability to devote full time to their projects, adequate funding, abundant staff and library resources, expert colleague support—which most academic scholars would relish. But most important, official historians are privy to material that may not be available to other historians for years. Their government identification and special access privilege subject official historians to the appellation of court historian. In most cases, the charge is not justified. Nevertheless, the official historian should be sensitive to the suspicions about him, and he must pay particular attention to fairness since some of his sources may not be universally accessible.

The three books reviewed here are fine works, which reflect some of the virtues and limitations of official military histories. The similarities among the three are quite apparent. All are primarily narrative, each beginning its account with World War II. One is a general chronological survey to 1965; the other two are chronologically developed topical studies. All abound with names of commanders, participants, units, equipment, acronyms, code names, and aircraft nomenclature. Their glossaries are essential for the novice. All have useful indexes, bibliographic notes, and good visual aids. Although each is candid and critical at times, none is particularly analytical. All are sound, valuable studies which will remain important reference works, but none will attract a very wide audience.

It is most appropriate that Dr. Robert F. Futrell is the author of the first vo-

lume of the Air Force's official history of the Southeast Asia conflict. He was a major contributor to *The Army Air Forces in World War II* series, and he wrote *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*, the service's single-volume official account of that conflict. His *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine* is a classic on the role of air power. Before his retirement from the Office of Air Force History in 1974, Dr. Futrell wrote a detailed, classified history of the Air Force's early involvement in Vietnam. Martin Blumenson, one of America's premier military historians, edited the manuscript and prepared it for unclassified publication.†

*The Advisory Years to 1965* is an extremely ambitious and detailed undertaking which epitomizes the best attributes of official history. Futrell weaves the evolution of Air Force involvement into a larger narrative account of the early years of the war. He begins with the origins of the American commitment in the late 1940s and early 1950s, treats Dien Bien Phu and the withdrawal of the French, and details the genesis of the United States advisory command structure. The bulk of the work traces the rise in Air Force activity in Southeast Asia from 112 airmen (68 in Vietnam, 44 in Thailand) in the late 1950s to 9538 personnel (6604 in Vietnam, 2934 in Thailand) on the eve of Americanization in early 1965 and develops the expansion of the mission and the organizational structures.

Futrell surveys the cautious evolution of Air Force activity from the introduction of a tactical air control unit, the first permanent duty status unit in Vietnam, in October 1961, through expansion of several diversified missions. These included the inception of reconnaissance capacity, the Farm Gate training and limited combat role, the Mule Train airlift detachment, the beginning of Ranch Hand herbicide

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† Robert F. Futrell with Martin Blumenson, *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia: The Advisory Years to 1965* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1981, \$15.00), 398 pages.

operations, and the advent of air interdiction. He explains how Air Force commanders, especially Chief of Staff Curtis E. LeMay, chafed about the restrictions on activity and the Air Force's subordinate status in the command structure. Futrell is obviously sympathetic with the Air Force's frustration with the Kennedy administration hesitations and the tribulations of working with the inchoate Vietnamese Air Force.

This frustration continued into the early Johnson years despite the service's increasingly upgraded combat role. General LeMay continued to charge that the impediments which limited Air Force effectiveness were losing the war. As the conflict deepened, the facade that all operations had a primary training mission became more and more farcical. Maintaining this pretext by such actions as having Vietnamese aboard on all missions, even when they were merely available enlisted personnel who were handy to fill the quota, was ridiculous and greatly hindered operations. Meanwhile, the Air Force sought a greater role in the American command structure and in policy formation. By the beginning of 1965, the service had established its vital role in the war, and a nucleus of air power assets was in place. The Air Force's largest function in the conflict, the bombing campaign of North Vietnam, would soon begin.

*The Advisory Years to 1965* is a meticulous piece of research that utilizes documents which may not be available to other scholars for some time. Military historians will find it a valuable reference work. The appendix, which outlines the chronological growth of United States and Vietnamese Air Force units by month, year, and location, is a useful addition. However, the volume reads too much like a text, or even a staff report. And despite the author's clear perspective and forthright judgments, the book

is not particularly analytical. Even though it offers a good survey of early American political involvement in Vietnam, it will not attract a large general audience. It remains a book for specialists.

THE other two volumes have somewhat narrower parameters. Both are excellent studies that will probably remain the definitive word on their respective subjects for some time. *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia, 1961-1975*, by Earl H. Tilford, Jr., is the more engaging since it treats one of the most fascinating aspects of the Vietnam War, the rescue of downed fliers.†

From the early days of aerial combat, American fliers have been confident that if they went down every effort would be made to rescue them. During the years in Southeast Asia, the Air Force lost 2254 aircraft; Army, Navy, and Marine aviation losses swelled that number. From these downed aircraft, the Air Force's Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service recovered 3883 men who otherwise might have been killed or captured. Tilford's book is the saga of the rescue operation during the war years.

The account is a chronological narrative covering the development of search and rescue during World War II, its growth during the Korean War, and its increasing sophistication in Southeast Asia. The author explains advances in aircraft capabilities, communication equipment, training, and rescue procedures. The vignettes reflecting the courage of rescue pilots and pararescue men who went down on the ground after injured fliers is both engrossing and inspiring. Probably the most interesting sections concern the unsuccessful attempt to liberate American prisoners of war at the Son Tay prison camp in North Vietnam and the complex events of the mission to regain the

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†Earl H. Tilford, Jr., *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia, 1961-1975* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1980, \$7.50), 212 pages.

captives of the *Mayaguez* at Koh Tang in 1975. Each story details the planning, training, execution, and results of the operations. Although the Son Tay account is not as detailed as Benjamin F. Schemmer's *The Raid*, it may well be a more accurate appraisal. Tilford's interviews with participants add dimension. The account of Koh Tang, based on interviews and Major A. J. C. Lavalley's earlier monograph, *Fourteen Hours at Koh Tang*, is outstanding—far superior to Roy Rowan's popular journalistic survey, *Four Days of the Mayaguez*.

Although it includes much the same emphasis on commanders, locations, nomenclature, code names, and acronyms common to these volumes, the book is interesting reading. It is well researched, objective, and highly competent. Since the topic is not likely to engender varied interpretations, the book should remain the definitive study of the subject. It is a model treatise.

**A**N equally good study although more controversial and somewhat less engaging is *Ranch Hand* by William A. Buckingham.† Few topics have generated more passion than the ecological effects of the American presence in Vietnam. From the first, war critics denounced the irreparable damage done to the country and its people by bombing, artillery free-fire zones, and row plows. But no activity caused furor equivalent to that precipitated by the use of herbicides. If the issues of ecological damage to Vietnam and the specter of chemical and biological warfare were not explosive enough, by the early 1970s the hottest issue was the possible damage done to American servicemen by exposure to some of the herbicides. During the postwar years, Agent Orange has become a household word, and the debate

smolders today between veterans claiming irreparable personal injury and official U.S. government denial of responsibility.

Buckingham begins with a brief description of the origins of aerial herbicide application, pursues the story through World War II operations, and carefully describes the hesitant decision process and bureaucratic procedures that characterized defoliation and crop destruction in Vietnam. He also traces the evolution of the Ranch Hand program and unit, including its aircraft, equipment, and the chemicals used. By 1964, the use of herbicide in Vietnam was widespread, and criticism of its use was emerging in the United States. Buckingham treats the peak of Ranch Hand activity between 1965 and 1969, the ever-growing controversies, and the numerous studies of herbicide effectiveness and its dangers. He also explains the tactics employed, the risks incurred, and the losses sustained during Ranch Hand missions.

By 1969, Agent Orange, introduced into Vietnam in 1965, was under widespread scrutiny and criticism. Academic, private, and governmental studies addressed the question of possible birth defects resulting from exposure to the chemical. Although no definitive consensus emerged, international attention and condemnation ensued. This concern, coupled with the beginning of the American deescalation in 1969, led to the decline of Ranch Hand activity. Agent Orange was banned in 1970, and by the end of the year Ranch Hand was out of business. The last herbicide mission of the war was flown on 7 January 1971.

In an epilogue, Buckingham deals with the post Ranch Hand questions during the final years of the war: What should be done with existing stocks of Agent Orange in Vietnam? What herbicide capacity would the United States provide for the South Vietnamese? What

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†William A. Buckingham, Jr., *Operation Ranch Hand: The Air Force and Herbicides in Southeast Asia, 1961-1971* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1982, \$8.50), 253 pages.

would future American herbicide policy be? He also touches briefly on the continuing controversy over veteran claims against Agent Orange. An appendix provides useful statistical information on herbicide use during the war.

Although this is a fine study, the technical nature of topic limits its readership. Doubtless, much more will be written on herbicides in Vietnam and on their possible military role, if any, in the future. It is a topic that must be pursued. Certainly, this is a good pioneering study, one that will contribute to the difficult future decision process.

OFFICIAL histories fill a particular place in historiography. They may be the definitive study

of some otherwise neglected topic or may merely reflect one perspective on a heavily treated subject. Since their authors have early access to source materials, such studies will ordinarily be among the earlier ones on a topic. As previously closed material becomes available, the authors of Vietnam official histories have a special obligation to provide objective evaluations of many aspects of this controversial American experience. Early readings, at least from the Office of Air Force History, indicate that we can look forward to a series of significant contributions that will rival the important work done by the official historians of World War II.

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#### Notes

1. Robert Pisor, *The End of the Line: The Siege of Khe Sanh* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1982), pp. 48, 120, 139-41.

2. Eric C. Ludvigsen, "Vietnam—In 21 Volumes," *Army*, August 1977, pp. 30-32.

## potpourri

**U.S. Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: Potentials for Military Struggles in the 1980s** edited by Sam C. Sarkesian. New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Transaction Books, 1981, 221 pages, \$9.95.

In his well-considered introduction to this group of papers, prepared especially for a low-intensity conflict workshop-seminar at Loyola University of Chicago, editor Sam Sarkesian asserts that the United States has yet to demonstrate its ability to integrate political, military, and economic instruments into a coherent policy effective in the Third World. On a conflict spectrum ranging from the noncombat use of force to general conventional and nuclear war, he points out that the United States seems to have the capability and credibility for conflict near the two extremes but has only limited capability and minimum credibility in the midrange of conflict. And this is the range in which future conflicts are most likely to occur.

West Point professors George Osborn and William J. Taylor conclude that specific U.S. interest and the general

Soviet interest in demonstrating its superpower status will come into conflict during the period 1980-85 and state that prudence demands political decisions be made in the light of military capabilities. David Tarr writes about restraints on the use of force, noting there is now no widely shared public rationale for American involvement in low-intensity conflicts, save a rather vague preference for peaceful change and an ill-defined anxiety about vulnerable resources, especially petroleum. If the United States does get involved, the occasion will probably require prior aggressive intervention by a third party and a request for aid from local authorities. U.S. Army Colonel Howard D. Graves describes the United States as able to deploy and employ small elite military forces rapidly for low-intensity contingencies but sees "serious limits" in deployment of large units to overseas areas.

The British and French experiences with low-intensity conflict are subjected to informative analysis by Dr. Dennis J. Duncanson of the University of Kent and French Army Colonel Jacques L. Pons. The former emphasizes Leninist

doctrine as the ideological basis for low-intensity conflict. He points out interesting differences in the English experience, e.g., Britain was the governing authority in nearly every low-intensity conflict in its history. Colonel Pons writes of the French experience in Indochina (1945-53) and Algeria (1954-62), neither of which was a military defeat. The withdrawals were the painful but necessary prelude to the granting of independence to black African republics through friendly negotiation and the recovery of France's freedom of action under Charles de Gaulle. While Duncanson despairs that Britain in the future would only send soldiers to fight distant aggression "after some kind of referendum," Colonel Pons gives good marks to France for its effective interventions in Kolwezi and the Central African Republic in 1979.

The Soviet response to low-intensity conflict is described by Roger Hamburg, who sees an "irresistible temptation" of the Soviets to probe when the United States is unwilling to get involved. Both sides have kept the intensity of conflict low, but the momentum of the rivalry is great and therefore dangerous. Frank Trager and William Scully consider two general U.S. responses: counterinsurgency, which was tested and buried in Vietnam; and the rapid deployment force. The RDF is a useful response, but the authors emphasize the overriding truth that the outcome of conflict is determined not only by aggregates of power but by political leadership and initiative, and that there is no substitute for the "painful empirical tasks of political analysis and forecasting, of exercising intelligence. . . ."

Interesting and informative readings.

Dr. James H. Buck  
*University of Georgia, Athens*

**Silence Was a Weapon: The Vietnam War in the Villages**  
by Stuart A. Herrington. Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1982. 222 pages, \$15.95.

Lieutenant Colonel Stuart A. Herrington, U.S. Army, writes that even though he was a career officer he opposed the Vietnam War from its origin. Rather than serve, he left the Army in 1969 only to return seven months later with the understanding he was due for a utilization tour. He subsequently served as an intelligence advisor to the South Vietnamese military, 1971-72, and later as a member of the U.S. mission in Saigon during the stillborn cease-fire, 1973-75.

*Silence Was a Weapon* focuses on Herrington's experiences while serving in Duc Hue district, Hau Nghia province as a Phoenix advisor to the Vietnamese. (Phoenix was the code name for identifying members of the Vietcong infrastructure and the planning of operations to "neutralize" them.) The author contends that the Phoenix program was the facet of the pacification effort that most typified the frustrations and inadequacies faced by U.S. advisors. The program, he suggests, "was a forthright, simple, and typical American, direct approach to the problem." In order to root out the Vietcong insurgents, the Phoenix concept required two elements: the open sharing of information by all Vietnamese intelligence agencies; the enthusiastic support of the Vietnamese district chiefs. Neither element,

according to Herrington, succeeded, but the program worked, to varying degrees, in many of the districts.

The Vietcong organization was the major device that ensured the silence of the Vietnamese people; this silence was sufficient to frustrate U.S. advisory efforts. In this regard, Herrington believes that the American advisor played a paradoxical role—one of redeemer and curse—to the South Vietnamese. He argues that most U.S. advisors were not trained to function in the delicate role required of them and for the most part were resented or only tolerated by their counterparts. Part of the problem, Herrington suggests, was the linguistic and cultural barrier, a barrier almost impossible for the advisor to breach.

The author writes that the U.S. advisory system itself also imposed further barriers to mutual trust between the American advisor and his Vietnamese counterpart. Herrington cites as an example the monthly Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES) report, which became a report card on the performance of Vietnamese district chiefs. In many cases, the HES report placed U.S. district advisors in compromising adversary relationships with their Vietnamese counterparts. However, in spite of many flaws, Herrington considers the U.S. advisory effort as having been effective.

In his concluding chapter, Herrington states that when he left Vietnam after twenty months of advisory duty he had mixed feelings regarding the South Vietnamese. On the one hand, he respected what he had seen of the territorial forces militia troops. But when it came to the regular Army of the Republic of Vietnam units, he had "seen extremes of performance that were plain scary." The author adds that one of the most disturbing realities that he came to know in 1971 and 1972, "was the near universal cynicism of the people toward their government."

Lieutenant Colonel Herrington's reflections are candid and depict his intense emotional involvement with the war from a perspective that he describes as a "low-level actor in the overall sweep of events that unfolded around me." His book includes his apprehension and frustration in coping with advisory duty, friendships with the Vietnamese, first-hand knowledge of Vietcong revolutionary justice, and war itself.

*Silence Was a Weapon* will appeal mainly to those who served as U.S. advisors to the South Vietnamese military and will rekindle many memories. For the general reader, the book provides insights into a deeply complex war, which for the most part the American public still does not understand.

Colonel James B. Motley, USA  
*Office of the Secretary of Defense*  
*Washington, D.C.*

**Teaching the Vietnam War** by William L. Griffen and John Marciano. Montclair, New Jersey: Allanheld, Osmun & Co., 1979. 183 pages, \$14.50 cloth, \$6.50 paper.

A foreword by Howard Zinn, an acknowledgment to Noam Chomsky, and a preface that asserts our involvement in the war constituted "a deliberate policy of imperialism



and aggression" provide adequate hints that we are about to read a polemic posing as a scholarly analysis of twenty-eight high school textbooks' treatment of the Vietnam War.

There are, of course, good reasons to offer a textbook critique of the Vietnam War. Indeed, anyone can challenge high school textbook discussion of any issue, for it is in the nature of these texts that they greatly simplify complex problems. In fact, the same charge can be leveled at most college history texts, although presumably professors engage their students in more critical examination of historical phenomena. At least I find that in teaching a college course on the history of the Vietnam War, considerable supplementary material must be imparted to the students.

But the purpose of *Teaching the Vietnam War* is not to assess critically and honestly the relationship between scholarship and textbooks, or even to draw the reader into an objective appraisal of the Vietnam War, but to argue an ideological position that is considerably weaker and more simplistic than even the most dim-witted author of textbooks could accept.

Here we have the tired old cliché of good guy/bad guy, except that the United States, of course, is the latter. According to William Griffen and John Marciano, the North Vietnamese in the mid-1960s were eager for negotiations (under what conditions? with what serious intent?) while the Americans were intent on nothing other than military destruction. President Johnson, in brief, was a liar and mad-bomber, but Ho Chi Minh was a man of truth and peace. The writers seethe with indignation at the dastardly Diem but have no harsh words for Ho, a Stalinist who is simply described as "one of the founding fathers of Vietnam." (p. 23) The fall of Saigon is presented as an example of "how a people can take over their own country" by troops "who actually represented the indigenous population." (p. 50) The use of search and destroy operations by the American military "were inherently terroristic, clearly war crimes as defined by the Nuremberg Tribunal." (p. 171) Finally, the authors lament that high school students fail to learn that we "had committed the most blatant act of aggression since the Nazi invasions of World War II." (p. 171) Seldom have I seen so many stupidities assembled in one book.

And so it goes. There are only two good reasons to review such a work. First, *Teaching the Vietnam War* is a useful case study of the beliefs (and tactics) of the American extreme left, quite apart from consideration of the Vietnam War. Second, the review should serve as a warning against the use of this diatribe by high school faculties, who often include those who have internalized the highly selective antiwar view of our involvement in Vietnam and remain susceptible to its message.

Dr. Eugene J. Watts  
Ohio State University, Columbus

"Aircraft in Action" series by various authors. Carrollton, Texas: Squadron Signal Publications, 1980, 50 pages, illustrated with full-color cover and two-page, full-color insert, \$4.95.

In the early 1970s Squadron Signal Publications of Carrollton, Texas, began publishing a series of specialized reference pamphlets primarily for scale-model aircraft builders. The series, known as "Aircraft in Action," is notable for its extensive high-quality photographic and diagrammatic coverage of military aircraft and their crews.

Few individuals possess the specialized knowledge, equipment, time, and money needed to research official photo archives, so Squadron Signal has provided easy access to an initially limited but growing clientele. The publisher and the specialized audience of modelers and buffs who made the business a paying proposition deserve a great deal of credit, for "Aircraft in Action" has become an increasingly polished, relevant, and professional venture.

Dealing with an incredibly wide range of aircraft from World War I to the present, "Aircraft in Action" photographically details the histories of the well known and not-so-well-known, from the Messerschmitt Bf 109 (Part I, No. 44) through the P-39 Airacobra (No. 43), Macchi C.202 (No. 41) and B-17 Flying Fortress (No. 12), to the P-80 (No. 40), B-36 (No. 42), C-130 (No. 47), AH-1G Huey Cobra (No. 14), and a host of others. Now past volume 48, covering the operational history of the Lockheed PV-1 Ventura, a little known but effective World War II Navy patrol bomber, and volume 49, covering the A-10 Warthog, Squadron Signal's well-illustrated series improves with age.

Though invariably offering impressive selections of archival photographs, supplemented by several pages of artists' renditions in full color, early selections tended to have sketchy and occasionally misleading texts. The last few years' releases, however, have attained a high standard of accuracy. Developmental and operational histories, though without citations and necessarily brief, are generally complete, informative, and intelligently keyed to the photographs and captions. Detail sketches are effectively used to illustrate key design features. Much of the material in these books will be unfamiliar even to the informed reader. The B-36 title, for instance, contains excellent coverage of the FICON program, the use of an RF-84 bomb bay parasite fighter which could be launched and recovered in flight, and the Tom Tom project, an improbable—and ultimately unsuccessful—attempt at fighter range extension involving wingtip-to-wingtip hookups with RF-84s.

The A-10 volume, authored by Lou Drendel and illustrated by well-known aviation illustrator Don Greer, is richly garnished with pen-and-ink detail cutaway sketches of the 30-mm gun, armor protection, ordnance configuration options, egress system, and so on; it contains a considerable amount of developmental history and short but surprisingly comprehensive discussions of design philosophy and tactics.

These "Aircraft in Action" monographs are not definitive histories, but they are competently researched and written, attractively produced, and reasonably priced. They contain much information and pictorial evidence that is unavailable elsewhere in published form.

J.F.G.

Korea: The Untold Story of the War by Joseph C. Goulden.  
New York: Time-Life Books, 1982, 690 pages, \$22.50.

Forget the word *untold* in the title. Most of what appears in this well-written book has already appeared in print.

What Joseph C. Goulden's volume offers is simply the best account to date of the Korean War. No one before him has put together so well the disparate elements of the complex story.

Goulden has cast his eye on and described clearly every decision-making level involved. Although the conflict was international in scope—that is, many governments not directly participating in the struggle exerted pressures, reacted to events, and influenced the course of the war—Goulden's focus rests for the most part on the American story. This he traces with meticulous detail up and down the chain of command.

President Harry S. Truman, later President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and their political and military advisers in Washington; Douglas MacArthur, later Matthew B. Ridgway and Mark W. Clark in Tokyo; and the combatants in Korea down to the foxhole level—all appear and act on the stage of history. Goulden has depicted them and their activities with care and skill.

The Korean War was a limited war in the nuclear age. It was a war prosecuted by the United Nations against a Communist coalition. It marked the apogee of MacArthur, who, against the advice of everyone, pulled off at Inchon one of the most spectacular and brilliant amphibious operations in the history of warfare; and the decline of this legendary figure who overstepped the boundary separating military and political actions and was unceremoniously removed from command. It ended inconclusively with an armistice rather than a victory; neither side reunified Korea by force.

It was a curious war, unpopular in the United States although probably necessary, given the times, circumstances, and political forces at work. Whether it was a prototype of the kind of war possible now in the nuclear age, a war of limited objectives, with neither victor nor vanquished, remains to be seen. But it deserves careful study, and Goulden's account is an excellent way to get started.

Dr. Martin Blumenson  
George Washington University  
Washington, D.C.

**American Aircraft of World War Two in Color** by Kenneth Munson. Dorset, England: Blanchford Press, 1982. 160 pages, \$19.95.

Can American aircraft of World War II be covered in 160 pages? Hardly, and because *American Aircraft of World War Two in Color* makes no attempt to deal with all World War II American aircraft, this title is somewhat misleading. But the book does cover, in some detail, about one hundred of the major aircraft used by American forces during World War II. Kenneth Munson has written several other books on aviation subjects, including the *Pocket Encyclopedia of World Aircraft in Color*.

The book is organized by names of manufacturers. So in order to find the B-24, you need to know that Consolidated was the manufacturer. Most of the salient information is

tabulated for easy reference. Each table includes engine type, dimensions, and performance data such as maximum speed, time to climb, and range. As an added indication of performance, wing loading and thrust/weight ratios are included; also narratives which vary in length depending on the relative importance of an aircraft; and information such as design evolution, various mission roles the aircraft performed, armament, and usually numbers built (occasionally by models), use by allied air forces, and special modifications. A random check of these data found them to be quite accurate.

The most attractive feature of *American Aircraft of World War Two* is the artwork. More than sixty drawings are in full color and often show aircraft markings of noted aviators or interesting units. The only serious shortcoming in the book is the treatment of armament. Rather than being included in the tables, armament is included in the text as a part of design evolution, often requiring the reader to follow the text through various models to determine a particular model's armament.

*American Aircraft of World War Two* is interesting and informative. Anyone looking for a general reference book for World War II American aircraft should give it serious consideration.

Captain Bruce B. Johnston, USAF  
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**The Naval Air War in Vietnam: 1965-1975** by Peter B. Mersky and Norman Polmar. Annapolis, Maryland: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America. 1981. 219 pages, \$17.95.

Vice Admiral David L. McDonald asserts in the foreword to *The Naval Air War in Vietnam* that Norman Polmar (recipient of the Navy League's 1976 Alfred Thayer Mahan Award for literary achievement and author of numerous military historical works) in conjunction with Peter Mersky (a former naval air intelligence officer and lifelong aviation enthusiast) provide "the most complete chronicle of the air war in Vietnam yet to be published." Their book begins with a quick review of post-World War II Vietnam and reminds us that "U.S. carrier aviation was no stranger to that troubled area of the world." Polmar and Mersky describe the attack on the U.S. destroyer *Maddox* in the Gulf of Tonkin (2 August 1964) and quickly point out that four F-8E Crusaders from the USS *Ticonderoga* were immediately vectored to the *Maddox*, becoming the first aircraft to search out and destroy the enemy. The authors' description of the Vietnam War comes alive through their accounts of naval aviators, sailors, and Marines who sailed the ships, flew the aircraft, and ultimately fought the enemy. Mersky and Polmar highlight the importance of carrier aviation throughout the book, concluding with an example: the *Coral Sea's* participation in the rescue of the captured *Mayaguez's* crew (May 1975).

The authors claim that during the first year of the war the "carriers had proven their worth" and that these "giant ships that were really tiny airfields had carried the war to

the enemy. . . . The advantage of the carrier as a roving airfield . . . was proved time and again as the ships patrolled the entire length of Vietnam, their planes striking at enemy positions in Quang Tri, South Vietnam one day, and then hitting Haiphong the next." From the final F-8 combat flight to the first deployment of the F-14, Mersky and Polmar trace the employment of the entire spectrum of U.S. naval aircraft. The authors tell of the first naval aviator to receive the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam—a helicopter pilot; they detail the MiG kills while identifying our first aces; they relate the adventures of our SAR (search and rescue) crews; yet they do not neglect the oftentimes forgotten heroes—the reconnaissance, transport, and close air support pilots.

*The Naval Air War in Vietnam* is loaded with pictures and supported with facts, yet it records this war with the personal experiences of numerous participants. The authors have documented the how and when of the war as well as expressing the frustration that crews and commanders felt as they fought a limited and unpopular war. I agree with Admiral McDonald's assessment that this book "offers a vivid description of what that war was to the warrior in the sky and how he performed." Accordingly, I recommend this book to anyone desiring to understand the capabilities of U.S. naval aviation.

Major Robert R. Tyler, USMC  
Hq Naval Air Systems Command  
Washington, D.C.

**Conventional War and Escalation: The Soviet View** by Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., and Amoretta M. Hoerber. New York: Crane, Russak, 1981, 63 pages, \$5.95.

During the past decade, it has been popular in American literature to state that a nuclear war with the Soviet Union is impossible. The logic being that such a war would be so terrible that the Soviets, having come to agree with the West, would turn away from nuclear toward conventional and that the shift in Soviet strategy and doctrine is currently under way.

In this brief study, Joseph Douglass, Jr., and Amoretta Hoerber have examined a large body of Soviet military literature, which is extremely limited in the West. The authors are think-tank types from the Washington area. Douglass is a network theorist/mathematician; Hoerber is now Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Development. The authors reach these conclusions: (1) no noticeable shift in Soviet policy can be identified; (2) the main Soviet development in the past decade is that of an effective nuclear combined arms offensive capability; (3) should war begin with a conventional phase, the sudden transition to nuclear operations will be the primary consideration; (4) in the Soviet view, an opening conventional phase will provide a mere effective implementation of a surprise nuclear strike; and (5) the Soviet approach is focused on the most favorable time to make the transition to nuclear operations. The bottom-line conclusion of the authors is that Soviet concepts of nuclear war differ drastically from the perceptions of those concepts in Western

literature. In fact, the West tends to overlook, not address, and even discounts the Soviet thinking on nuclear operations.

No one can ever fault Barnett/Trager and Company (National Strategy Information Center) for sloppy research. Indeed, they are experts in strategy-type publications, and this little book is no exception. *Conventional War and Escalation* really should be required reading for every military officer if for no other reason than to think the unthinkable. For, if as the President has said, "the window of vulnerability" is already open, then the American people need an explanation of what has happened to leave us so vulnerable to Soviet nuclear attack before the military begins arming the warheads.

Dr. Robert H. Terry  
York College of Pennsylvania

**Vietnam: The View from Moscow, Peking, Washington** by Daniel S. Papp. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1981, 257 pages, \$17.95.

Students of international relations must view the world through the eyes of foreign leaders to understand national decisions and actions. This task is difficult but vital. Officials act on information as judged in their capitals, and it is critical to know their points of view since governments seldom agree on the facts or their significance. Fortunately, more American scholars are paying attention to different national perceptions. Daniel Papp, for example, wisely employs a wide variety of sources (including *Pravda* and the *Peking Review*) to examine world views as seen from three superpower capitals during the long Vietnam conflict, 1945-72. His difficult endeavor gives us a valuable eye-opening work.

Papp demonstrates that the relationships of both Moscow and Peking with Hanoi frequently changed. While ideology demanded Communist support for North Vietnam's effort, other narrow interests dominated the foreign policies of the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Moscow slighted Hanoi after World War II because the Soviets worried more over Europe and could not give extensive military aid to Ho Chi Minh. After lending stronger support in the late 1960s, the Kremlin shifted its emphasis to détente—a goal ill-served by the heated conflict in Vietnam. At the same time, proximity and ideology made China an early and stronger supporter of Hanoi, and the 1966 cultural revolution discouraged any change from this policy. Meanwhile, the Sino-Soviet split allowed Hanoi to play each capital against the other with little obligation to either. Relations among the Communist capitals, therefore, were less affected by ideology and more by perceptions of what best served each nation's purpose.

The picture grew more complex in the late 1960s when the United States finally realized that a military victory for South Vietnam was impossible. Within a short period, President Nixon launched his Vietnamization program, successfully pushed for détente with Moscow, and opened relations with Peking. These new shifts in U.S. foreign policy placed both Communist giants in awkward posi-

tions with the United States. Both capitals continued to extend support for North Vietnam but took care not to jeopardize improved diplomatic relations with Washington. Moscow and Peking welcomed the end of American involvement in Vietnam, but China, fearing Soviet influence, wished to see the United States maintain some presence in Asia after 1972. Distrust between the Soviets and Chinese dominated their foreign policy and clearly overshadowed their support for Vietnamese liberation.

Papp has written a carefully researched and logical work, but one interpretation may trouble the reader. He believes Linebacker II served only to delay the final 1973 settlement—Nixon simply wanted to pump in more supplies to make Vietnamization work before the United States had to depart. The final accords, Papp argues, hardly differed from the draft that had been written the previous October. The author disapproves of Linebacker II, and he uses the term *indiscriminate* bombing and (citing the Washington media) shocking B-52 losses, to describe the effort. Many military men connected with the drive will not recognize his discussion of the offensive. Although Papp judged Linebacker II to be of no real value to the U.S. position, hundreds of former prisoners of war tell a different story. Nonetheless, Papp has written a coherent history reminding American readers that U.S. efforts in Vietnam played a key role in the activities of other Communist powers, and that varying interests among the Communist countries drove their national leaders to take steps not wholly consistent with ideology. He skillfully describes the perceptions and activities of the three governments, and he gives the reader a useful understanding of diplomatic relations among them.

Lieutenant Colonel Harry R. Borowski, USAF  
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**Viking of Assault: Admiral John Lesslie Hall, Jr., and Amphibious Warfare** by Susan H. Godson. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982, 237 pages, \$21.50 cloth, \$10.25 paper.

The poverty of historical writing on the U.S. Navy and amphibious warfare is a true reflection of that service's institutional disinterest in the role of maritime power projection. Dr. Susan Godson's eulogistic biography of Admiral John L. Hall, Jr., a minor figure in the naval operations in the Mediterranean and European waters, is only the second biography of a World War II Navy commander who specialized in amphibious operations. (The other is George C. Dyer's two-volume work on Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner.) Although the book and its subject are limited, Admiral Hall's experience testifies (and more than the author realizes) to the Navy's ad hoc approach to amphibious operations.

Because the Navy had no powerful officer faction or bureau organization to champion amphibious warfare, its prewar landing exercises had minimum influence on producing a body of amphibious experts outside the Marine Corps. Like most of the other amphibious force or transport group commanders, Hall had no prewar experience in landing operations. Like his contemporaries, he thought

he was making history with innovations in landing operations doctrine and techniques that already existed but had not been institutionalized within the Navy. Only the even greater ignorance of Army officers about such matters as combat loading, naval gunfire support, coordinating the ship-to-shore movement, and beaching offloading operations made the Navy commanders look like experts. Godson claims that Hall studied amphibious developments in the Pacific theater, but as late as D day Hall himself admitted that he and his staff were still pioneers. Not fully comfortable with issues of military doctrine, Godson overlooks the implications of pioneering, such as needless arguments over issues of command in joint operations and the varied quality of naval gunfire at Omaha and Utah beaches. It is not clear whether the same lack of clarity applied to Hall as well.

Although he had developed a solid reputation as an amphibious troop trainer and logistics manager in Europe, Admiral Hall did not match his Pacific peers in skill—or at least reputation—by the time he participated in the Okinawa invasion. As one of twelve amphibious group commanders, he was hardly a key figure in "Iceberg," the Pacific war's most ambitious landing. Turning in another competent performance until the war's end, Hall then served in a number of shore administrative positions until his retirement in 1953. He showed no further interest in amphibious operations, but he did serve as a forceful spokesman for interservice cooperation in an era when such sentiments were unfashionable.

*Viking of Assault* makes a minor contribution to the history of American amphibious operations in World War II and suggests just how much more original research might be done on the Navy's role (or lack thereof) in developing a truly significant American military technique.

Dr. Allan R. Millett  
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**Why We Were in Vietnam** by Norman Podhoretz. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982, 240 pages, \$13.50.

Norman Podhoretz's reexamination of American involvement in Vietnam is a thought-provoking polemic by one of the leading neoconservatives of the 1980s. Although he relies heavily on personal memoirs and secondary sources rather than documentary evidence, Podhoretz provides a much-needed counterpoint to the lingering liberal arguments about the morality of the Vietnam War. As the title suggests, he raises some very important questions that have been ignored for too long.

Tracing the history of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, Podhoretz provides an interesting analysis of the strategy of containment designed to check the perceived threat of Communist expansionism. He sees President Kennedy's endorsement of counterinsurgency programs to meet the new challenge of Communist-supported "wars of national liberation" as a crucial turning point. There is an insightful reappraisal of the image of Kennedy as the reluctant president who never would have sent combat troops to Vietnam had he lived, as expounded by such

Kennedy apologists as Arthur Schlesinger. But Podhoretz carries his point too far when he lays the burden for American intervention at Kennedy's doorstep. Two previous presidents, Truman and Eisenhower, had already firmly established the foundations of America's commitment to South Vietnam.

Here is where Podhoretz fails in answering his own question: Why were we in Vietnam? Rather than try to unravel the complex series of events and decisions that slowly drew the United States deeper into the war, he spends most of his time pointing his finger at those he believes were responsible for our failure. Intellectuals, liberal politicians, and the media are among the many that Podhoretz blames for the erosion of America's moral will power. Yet he conspicuously fails to mention his own role as the editor of *Commentary* magazine, which was critical of U.S. policy during the war.

Podhoretz concludes that the United States intervened in Vietnam "for the sake of an ideal," defending a democratic government from Communist subversion, rather than for "its own direct interests." Even if this simplistic answer is taken at face value, it begs a much more crucial question. If the United States is to continue as the moral champion of this ideal, we must come to grips with the problem of how to deal effectively with future challenges. The lessons to be learned from our failure in Vietnam have to be more carefully analyzed if we ever hope to succeed.

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**Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs** by William Spencer.  
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976, 184 pages, \$5.95 cloth, \$3.95 paper.

With continuing strategic interest in the Barbary Coast, readers may well turn to William Spencer's light and popular book for historical background. This volume in the Centers of Civilization series dramatizes the life of pirates of old in their Mediterranean capital. Algiers is all the more remarkable for its relatively recent rise to prominence—since 1500, when enterprising members of the Barbarossa family helped in owing only nominal obedience to the Turkish Empire.

Spencer treats three centuries of Algerine history, from the splendid Barbarossas to the losing nineteenth-century struggles against American, British, and French forces. His writing is vivid and his subject significant, with colorful vignettes of social life of women, wrestling matches, and justice in the city. However, there is no map of the city itself, nor are there any footnotes. Western and Turkish sources are cited in the bibliography, but students of early modern history will be surprised at the absence of Braudel and Tenenti, two masters who have taught us much about the history of piracy in the Mediterranean. Religious and economic motives figured in the rise of the corsairs of Algiers, who may have been the most successful pirates of the sixteenth century; but, by 1830, their power was slight in comparison with that of France. Despite their ultimate

capitulation, or perhaps because of it, they certainly merit a sympathetic historian such as Professor Spencer, who argues that they were the most powerful force opposing European colonization in Africa.

Dr. Maarten Ultee  
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

**Space in the 1980s and Beyond** edited by Peter M. Bainum.  
San Diego, California: American Astronautical Society, 1981, 292 pages, \$40.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper.

Many people would call *Space in the 1980s and Beyond* science fiction at its best, but Erik Quistgaard, Director General of the European Space Agency, in his opening address to the Seventeenth European Space Symposium, refers to it as a bridge between the present and the future, bringing together prospective ideas for the distant future as well as presentations on the present achievements and their extensions. In logical succession, *Space in the 1980s and Beyond* examines many of the possibilities of space exploration available to the European community, as presented through the papers submitted to the Seventeenth European Space Symposium. While the introduction raises the question of what Europe should do in the next decade, the book never reaches any conclusions as to the best possible solution. Instead, it examines at length a long-term strategy, space-based information services, manufacturing in space, space and the energy problem, and population or colonization of space.

Each topic is well presented and thoroughly explained, many with diagrams and graphics for the harder-to-comprehend ideas. Although some of the papers are presented only in brief summary, since they are published in full in the *Journal of the British Interplanetary Society*, a thorough footnote is provided for reference.

Overall, *Space in the 1980s and Beyond* is an outstanding and imaginative examination of the practical possibilities of space and well worth reading for the aviation enthusiast with an interest in the future of space.

First Lieutenant Roy Houchin, USAF  
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**The United States and the Soviet Union: The Decision to Recognize** by John Richman. Raleigh, North Carolina: Camberleigh & Hall, 1980, 287 pages, \$11.95.

John Richman opens *The United States and the Soviet Union* by listing all of the hot spots around the world within the last twenty years and claiming that the United States has brought them all on itself. Richman then says that despite honest intentions, the United States simply has not fully understood the impact of its actions on the international scene. He alleges that because the United States has never realized its inherent greatness and strength, it has run scared from the Communist nemesis, the Soviet Union. The case around which the author tries to support all of this argument is the decision to recognize the Soviet government as legitimate during the 1930s.

As a case study of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the interactions with his State Department, this book is fairly interesting and provides some worthwhile insights into the personalities involved. As an objective look at the question of whether to recognize the U.S.S.R., this volume is sadly one-sided and even tedious as the author ridicules the State Department area specialists who differed with the President's beliefs. The question of the advisability of recognition is never broached—only the infighting that surrounded the issue.

Richman tries to end this book with the same generalizations about the lack of understanding by the United States of its actions on the world, but the tie-in during the intervening pages is never made. If you are not interested in the specific problem of White House-State Department squabbling on this specific issue, this book is not worth your time.

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**Warplanes of the World 1918-1939** by Michael J. H. Taylor.  
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981, 192 pages,  
\$17.95.

This compact reference work contains information on more than 700 military aircraft, with photographs of approximately 280. To the browser, the volume's compactness commends it over many similar references. However, on closer examination it is this very feature that detracts from the book's usefulness to researchers. *Warplanes of the World 1918-1939* is divided into three parts, with critical data provided on only approximately 140 aircraft listed in Part I. Less information is provided on the approximately 90 aircraft listed in Part II, with only a sentence or two on most of the remaining 470 plus aircraft in Part III.

There is no discernible reason for the division of the aircraft covered in Parts I and II, since both sections contain the same types of aircraft, with similar periods of service, the same countries of origin, etc. No explanation for this division is given. An explanation for Part III is that it contains a listing of less important aircraft, noncombat aircraft, and those serving mainly during the two wars and fully covered in companion books of the series. Since the book professes to be a reference volume on warplanes of the world during the interwar years, inclusion of the aircraft in Part III is questionable.

Adding to the organizational confusion, the format for the third section is different from that found in the first two sections. In Parts I and II, the aircraft are listed alphabetically regardless of country of origin, while in Part III they are arranged alphabetically by country. The book's value as a research aid would be enhanced by a more consistent approach, arranging them all either by country, type, or alphabetically. The flaws are unfortunate, since the compact packaging offered such promise. The price is steep for the information it contains.

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**Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945** by Irwin F. Gellman. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979, 296 pages, \$18.50.

Comfortable assumptions provide dangerous entrapments for historians, as Irwin Gellman's study of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Latin American policy proves. Gellman demonstrates that the Good Neighbor Policy was not a culmination of Republican foreign policy in the 1920s despite an occasional able diplomat such as Francis White. The Good Neighbor Policy was born out of FDR's desire to pull the United States out of the doldrums of the Great Depression and into World War II. As a matter of fact, Gellman emphasizes FDR's care not to disturb pacifists and isolationists in the United States by directly challenging Axis aggressors. Thus, Roosevelt chose Pan-Americanism "as both a regional bond and a platform from which the president reached across oceans to an international audience." (p. 12)

Gellman describes the key roles played in the development of the Good Neighbor Policy by Roosevelt, Sumner Welles, and Nelson Rockefeller. The Good Neighbor Policy suffered fatal blows, however, when FDR died, Welles resigned, and the United States emerged victorious from World War II. Our neighbors "south of the border" were ignored by Stettinius, Hull, and other imperceptive diplomats more interested in global than regional foreign policy.

It strikes me that U.S. foreign policy suffers a disease often attributed to Latin America—*personalismo*, or the cult of personality, often associated with caudillismo. Without FDR and Welles, the Good Neighbor Policy collapsed because Roosevelt's brand of Pan-Americanism never became a principle of U.S. foreign policy for subsequent presidential administrations to follow. The Good Neighbor Policy never rose above the personalities who gave it birth.

Gellman's study is well researched, concise, and analytical. It is quite likely to become the standard work on the Good Neighbor Policy for many years to come.

The only flaw that I detected was the failure of editors to eliminate a large number of typographical errors from this otherwise fine work.

Dr. Thomas O. Ott  
University of North Alabama, Florence

**War in Peace: Conventional and Guerrilla Warfare since 1945** edited by Sir Robert Thompson, Ashley Brown, and Sam Elder. London: Crown, 1982, 312 pages, \$25.00.

War, like poverty, is a constant in history. Westerners tend to believe that history happens in Europe and North America where, since the end of World War II, a stability has been imposed by the advent of nuclear warfare, the rise of the Soviet Empire, and the establishment of NATO. Nevertheless, in the last 37 years, Americans have found themselves in combat for roughly half that time in Korea and Vietnam. Add a police action in the Dominican Re-

public, a couple of landings in Lebanon, deployments of ships and airplanes to the Indian Ocean, and a fiasco in the Iranian desert, and peace seems to have been distant indeed.

Wars, in fact, rage constantly. Sir Robert Thompson and the editors at Crown Publishers have compiled a very good book sketching nearly thirty conflicts occurring since 1945. These wars run the gamut from conventional fighting in Korea to the diverse warfare of the Indochina conflicts and include terror campaigns in South America, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere. Students of specific conflicts will find this treatment somewhat superficial. However, that criticism is unfair because *War in Peace* does what it purports to do—it provides a quick yet authoritative guide to the many wars of the past 37 years. Numerous color pictures and drawings add to the quality of this book, which, at \$25.00, does more than books that sell for far more.

Since this publication in early 1982, the British fought Argentina over the Falklands, Israeli forces marched into Lebanon to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization, Iran and Iraq continued their bloodletting, and the Soviets proved no closer to subjugating the proud and freedom-loving peoples of Afghanistan. It is the responsibility of all professional soldiers to stay abreast of the diverse and complex conflicts that are a continuing part of the human experience.

F.H.T.

**No Margin for Error: The U.S. Navy's Transpacific Flight of 1925** by Dwight R. Messimer. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1981, 176 pages, \$15.95.

*No Margin for Error* is the historical account of the U.S. Navy's first flight from California to Hawaii. But more than that, Dwight Messimer—a Ph.D. candidate in American military history—has, in this his first book, tied together the politics, personalities, and facts of this singular event and produced a riveting, true-to-life tale.

In the 1920s, the Navy needed a spectacular happening to counter General William "Billy" Mitchell's campaign to "create an independent air force responsible for all U.S. aviation matters." The plan was to build a twin-engine flying boat and fly it 2100 miles nonstop to Hawaii. The purpose was "to demonstrate with the maximum publicity possible naval aviation's usefulness to the fleet." When the last flying boat (PN9-1) was lost at sea with five airmen

aboard, the plan had failed; however, the news coverage of the search for the missing plane and crew assured the accomplishment of the purpose. The flight was a "successful failure."

Commander John Rodgers, a Naval Academy graduate, was selected to lead and direct this project. Rodgers lived in the shadows of his ancestors, who were famous American naval heroes. He was the second naval aviator and the first naval officer taught by the Wright brothers to fly. Messimer relates how Rodgers fought the battle of spare parts and leaking radiators to assemble three flying boats to attempt the proposed flight: one (PB-1) would not make the scheduled takeoff; the second (PN9-3) "dropped out of the race" five hours out of San Francisco; third, Rodgers's aircraft (PN9-1), ran out of fuel 2½ hours after takeoff some 450 miles short of its destination, and "was down at sea—and nobody knew where." The author shows how some early decisions and assumptions concerning wind, fuel, carburetor jets, and emergency provisions almost became fatal. Messimer details the almost unbelievable final sequence of events that put PN9-1 adrift and unprepared for survival at sea.

Many stories have been told of men adrift at sea. What is different in this story is how Commander Rodgers fostered a "determination and a will to survive which was shared by every member of the crew," while utilizing his past naval experiences to convert his airplane into a sailboat; and then to sail it for nine days to complete his journey. Messimer's account of those nine days contains details that are vivid, astonishing, and personable. He documents the events with appropriate charts that aid the reader's understanding of the dynamics of the search. The author concludes that the PN9-1's ordeal at sea coupled with an unrelated aircraft crash and "... Mitchell's outburst served to focus the nation's attention on the sad state of American aviation. . . . The important result was that President Coolidge appointed almost immediately a board to report on 'the best means of developing and applying aircraft in national defense.'"

*No Margin for Error* is enjoyable reading. Its graphic portrayal of the events of 1925 remind us of the importance of proper testing, evaluation, and planning. Messimer has shown that the project was more than politics; "it had been people, planes, and ships." He made it more than facts; he made it thrilling.

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## AWARD

The Air University Review Awards Committee has selected "What Happens If Deterrence Fails?" by Dr. Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., as the outstanding article in the November-December 1982 issue of the *Review*.

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