

THE KEY TO PEACE

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GENNADY GERASIMOV

THE KEY
TO PEACE
IN VIETNAM

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From the angle of history it is really not so long ago that the people of a certain country rose up to fight the colonialists. They published a document listing the reasons why they had taken up arms. They said that the chief colonialist had "plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy of the head of a civilized nation."

At that time the colonialists represented a mighty power possessing an armed force equipped with what was then the latest word in armament. The other side began with carbines and guerilla units. The first battle fought in that war for liberation was a typical guerilla ambush on a road leading to a bridge.

This ambush, which historians subsequently came to call "the Battle of Concord," initiated

the American War of Independence. Every schoolboy in the United States knows how this war ended.

Today Americans are seeking the answer as to how the war of independence, which the people of Vietnam are fighting, will end. We can tell them that it will end just as the American War of Independence did.

Though historical parallels are conditional, the logic of development just mentioned is rather edifying. Even the causes of resentment and dissatisfaction inscribed in the Declaration of Independence quoted earlier, though addressed to King George III of Britain, can today be very well addressed to the United States itself. The methods of guerilla warfare employed by Francis Marion, the famous Swamp Fox, are similar to those employed by the patriots in Vietnam today. Again, as in the America of bygone years, in Vietnam today the population support the guerilla army and hate the invader.

Unfortunately lessons of this nature that history teaches are, as a rule, lost on imperialist politicians. The American interventionists will surely "slip up" on that self same place where the French expeditionary corps "slipped up" before them in 1954. Incidentally the French expeditionary corps found itself in the same situation in which the "redcoats" of George III met defeat.

There is, though, an essential difference which merits special mention. The interventionists of today have tried to evade the inexorable course of history by employing American business acumen. They made very thorough pre-

parations for intervention in Vietnam beforehand, believing they had taken everything into account.



HOW AGGRESSION IN VIETNAM WAS PREPARED

Those preparations were started in 1961 when, in his first State of the Union message, the new President, John Kennedy, authorized the new Defence Secretary, Robert McNamara, to re-estimate all of US defence strategy.

Under the Administration of President Eisenhower, the official military strategy had been a doctrine of "massive retaliation." In practice this implied primarily preparations for a nuclear war and the build-up of the air force and navy in preference to ground forces. In protest General Maxwell Taylor, then Army Chief of Staff, resigned and published the book entitled *The Uncertain Trumpet*.

"If the bugle gives an indistinct sound," the General said quoting apostle Paul, "who will get ready for battle?" That is exactly what happened, the general claims, to US strategy, since the chiefs of the US war machine were uncertain as to the character a future war would assume. Taylor warned that if preparations were made only for a nuclear war, it was possible to lose sight of a war for national liberation. He claimed that preparations must be

made for the firing of missiles and the use of knives, that the USA must be ready to fight in any place at any time, as he said, with the means and the forces appropriate in the given circumstances. This was now a strategy of "flexible response" and limited wars.

After President Kennedy took over, Taylor became Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, conjointly with Robert McNamara, the new Defence Secretary who subscribed to his views, he initiated a series of organizational measures in the armed forces in order to provide the material guarantees for his strategic aims.

War spending began to climb. The strength of the armed forces was increased from 875 thousand to one million. The mobility of army formations was drastically enhanced. The tactical air force was extended and the number of its aircraft sharply increased.

Fifteen strike aircraft carriers, the core of the surface fleet, were switched from strategic forces to the "servicing" of limited war. The strength of the marine corps was increased and special commandos called the "green berets" were formed of cutthroats.

Training programmes incorporated classes in methods of anti-guerilla warfare. Aircraft would land paratroops somewhere in the south of the United States, where this force would "rout" mock guerillas. Later, these same aircraft flew the men across the seas, but over there matters were not as simple.

Troops were equipped with new weapons such as amphibian armoured carriers, which could rumble across flooded rice plantations.

improved flamethrowers, chemicals for the destruction of tropical foliage and many other things. New or revised field manuals were published such as the *FM-31-21, Guerilla Warfare and Special Purpose Operations*, the *FM-31-15 Operations Versus Irregular Forces*.

In this fashion did the Pentagon diligently set the apparatus of armed violence to suppress national liberation movements and, generally, to provide the United States with tangible opportunities for piracy and brigandage in any part of the globe. In this fashion did the American armed forces turn into a flying international police squad.

However, to be accurate, one ought to note that McNamara had hoped to win in Vietnam merely by employing Saigon puppet forces.

"There is no plan for introducing American combat troops in South Vietnam," he said on May 9, 1962.

This was the first of the false statements that he began to issue regularly. It might have been that there was indeed no concrete plan at that time; on the other hand, the technical means had been devised for quickly transporting personnel and armament, and when developments in Vietnam took a serious turn for the United States, they used these means. The President made two fatal decisions: one to bomb the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the other, to order direct American troop participation in hostilities against the patriots in South Vietnam. McNamara was very proud that he had been able to furnish the material ground for these decisions.

"I don't object to its being called McNama-

ra's war," he said. "I think it is a very important war and I am pleased to be identified with it."



THE LOGIC OF DEFEAT

Strictly speaking intervention in Vietnam is not the Defence Secretary's private war, but US imperialist aggression. The men directing this aggression clearly lack political perspicacity, preferring to identify politics with brute force.

From the viewpoint of a professional soldier or business-man who seems to have taken everything into account, it is incomprehensible how the mightiest capitalist power cannot bring the people of Vietnam to their knees. There is no special secret about this that history could not divulge. For instance, Colonel Woodhouse, a British expert, describes one such secret as follows. A guerilla war, he says, has never been successful in a region where the population is hostile towards the guerillas. On the contrary, he notes, it is impossible to quell a guerilla movement in a region where the population supports the guerillas.

In the eyes of a military expert a summing up of this nature is elementary. Even such a civilian as John Kennedy, told the Senate back in 1954, that "no amount of American military

assistance in Indochina can conquer an enemy which is everywhere and at the same time nowhere, 'an enemy of the people' which has the sympathy and covert support of the people."

The practical conclusion to be drawn from this specific feature of guerilla warfare reduces evidently to the point that in Vietnam it must be more a struggle for popular support than against guerillas, since it is precisely from popular support that the guerillas derive their strength, in much the same way as mythological Antaeus derived his strength from Mother Earth. However, the US interventionists preferred to stake on terror.

One cannot say the Pentagon does not understand this at all. One can disagree with American news analyst Walter Lippmann when he claims that the US leadership,—and he names the President, the Defence Secretary and the Secretary of State,—do not understand the character of this war and that this circumstance has "the same effect on their calculations and plans and decisions as it would, let us say, to use a map of Chicago to find one's way in New York." They are well aware of what it means. At any rate General John MacConnell, for instance, wants it realized "that this struggle is our first major counter-insurgent or antiguerilla war and for this reason we have had many lessons to learn." Among persons closely associated with the US Administration one will hear the argument that a political analysis is as important in an anti-guerilla war as the study of maps in the usual type of war.

Apparently, between the understanding of things and action prompted by such under-

standing there is a gap which the American politicians will be unable to bridge unless they change their very essence. The aggressiveness and adventurism inherent in imperialism are precisely that motive force behind the evolution of the drama in Vietnam.

Even at the very outset of the venture in Vietnam there were more than enough warnings issued in the United States itself against staking exclusively on armed force. To illustrate one could cite the *Counter-Insurgency Warfare. Theory and Practice* by David Galula, a staff member of the Harvard University Centre for International Affairs.

He was given the objective of formulating "the laws of counter-insurgency warfare" since as we learn, "the West almost automatically will be involved directly or indirectly in the coming revolutionary wars." What are these "laws" which, the author says, are just as necessary as a compass? Are they being followed by the US in Vietnam?

Galula states that a revolutionary war is, primarily, an internal conflict. When such a war breaks out, it can be assisted from without, but it is impossible to export this war since, in order to begin an uprising, it is necessary to have a revolutionary situation within the country itself, and, as he puts it, "a well-grounded cause with which to attract supporters among the population."

So much for theory. In practice, though, the United States proceeds from the thesis of "aggression from the North" which in no way corresponds to reality. By bombing North Vietnam the United States was trying to decisively influen-

ce the progress of hostilities in South Vietnam.

Galula goes on to say that "military action—essential though it is—cannot be the main form of action." He claims that an approach from the conventional military criteria of troop strength, armament, the capture of territory and the like, results in confusion and defeat. This, he declares, is a struggle not for territory but for the population.

That is how it is in theory. In practice the United States is throwing more and more contingents into the shambles of the revolutionary war, though, this, far from producing a turn of the tide in the war is, on the contrary, only increasing the casualties among the American armed forces.

The main theme of Galula's book, which is repeated time and again and viewed from various aspects, is that in guerilla warfare strength should be determined by the extent of popular support. Hence he advises a campaign not so much against the guerillas as for the population. A guerilla war, he emphasizes, is above all a political war.

That is how it is in theory. In practice US troops, exploiting their fire power, are slaying peaceful inhabitants—thereby intensifying popular wrath against the interventionists.

Galula believes that the way to victory is through reforms which would pacify the population and serve to isolate the guerillas. "To deprive the insurgent of a good cause amounts to solving the country's basic problems." However he is not so naive as to be unaware that the authority against whom a revolutionary war erupts cannot consent to this since it would

imply self-elimination. He advises at least a study of the alignment of class forces in the country and suggests a differentiated approach to the various sectors of the population. He also proposes winning over the population or at least trying to ensure their neutrality. He considers the resettling of the population in specially allotted regions or in "strategic hamlets" an extreme and very dangerous measure, which merely denotes the weakness of the antiguerilla forces.

That is how it is in theory. In practice the United States does exactly the contrary, completely ignoring Galula's recommendations. For that matter, how can the United States act otherwise? After all it supports a regime that is directed against the people.

With good reason Galula regards as the crucial problem of the war the providing of an alternative aim, the drafting of "a political programme designed to take as much wind as possible out of the insurgent's sails."

However this is something the interventionists will never be able to do. For the simple reason they have no aims that dovetail with the desires of the population. As *The New York Times* once observed: "there is not—and probably cannot be—any inspiring and precise definition of what the war is all about." The US cause in Vietnam is doomed to fail since it is wrong.

General Maxwell Taylor personally witnessed the scrapping of his strategy of "flexible response." This general cum-theorist not only personally directed at the Pentagon the switch-over to the new strategy; he then went to Saigon as US ambassador to supervise the imple-

mentation of this strategy in practice. His exit from the scene was one of the first in the whole series, which included the resignation of Westmoreland, McNamara, and others, thus adding to the epitaph on the strategy of "limited wars."

It thus happened, Walter Lippmann observed, that the official theory of Vietnam war, as General Maxwell Taylor put it to President Kennedy and, as subsequently Defence Secretary McNamara put it to President Johnson, had proved untenable.

Nor did the theory of escalation, proposed by Herman Kahn, Director of the Hudson Institute of Strategic Research, achieve its purpose either. This theory rests on the frankly aggressive thesis of achieving one's purpose by coupling the use of force with the threat to use still greater force. But in practice the US escalation resulted, and inevitably so, only in stepping up the war, failing to win a victory in the field for the USA.



PRICE OF MADNESS

At the outset, American generals joked, it is said, that care should be taken not to upset Vietnam war, because though it didn't amount to much, it was the one and only war they had.

Now, though, the American magazine *Time* complains, that just as a man with a toothache cannot think of anything else the USA seems at times not able to think of anything but Vietnam.

When the interventionist force first set sail, the Pentagon reckoned that the expedition, which it expected to be a walkover, would cost somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 million dollars. It was thought that the war would be a kind of "military tourism" with hazard thrown in as the price of exoticism.

In 1966 the USA had to essentially revise estimates and put the cost of the war at the annual sum of 12 thousand million dollars! The magazine *Fortune*, mouthpiece of American businessmen, observed in April 1966 that the war in Vietnam was also a financial experiment as to how much in the way of munitions a modern power could waste in a definite space of time and on a definite territory.

Later it became clear that the Vietnam aggression was out of reach of even the richest power in the capitalist world. In January 1967 in a Message to Congress US President Lyndon Johnson admitted that the original estimates were wrong and asked for double the sum—which he got. The cost of the war rose to an annual sum of 30 thousand million dollars and even more!

The epithet "astronomical" which may be used to describe the extent of US financial losses in Vietnam is in itself unable to convey the scale of Pentagon expenses. The enormity can be realized only if we invoke comparisons.

Item: the entire Korean war cost the USA 18 thousand million dollars.

Item: the making of the first atomic bomb cost two thousand million dollars.

Item: the cost of Expo-67 in Montreal reached one thousand million dollars.

Item: the entire French national budget is four thousand million dollars less than the US budgetary item covering the war in Vietnam.

If we were to divide this sum of 30 thousand million dollars among the inhabitants of South Vietnam, whose interests the USA is supposedly defending, each person would get one thousand eight hundred and seventy five dollars a year, which is more than the per capita national income in most countries of the world and many times more than the per capita income of between 80 and 160 dollars a year in Southeast Asian countries. This sum, which theoretically is adequate for achieving prosperity, is in practice being wasted on physical annihilation.

These comparisons and figures will help us to realize that the word "madness" is no exaggeration when applied to describe United States policy in Vietnam.

Robert McNamara differed from his predecessors as Secretary of Defence in that he introduced at the Pentagon a method of economic management borrowed from business practices, the method of "costs-effectiveness," whereby the results should warrant the expenses incurred.

This Ford-trained executive was sure everything could be bought and sold, that money and able organization could resolve any problem.

The Defence Secretary talked of "the quantification of the war" in Vietnam. However, he has seen for himself that a spate of dollars still does not provide the key to the solution of the problem in Vietnam.

Especially indicative in this respect are the results of aerial terror against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.



BOMBS AS FETISH

American aircraft bombed the DRV territory for the first time in August 1964.

Regular bombings began on February 7, 1965.

The suburbs of Hanoi and Haiphong were bombed for the first time on June 29, 1966.

Targets in the heart of Hanoi were bombed for the first time on May 19, 1967.

It all began with Guernica—a small town in the land of the Basques that was razed by fascist bombers. After that came towns in Holland, Britain, Poland and the Soviet Union...

Militarism elevated bombs to the status of a morbid fetish, as soon as military aircraft first appeared. Shortly after the First World War, Giulio Douhet, an Italian general, suggested in his book *Supremacy in the Air* that it was possible to win a war within a space of a few days with a bomber armada. In the United Sta-

tes General William Mitchell became high priest of war in the air. Though wartime practices failed to confirm their theories, the militarists still continue to cherish this illusion. Thus Professor Bernard Brodie, who is on the strategic research staff of the *Rand* corporation, bears witness that the long-deceased Italian general continues to exert a tremendous influence on the US air force.

Douhet's theories are tenacious. In this world so hostile to imperialism, which is beset by the failures history has ordained, these theories seem enticingly simple. To every problem of war policy you have the monosyllabic answer of "Bomb!" The American warlords think modern aircraft capable of turning a war into a piddling problem from a manual on operations analysis.

Thus there came into being the illusion that bombs could achieve everything. US aircraft are bombing the territory of Vietnam with greater ferocity than they did in Korea or in Europe during the past war. During the Second World War US aircraft dropped on Europe an average of 48 thousand tons of bombs monthly: in Korea the monthly average was 17.5 thousand. In Vietnam the monthly average was more than 53 thousand tons. In three years of war in Vietnam American aircraft dropped 1,760 thousand tons of bombs, more than they dropped on Europe during the past war.

General John McConnell, Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, who directly supervised this task, summed up the situation as follows: "If we look now at the total range of air force operations in Vietnam, we will see one broad or

general lesson coming out of our experience. And that lesson is that air power has emerged as a dominant force in counterinsurgency." This clearly smacks of Douhet's aerial war theories.

However, in its application to Vietnam this theory has been somewhat modified. Douhet advocated unlimited war in the air. His present American disciples have wedded his theory to that of "escalation" or, to use McConell's term, to the practice of "strategic persuasion." The former US diplomat George Kennan put it this way: "There seems to be an impression that if we bring sufficient military pressure to bear there will occur at some point something in the nature of a political capitulation on the other side."

The theoretical foundations of this militarist policy were evolved some years back by Professor Thomas Schelling and his colleagues. A contribution was also made by General Thomas Power, former commander of the US strategic air command. Upon his retirement in the autumn of 1964 he published a book entitled *A Plan for Survival* in which he described a hypothetical operation as he called it in North Vietnam. Even then he proposed that bombings be combined with ultimatums, inferring that bombings would be repeated and stepped up until the ultimatums were accepted. In this fashion he surmised that within the space of a few days and with the minimum use of force, the conflict in South Vietnam would be resolved in favour of the USA.

The "hypothetical operation" Power described was actually put into practice; however, in

practice it encountered obstacles Power had either not known or conveniently forgotten.

In the first place the USA wrongly estimated how their bombings would affect the morale of the Vietnamese people. In conformity with the American theory of the "quantification of war" it seemed that the more bombs dropped, the more popular morale would be undermined. However this is basically wrong since the valiant people of Vietnam are adamantly resolved to evict the aliens, however great the sacrifice. The lessons of history have been lost, as we see, on the present advocates of aerial warfare. Guernica stepped up the resistance of the Basques to Franco and his forces. Far from scaring the British, the bombings of Coventry and London only rallied them still more firmly together.

After a visit to North Vietnam Felix Green, a British newspaperman now living in the United States, told an American audience at Oregon University that the bombings had achieved what bombings always achieved—they had united and rallied the people still more firmly together.

Another miscalculation on the part of the American imperialists was their overestimation of the effectiveness of the bombings. The lessons of the past war had already intimated that such results should not be overestimated. It is well worth remembering that it was not allied bombings of German cities that defeated the nazi state but ground armies and, first of all, the Soviet Army that smashed the backbone of the enemy.

A weighty opinion on this score has been voiced by General Matthew Ridgway, former commander of US forces in Korea. "Korea," he said in the magazine *Look*, "taught that it is impossible to interdict the supply routes of an Asian army by air power alone. In Korea, I saw whole sections of railroad bombed into scrap iron by aircraft, and yet the enemy rebuilt the tracks in a single night, and the trains ran the next day. . . It is easy for the civilian mind to be seduced with talk of 'easy' conquest through air power. But the crucial battles are still won by foot soldiers."

The third blunder the American warlords made is their spurious explanation that the war in South Vietnam had supposedly originated from North Vietnam. The war for national liberation in Vietnam derives from the people's determination to rid themselves of the foreign interventionists and their Saigon stooges.

In an interview with Wilfred Burchett, an Australian newspaperman, President Ho Chi Minh of the DRV noted that the Americans were kidding themselves if they thought that by bombing the North they could win in the South. The bombings of DRV territory only demonstrate the consternation and rage of the American military, while the steady escalation of these bombings, as noted in *The New York Times* by news analyst James Reston, has demonstrated the inability of the Johnson Administration to think sanely and arrive at sane conclusions.

Nevertheless, the illusion that the war in South Vietnam could be won by bombing North Vietnam has proved to be most tenacious and

has survived the failure of initial optimistic forecasts. In particular, in its report on the aerial war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam that was published in the autumn of 1967, the US Senate Preparedness Subcommittee noted that the aerial war had become one of the most crucial and decisive problems. The Subcommittee urged the President to escalate the war in the air, rebuked the Defence Secretary for the few notes of realism in his restrained estimation of the effectiveness of the bombings and supported the Joint Chiefs of Staff in its demand for a free hand and hopes of bombing North Vietnam "back into the Stone Age."

The Senate Preparedness Subcommittee upheld the principle of more of the same and demanded that the fetters be removed from the real air force potential.

In effect US aircraft fought a war against the entire population of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, sparing no one. In the case of a man who has a conscience, says the colonel from Hemingway's story *Across the River and Into the Trees* it is always worthwhile for him to stop to think what military aircraft really are. However, colonels with conscience do not serve at the Pentagon. As Mendel Rivers, chairman of the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, put it, Hanoi must be razed to the ground and, to hell with world public opinion! As for civilian victims, well... US Secretary of State Dean Rusk himself cynically termed these victims in a television interview on September 10, 1967 a sad by-product of the policy of bombings.

THE PRICE

Another by-product of the aerial war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is the telling losses of the US air force. Piracy in the air does not get off scot free.

The figure 100 is a magic one for the American airman in Vietnam. He prays for it and dreams of it. "The whole world revolves around" those one hundred missions, one American pilot told a *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent. After one hundred sorties a pilot can go back home to the United States.

Official losses in the air war against the DRV are, according to the figures given by this same newspaper, three aircraft per thousand missions. Thus the equation between life and death for the American airman can be presented roughly as follows:

$$\frac{3}{1000} \times 100 = \frac{3}{10}$$

In other words the American airman has a thirty per cent chance that his wife and children will never see him again. One cannot die a hundred times, they say, but it is quite possible to die once.

In reality the prospects for survival are still gloomier. The official figure for losses sustained has been watered down by statistical manipula-

tions. Given is the overall number of sorties and missions, most of them of a reconnaissance nature, when flights are somewhat off to the side of the areas where the concentration of anti-aircraft defences is high. Losses on reconnaissance missions are, naturally, less than on bombing runs. Thus that average ratio of three per one thousand disguises a greatly reduced chance for a bomber pilot to come home safely from Vietnam.

These pilots are "welcomed" by heavy flak and may also be intercepted by MIG fighters and Soviet-made missiles. American aircraft carry an instrument, which tells the pilot when he is within the operation range of a missile-installation radar unit. American airmen confess that at that moment life flashes by from birth, as if in a kaleidoscope.

The Christian Science Monitor quotes from the recollections of an American pilot who went on a mission to bomb Hanoi: "I found my mouth went so dry on my first run that I had trouble speaking on the radio. The second time, I chewed gum, and my mouth went dry, and the gum stuck to my teeth and tongue." In the opinion of John McConnell, Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, a man we have quoted before, the concentration of anti-aircraft defences in the Hanoi-Haiphong area is the highest ever recorded in the defence of any city anywhere in the world.

How many American airmen have already paid with their lives for the Vietnam venture? In August 1967 *The New York Times* quoted the Defence Department as putting the number at 1,800. To this we must add 550 reported mis-

sing. This adds up to the grand total of 2,350, or, in terms of aircraft personnel, seven air divisions.

According to Defence Department figures published in March 1968, some 770 air force personnel were killed. This does not include the losses sustained by the naval air arm.

In September 1967 the US Senate Preparedness Subcommittee noted in a report published that there was a great scarcity of air force pilots. This is due both to the direct losses sustained in the Vietnam war and to the indirect "losses," which last means that airmen exploit every juridical pretext possible to get a discharge. Since 1964 the number of men discharged from the US Air Force has quadrupled. Who was to line up for death after all?

How many aircraft have been lost? We cannot expect the exact answer from the Pentagon, as it is extremely fond of juggling statistics.

At any rate, in November 1967, the US command announced that 2,929 aircraft and helicopters had been lost since the beginning of the war in Vietnam.

At some future date historians will find from the archives what the aerial war in Vietnam really cost the USA. So far this is highly confidential. Carl Rowan, former director of the US Information Agency, noted in the *Detroit News* in May 1967 that the Communists were keeping a rather correct tally, while the American public were ignorant of the true figures.

However, even the known approximate figures enable one to compute the true price the USA has to pay for the war in the air.

One aircraft costs on the average two million dollars—a figure often quoted in the American press. Helicopters are a bit cheaper. By simple multiplication, we get the round sum of five thousand million dollars—the price of the aircraft destroyed in Vietnam.

The airman also has his “price”—550 thousand dollars. For such is the cost of his training, his pay, and finally, the grant given his widow. Again simple multiplication produces the total of 1,300 million dollars.

Add to this the cost of the ammunition fired and bombs dropped and we get the total cost of the aerial war as somewhere in the neighbourhood of seven thousand million dollars. Even advocates of this war will not claim that the bombings of the DRV, which after all has little in the way of major industrial installations, has tended to destroy an industrial potential worth that much. From the viewpoint of the Pentagon where the principle of “costs-effectiveness” was introduced after McNamara took over, this war is clearly “operating at a loss.”

According to Pentagon estimates which senator Javits gave Congress, the USA spends 10 dollars to inflict a one dollar’s “worth” of damage on DRV economy.

It is much harder to add up the political losses the USA sustains as the result of this piracy in the air. In this sense the prime result is the whirlwind of anger, which the American leadership has reaped both at home and abroad.

All over the globe the public are calling for the termination of the barbarous bombings and a halt to intervention in general. These demands are expressed in various ways—from

paid newspaper advertisements, to manifestations in which thousands upon thousands of people take part.

To illustrate how aggression is condemned by representatives of the Western public we may quote the 96-year old English philosopher, mathematician and journalist Lord Bertrand Russel. He calls on Americans who, as he says, have never known what foreign armed occupation is and who have never experienced the systematic destruction of their country from the air, to try to understand what is happening in Vietnam.

He says that for many in the West the epithet US imperialism seems shopworn, because they do not know from their own experience what an imperialist policy really means. However, most of the world's population, who live in the developing countries, well know what this policy is. American imperialism, relying on its powerful war machine, is simply plundering and looting these countries.

In his book *War Crimes in Vietnam* published in London in 1967, Lord Russel says: "In the course of history there have been many cruel and rapacious empires and systems of imperialist exploitation, but none before have had the power at the disposal of United States' imperialists, this constitutes a world system of oppression, and represents the true threat to peace and the true source of the danger of world nuclear war."

He says that to ensure peace and peaceful coexistence it is necessary to fight US imperialism with its dangerous policy of aggression in Vietnam. He says in his book that in Vietnam

the USA took over as it were from the French colonialists defeated at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Large forces were shipped to South Vietnam. Moreover, at the outset the United States pretended that no war was being fought there at all and that the Americans "were not directing this non-existent war." The new-fangled colonialists prevented the elections, provided for in the 1954 Geneva Accords, from being held and planted their own stooges as rulers of South Vietnam. Ngo Dinh Diem and his entourage "represented a group of landlords and the Catholic hierarchy in Vietnam—a small closely-knit circle," says Russel in his book. "The Diem family installed officers and relatives in various provinces, who administered them virtually as private estates."

Later on Diem was killed in a coup. However, this changed little in South Vietnam—if we rule out the opportunity for US interventionists to blame the dead puppet for all the atrocities perpetrated in the country.

The official American propaganda machine tries to blame the war in Vietnam on a "communist conspiracy." Russel proves that this is a popular national liberation movement which the Communists, naturally, support. He notes that American propagandists, poisoned with their own anticommunism, have betrayed themselves by dubbing the patriots of South Vietnam the "Vietcong"—that is by running the two words "Vietnamese Communists" into one.

These propagandists hoped that the public in Vietnam would disapprove of Communists. But as a result, Russel notes, the USA only helped to boost the good reputation communists

enjoy in Southeast Asia by linking communism with the national liberation movement and popular aspirations for independence and social justice. This in effect quite corresponds to reality, while the epithet Vietcong, originally conceived as a derisive term, has become an honorable one.

Later on the ill-starred propagandists of the US Information Agency announced a competition to find a new name for the Vietcong guerrillas, offering a prize to anyone able to come up with a suitable expression in the peasant vernacular that would convey scorn or ridicule. Alas, Russel notes with sarcasm, the only fitting expression in South Vietnam suiting to the conditions put forward is the "French" or the "Americans."

Many representatives of the Western public subscribe to Russel's views.

In the United States itself we could name Martin Luther King, leader of the Negro civil rights movement, so dastardly assassinated by racialists in April 1968, as a suitable illustration of the struggle waged against this war which is disgracing the nation.

True, at the outset Martin Luther King did not protest against the war in Vietnam, believing this problem was not directly connected with his defence of Negro rights. Very soon, though, the logic of struggle caused him to join opponents of US aggression in Vietnam. Attempts were made to deter him and he was warned not to confuse the two issues of war and civil rights. But Martin Luther King said he was not confusing them. They were brought together by life, since it was actually the sole

question concerning the destiny of the United States of America.

Exactly one year before he was killed, on the 4th of April 1967, King made a speech, one destined to become historic, in a church on Riverside Drive in New York. In this speech he listed the reasons why he was protesting against the dirty war in Vietnam.

First of all, he said, he had discovered that the small gains won in the civil rights movement over recent years and, more specifically, official promises to wage "war on poverty" had been completely nullified by the war in Vietnam.

"I watched the programme broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube."

Further, Dr. King told his audience, the war itself had come to exemplify callous manipulation with the poor. In Vietnam twice as many Negroes as whites are dying in proportion to their share in the country's population. And they are dying to no avail.

In this speech Dr. King vehemently denounced the war of genocide, a war to exterminate the people of Vietnam, which America is prosecuting on the ridiculous pretext of defending "democracy," but, really, as Dr. King put it, to defend the "Saigon junta" and turn Vietnam into an "American colony."

On the 23rd of April 1967 Dr. King proclaim-

ed a "Vietnam summer," specifying as priority tasks the struggle against war and against all other US interference in the affairs of other countries. King declared that any American whose conscience told him that the US war in Vietnam was unjust must refuse to be inducted into the armed forces.

The war in Vietnam is not only depleting the treasury but is also crippling the American people spiritually. Dr. King understood this very well. Vietnam war, he said, had served to strengthen the reactionary system in America and had consolidated its war-industry complex. It, he said, had mutilated the country's life, had brought the entire world to the brink of a nuclear holocaust, and had subverted national interests and the moral principles of Americans in the eyes of the entire world.

The war in Vietnam has also a second front which has come into being in the USA itself and which is cleaving more and more deeply through the different sections of American society.

Mounting numbers of Americans are coming to realize that this war is unlawful from the angle of the Constitution of the United States.

The whole point is that the USA has not declared war on the DRV. From the juridical point of view its military operations rest on the shaky foundation of the so-called Tonkin Resolution passed in August 1964 hot on the heels of the Gulf of Tonkin "incident," when, as the US State Department claimed, DRV patrol boats had supposedly attacked US naval vessels. The resolution authorized the President to take action to "protect" American armed forces over

seas. Few anticipated that an expeditionary corps of more than half a million strong would be required for "protection" or that to "protect" this corps itself, more hundreds of thousands of men would be needed.

For six whole months the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were busy with the "shady affair" that occurred in the Gulf of Tonkin. This committee discovered that war plans and the draft resolution itself were ready even before the supposed incident took place. At any rate the resolution in no way empowered the President to wage a wide-scale war.

US officialdom explained away continued aggression in Vietnam by the supposed need to "shield" the countries of Southeast Asia from "communist expansion."



VIETNAM AND DOMINOES

There is an English nursery rhyme about a whole chain reaction which began with the loss of a horse-shoe nail, and wound up with the loss of a kingdom. For want of a nail, a horse-shoe was lost, for want of a horse-shoe, a horse was lost and as a result the general was killed, the army fled and the enemy entered the city giving no quarter. "For want of a nail"—the Kingdom was lost.

US politicians have borrowed the naive logic of this nursery rhyme to vindicate the

aggression in Vietnam with what they called "the theory of falling dominoes." The idea is that if you stand these dominoes on edge and knock down one, all the others will also fall. They claim that if the Americans leave Vietnam, they will also have to pack up and leave all of Southeast Asia. Such is a favourite argument US Secretary of State Dean Rusk often invokes.

For some reason it has become a habit to term superficial metaphors, analogies and comparisons "theories." They have nothing in common with theory; at best they are but snappy journalese. One of these "feather-weight theories" is the "theory of falling dominoes" which henceforth, to be brief, we shall term the "domino theory." Though there is nothing theoretical about it being just a sophism, it is employed to camouflage and explain politics, war, barbarism and bloodshed and for this reason we must describe it in greater detail.

When Germany's representative Goebbels arrived in Geneva in September 1933 he declared: "Should Germany become a prey to Bolshevism, it would be impossible to stop it and the entire civilization of the West would be buried under its flood." Like the domino whose falling would cause all of the West to fall this German argument subsequently became a pivotal theme in nazi propaganda. Incidentally Goebbels probably did not play dominoes and did not invent the image of the falling dominoes. This was done by US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in the autumn of 1958. It has now proved very handy for the US leadership. "The President," former Senator Wayne Morse noted,

“seeks again to create the image of falling dominoes, reaching not only across Asia, but throughout the world, if the United States fails to wage war in Vietnam.”

The President was echoed in this matter by the Vice-President. American departure from Vietnam, Hubert Humphrey warned, would only serve to encourage further “communist aggression” in Asia.

In turn the Vice-President was echoed by ex-President Dwight Eisenhower. Some American self-styled military experts, he claimed, reject the domino theory. Meanwhile Eisenhower believed this theory frighteningly correct.

Eisenhower was further echoed by the Secretary of State. According to newsman Stewart Alsop, Dean Rusk “is convinced and quite obviously deeply and genuinely convinced, that to give the ‘inch’ leads to disaster.”

Still further the Secretary of State is supported by bellicose news correspondents. Hanson Baldwin of *The New York Times* rolls out this scarecrow: If, he says, they fail to win the war now being fought in Vietnam, then God help them, as that will be the end of them throughout the entire world.

In turn, newspapermen are echoed by hoodwinked Americans as, for instance, Lance-Corporal Charles Allen who composed a poem in honour of the domino theory. One Congressman incorporated the text in the official US Congressional Record. Here is an extract from it :

Some people think to fight here is wrong.
But, we must fight here or fight at home.
For Communist Victory in this torn land
Will encourage them to fight in other land

Except for the Lance-Corporal, about whom we have but meagre information, the above-listed members of the "choir" singing hymns to the domino theory are rather prominent and respectable persons. Evidently it is out of noble self-obligation that they echo such propagandist stupidity, for otherwise it is impossible to presume that they themselves "are deeply and genuinely convinced" of this stupidity. However, their status and the unsavoury policy they are prosecuting calls for "theoretical" accompaniment. After all, something has to be done to kidnap the Americans into believing that it is expedient to lay down their lives on the other side of the world—indeed literally so, for when it is midday in Washington, it is midnight in Saigon. They are told that if today they do not lay down their lives in Vietnam, tomorrow they will have to lay down their lives in Honolulu or even on the beach at San Francisco.

Sober-thinking Americans are debunking the sophistic chain of the "nail-horseshoe-kingdom" or "Vietnam-Southeast Asia-Hawaii-California" type.

"Nothing that happens in South Vietnam jeopardizes the security of the United States..." declared Senator Ernest Gruening. "Nor do I subscribe to the domino theory... That to me is arrant nonsense."

Former diplomat George Kennan, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that "the danger of the so-called domino effect" is highly exaggerated and that the best way out of the Vietnam impasse would be to evacuate American forces. "I dare say," he said,

"we would survive it in the end, and there would be another day."

Meanwhile Senator Frank Church has refused the domino theory in its substance. Guerilla wars, he emphasizes, are not links of one chain which can be snapped at one point. The causes of these approaching revolutions, he said, are, in effect, local in character. He rightly explained that it would be naive to think that by suppressing a revolution in one place it would be possible to put down revolution in general.

Professor Hans Morgenthau believes that the "domino theory has not the slightest basis in history." He indicates that a concrete approach must be taken to historical events, each of which has its own specific character. "Neither the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion nor the success of the intervention in the Dominican Republic," he says, "provides a precedent for anything." The war in Vietnam will not halt revolution in other countries.

Even Richard Russel who heads the US Senate Armed Forces Committee stated in an interview granted to the *US News & World Report*: "I don't buy this so-called domino theory." Meanwhile general Matthew Ridgway, who commanded US forces in Korea at a time when the situation was suitable for the application of domino theory, noted in the magazine *Look*: "The falling-domino theory is a theory I have never accepted. Like many other premises upon which people tend to rest their position, it is deserving of more searching analysis than it generally gets."

Ridgway brought up the important issue

that the domino theory could pull the wool over the eyes not only of Lance Corporal Allen, since he hardly wrote his poem by way of military discipline but rather voluntarily, but also of American politicians themselves, were they to try to employ it as a political compass. The temptation is great since the domino theory provides a convenient, ready recipe in place of an unpleasant analysis of the concrete situation in Vietnam. Invoking it, one does not have to think about the real reasons why the people in Vietnam are struggling: the desire of the people of Vietnam to be independent, be masters in their own home, and carve out their own destiny for themselves. However, because of their blindness to the true motives of the opponent's behaviour, the interventionists are sustaining defeat.

The arguments Gruening invokes from the angle of American security, that Kennan puts forward from the angle of American prestige, that Church brings up from the angle of the causes of a national liberation movement, and that Morgenthau furnishes from the angle of historical process, rid us of all need to demonstrate once again that the domino theory is untenable. All that remains is to revert to the point that Goebbels made. Under the pretext of turning Germany into a stronghold against the "Bolshevist flood" the fascist politicians made ready to conquer the entire world. Today, under the analogous pretext of turning the United States into a stronghold against "communist expansion," its ruling quarters are acting the international gendarme and are strangling and throttling the freedom of the peoples. This is

a new beast of prey, but the mimicry has not changed.



AGGRESSION AND PRESTIGE

The advocates of continued aggression are finding it harder and harder to produce arguments and, as a result, retreat more and more frequently to what we might call their last line of defence. By this we mean deliberations about prestige, the claim that such a great power as the USA cannot afford the "luxury of defeat."

The American warlords, the men dubbed "hawks," find this argument particularly pleasing. This is so because in contrast to other arguments it can be fed to some of the "doves." Its advantage is that it does not preclude the possibility of criticizing previous policies.

Yes, say the hawks, it is quite likely that we shouldn't have involved ourselves in the first place, and then they try to neutralize the doves by appealing to their patriotism. They claim that since the USA is involved there is no point supposedly in looking for culprits but that the matter should be brought to a head. To leave, they assert, would mean to lose prestige.

It is not a matter of prestige, of course. The USA is fighting in Vietnam because it is prosecuting a policy of anticommunism, a policy of suppressing national liberation movements by

force. It is fighting in Vietnam because it is out to transform the south of the country into a new type of colony, into a bridgehead for further ventures.

As for the allusion to national prestige, this is a propaganda gimmick, whose significance increases in the eyes of the advocates of aggression, as it becomes clear that original plans have fallen through. In an article published in the January 1968 issue of the American magazine *Current History*, Hans Morgenthau asks why the USA is so determined to continue a war which appears to be "politically unwise, militarily unprofitable and morally dubious"? The answer is that America is concerned about its prestige.

But for America, and for the entire world for that matter, it would have been better if American politicians had been concerned about what others think and about their own prestige before deciding to launch intervention and not just on the eve of the collapse of this intervention. Equally so it would have been better if these politicians, before planning to get into a certain country, had first tried to find out whether it was possible to get out. Testifying on Vietnam before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee George Kennan related this edifying story: "It has been my belief for many years, and it is a belief based on the fact that I had at one time to make a very careful study of our difficulties in connection with the intervention in Russia in 1918, it has been my belief that one should be very, very careful about ever putting American forces ashore into a situation of this sort, unless one can see clearly

how and at what point one can get them out again.”

Developments have shown however that this lesson has been lost. In a new situation the USA has repeated the old blunder and is now sustaining defeat after defeat. As the upshot of its aggression the USA has found itself in isolation on the world scene. Even its NATO allies are not too particularly eager to support it. Millions in all countries curse the USA, angrily condemning it. Its prestige has reached a record low. The American warlords have found it not so simple to extricate themselves from the Vietnam “morass.”

By associating the war with national prestige, the “hawks” are trying to drive the American people, psychologically, into a tight corner, to burn the bridges behind them, though retreat is inevitable. This is precisely the motive behind all the official claptrap claiming that American national honour and dignity are supposedly at stake. It would of course be more logical to look at the matter from a different angle, that is to jettison the erroneous policy and thereby rebuild prestige. This is precisely what many prominent Americans are advising the US Administration to do. Though the mood in the US Congress is on the whole belligerent, even there we hear a few sane voices. Thus in one of his speeches Senator Young brought to mind a Confucian maxim to the effect that “a man who makes a mistake and does not correct it makes another mistake.” “We,” he continued, “have lost face by our involvement in Vietnam. We should not fear

losing face by disengaging from an ugly American war in Vietnam.”

However, what prevents the American “hawks” from a turning to a saner and more realistic policy is, among other circumstances, the point that talk about “national prestige” actually conceals the unsavoury personal prestige of the politicians and military who have found themselves in a complete mess. No wonder many sober-thinking Americans, including John Galbraith, economist, ex-diplomat and a prominent critic of the USA’s Vietnam policy, believe that the problem confronting the nation is for Americans “to save the reputation of the United States and not the reputation of the people who made this mistake.”

“The President is indeed right,” says Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review* in his publication, “that our national honour is at stake in Vietnam. The national honour is at stake because things are being done in Vietnam that are dishonourable and inconsistent with the meaning of American history.”

Cousins is evidently thinking back to the birth of the American nation in the process of struggle against the British colonialists. At the time the founders of the United States inscribed in the constitution the demand that the opinion of humanity be respected. However, those distant times are long past. Today the USA is throttling the freedom of the peoples and is showing, for all the world to see, that it cares nothing for the opinion of mankind. Now, as the upshot of aggression in Vietnam, US prestige has indeed dropped to a record low. Continuation of the war may result in American

prestige being lost for ever in the jungles of Vietnam.

As for American casualties—according to their own estimates there are 30,000 dead and 97,000 wounded. The figures are almost identical with those of the Korean war when 33,000 Americans were killed.



THE POWER OF SOLIDARITY

The courage, heroism and resolve of the people of Vietnam to evict the alien invaders and be masters of their own destiny are the chief reason why the interventionists will be defeated. In their struggle the people of Vietnam are also greatly encouraged by the support given by the socialist countries and the world public at large.

Vietnam has come to symbolize the effectiveness of the power of solidarity. From the angle of arithmetics the United States is stronger. In territory it is 63 times larger than the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, its population is roughly ten times more, while its industrial potential is an untold number of times greater. Military experts qualify such a relationship as overwhelming superiority. However, the people of Vietnam are supported in their righteous cause by the working folk of other countries, by the socialist states, and, finally, by the USSR

which renders material assistance—that is also very essential. As a result, the simple arithmetics of the imperialist jungle expressed in the formula that “might is right” and that “God is on the side of big battalions” has yielded to the political algebra of a new balance of forces on the international scene. The aggressor is losing.

The USSR is providing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the patriots of South Vietnam with extensive, diverse and increasing assistance. Several agreements have been signed under which the USSR is furnishing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with military and economic help free and is also granting more loans. In line with these agreements the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is getting from the USSR aircraft, anti-aircraft guns and missiles, heavy ordnance, rifles and ammunition—in short everything required to fight the American war machine. In addition the DRV is receiving from the USSR, means of transportation, oil products, food, medicine, fertilizer, in short everything required to assist its national economy. Though the statistics of Soviet help have not been published, we may presume that the figures are pretty large.

The policy of assisting struggling Vietnam accords with the basic principles of Soviet foreign policy which are to support popular national liberation movements against imperialist aggression. It accords likewise with the Statement on Vietnam which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted at its latest 23rd Congress, and also with the Declaration on the threat to peace emanating from the escalation

of US aggression in Vietnam, a document adopted by the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty states at its conference in Sofia in March 1968.

Official representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have repeatedly conveyed the heartfelt gratitude of the Central Committee of the Working People's Party, the DRV Government and the people of Vietnam for the great and effective assistance given in the effort to repulse imperialist aggression. "The agreements just signed," the newspaper *Nhan Dan* observed, for instance, on the 27th of September 1967, "are an indication of the sincere, serious and valuable support and help given by the Communist Party, government and people of the Soviet Union to the people of Vietnam."

Corresponding acknowledgements are received also from "the other side." US airmen, in particular, complain that in DRV airspace they encounter the heaviest anti-aircraft defences that ever existed.

The Soviet Union is answering American escalation of aggression with escalation of help to the victim of aggression. If one takes into consideration also the adamant resolve of the people of Vietnam to fight for as long as is necessary, the most sensible thing the interventionists could do in this situation would be to end their aggression.

In Vietnam two resolves have come to grips—on the one hand, the resolve of people of Vietnam to achieve freedom and independence, and, on the other, the resolve of American imperialism which seeks to turn South Vietnam into a new type of colony and into a bridge-

head for further gambles. The second resolve is weaker because no official declarations of "determination" can ensure an unpopular war with mass support, or mute its critics. Talk of determination and resolve only covers up pig-headed obstinacy and a reluctance to recognize a fiasco.

The Americans are fighting unwillingly. The morale of the American troops, Frederick Schuman, an American historian, observed, has dropped to a critical low as the result of their complete inability to understand the aims of the war in which they are fighting. Schuman said this about the American interventionists in Arkhangel'sk in 1918. History is repeating itself. And it will go on repeating itself until the interventionists go.

For the patriots of Vietnam, the war they are fighting is quite different. They are fighting for the freedom and independence of their homeland and have been fighting for so many years that they have learned to wait. This fight has become their way of life, if we may call it that, and all the privations, the battles, and death are a daily thing while the resolve to uphold their righteous cause is inflexible and steadfast. The interventionists cannot have a psychology of that kind and that is the vulnerable spot which even the latest armament will not protect.

There are signs of "agonizing reappraisal" going on in Washington. The bombing of the territory of the DRV was stopped on November 1, 1968. Now there is a new Administration in Washington. Since it is new it has a chance to begin anew.

When will the war in Vietnam end? Now that we have cleared up the problem as to how it will end we could provide as the answer a modification of what former President Johnson said. This is that the key to peace lies in Washington. The world public can actively contribute to the effort to expedite Washington's realization of the total lack of prospect ahead of its venture in Vietnam.

Г. ГЕРАСИМОВ

«Ключи к миру во Вьетнаме»

на английском языке

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