

The Biggest Mistakes of the Vietnam War

Not Knowing the True Nature of the Enemy - Part 6 (An Even Bigger Problem Today)

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The most famous quote of Sun Tzu, the Chinese general and philosopher (circa 544 to 496 BC) and author of The Art of War, is:

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles.”

Sun Tzu (Master Sun), whose birth name was Sun Wu, must have considered this vitally important , because he said it at least four different times with slight variations.

He also emphasized the importance of the intelligence function in warfare. This seems to include a much broader outlook than simply the military strength, weapons, and positions of the enemy. It is of utmost importance to know what motivates the enemy and what our own motivations are. We must be honest about our own motivations and predispositions to believe what is most comfortable to us rather than the hard facts of reality. Alexander Solzhenitsyn once wrote: “We do not err because truth is difficult to see. It is visible at a glance. We err because this is more comfortable.” Military Intelligence is most useful, when as far as humanly possible; it conforms to the reality of the enemy’s strength, morale, ideology, and motivation. It is useless, when it conforms to wishful thinking, political pressures, self-deception, or humanist fantasies about human nature. Michael Bassey Johnson wrote:

“You can believe in whatsoever you like, but the truth remains the truth, no matter how sweet the lie may taste.”

British author, Aldous Huxley, also pointed out this self-evident but often ignored truism: “Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.” Southern author, Flannery O’Connor put it bluntly: “The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it.”

President Lyndon Johnson, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, and their closest (largely academic) advisors conducted U.S. military efforts in Vietnam based on a counterfactual myth about North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh and communism in general with disastrous results. This was boosted by a single CIA report that claimed Ho Chi Minh was first of all a benevolent Vietnamese nationalist and a communist only secondarily as a matter of historical convenience. This CIA report is still widely referenced in many academic accounts of the Vietnam War. It was a favorite propaganda piece for the organizers of campus anti-war demonstrations. However, it was contradicted by most other CIA reports and never held widespread credibility within the CIA or military intelligence agencies. It completely contradicted many much more significant facts.

Ho Chi Minh left Vietnam in 1912 and was a founding member of the French Communist Party.

He later resided in the Soviet Union and attended the Lenin Institute, where he was trained as a political organizer and professional revolutionary. He did not return to Vietnam until 1944.

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Ho Chi Minh actually betrayed his nationalist competitors to the French, and when he took power in North Vietnam in 1954 had more than 50,000 of them murdered. More than a million fearful dissenters to his brutal regime fled to South Vietnam. Communist tactics implemented by trained North Vietnamese infiltrators into South Vietnam resulted in the assassination of 37,600 school teachers, village chiefs, local government officials, writers, intellectuals, and other anti-communists. Communist tactics included the murder and maiming of children as a terrorist tactic.

Lyndon Johnson declared 16 bombing halts to encourage peace negotiations during the Vietnam War. The Communists never made a single concession during these halts. They used the opportunity for frantic resupply and buildup North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. They were particularly energetic in installing more anti-aircraft weapons, which made USAF and Navy bombing missions much more hazardous. The net result was more U.S. casualties.

The Johnson Administration learned nothing from the experience of the Korean War, 16 U.S. bombing halts in Vietnam, or attempted negotiations with Communist "diplomats." Marxists will use any tactic, or lie, to further their cause. Marxists believe that any lie that advances Communism is political truth. They only bow to superior strength, and will disavow any concession when regaining power. Lyndon Johnson and his civilian advisors refused to see the reality of Marxism and consequently employed ineffective and often costly strategies against them.

The U.S. has an even bigger problem today in dealing with Islam. Both George W. Bush and especially Barack Obama have shackled U.S. national security with a counterfactual belief that Islam is a religion of peace. The Koran, the words and deeds of Muhammad, and 1400 years of violent Jihad completely contradict their fantasy version of Islam. We can already see the fruit of doctrinal Islam destroying freedom and public safety in Europe.

"If ignorant of both your enemy and yourself, you are certain to be in peril."

- Sun Tzu

Mike Scruggs is the author of two books: *The Un-Civil War: Shattering the Historical Myths*; and *Lessons from the Vietnam War: Truths the Media Never Told You*, and over 600 articles on military history, national security, intelligent design, genealogical genetics, immigration, current political affairs, Islam, and the Middle East.

He holds a BS degree from the University of Georgia and an MBA from Stanford University. A former USAF intelligence officer and Air Commando, he is a decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam War, and holds the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, and Air Medal. He is a retired First Vice President for a major national financial services firm and former Chairman of the Board of a classical Christian school.

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