

RIGHT WING CONG

by Stephen Talbot

Pham Van Lieu and his family, who fled Viet Nam in 1975, live in a comfortable home in Sacramento, California. Lieu has become an American citizen. His wife works full time. His children wear "Star Wars" T-shirts, designer jeans and Adidas; they speak fluent, unaccented English. By all appearances, the family has adjusted to life in its new country.

But Pham Van Lieu is not really at ease in America. His heart and mind are still in Saigon. Lieu has fought Communism all his adult life: as a soldier in the French colonial army fighting Ho Chi Minh; as a helicopter assault force commander against the Viet Cong; and as a director of the national police force in South Viet Nam in the mid-nineteen sixties. He is still fighting it now. For Pham Van Lieu, the war in Viet Nam did not end in 1975.

Lieu, who prefers to be addressed as "Colonel," is one of the leaders of the National United Front for the Liberation of Viet Nam, which claims right now to be waging a small-scale guerrilla war against the Vietnamese government. Last February, Lieu and Hoang Xuan Yen, a onetime NBC cameraman in Viet Nam, joined one hundred and fifty or so former South Vietnamese soldiers "somewhere along the Cambodian border" to inaugurate their campaign against Hanoi. On March 30, last year, a brief report on the ceremony, showing erstwhile Saigon military officers dressed in "black pajamas" and sharpening punji sticks for a booby trap, appeared on the CBS Evening News.

If the guerrillas looked familiar to the American television audience, it was no accident. Lieu's self-styled "resistance" movement has copied the appearance of its old Viet Cong adversaries. The front has also copied the Viet Cong's tactics: its strategy to infiltrate officers and "technical cadre" into Viet Nam to train and lead an indigenous army. It worked for them, says Lieu with a smile, so why not give it a try?

The leader of this guerrilla group is a former South Vietnamese admiral, Hoang Co Minh, whose name and appearance bear a striking — and intentional — resemblance to that wily old revolutionary, Ho Chi Minh. The similarity, of course, is all form: the political program of the front calls for "the complete abolishment of Russian military bases and the complete expulsion of the Russian colonialists," the establishment of a "free enterprise" system and the abolishment "forever (of) all vestiges of class struggle." As a means of promoting culture and education, the front proposes to "Assemble all Viet Cong books, magazines, papers and documents in a special depository to permit future generations to study the cultural crimes of the Viet Cong and to understand the darkest period in our nation's history."

A veteran of thirty years of warfare, Lieu, now back in this country, pledges that this war in Viet Nam will be the last. And, implacably optimistic, he predicts the "final victory" by 1985 — or 1990 at the outside.

How serious is all this? The Vietnamese Government acknowledges the existence of armed dissident groups but insists that the front is not active inside Viet Nam. Lieu says the front is allied with the remnants of the C.I.A.-trained tribal forces of Vang Po in Laos, as well with the Pol Pot-Prince Sihanouk coalition in Cambodia.

Whether Lieu and Hoang Co Minh's group has any impact in Viet Nam, its anti-Communist crusade has had an impact on the Vietnamese community in the United States. Since the collapse of the Saigon regime on April 30, 1975, nearly five hundred thousand Vietnamese have settled in the United States. Thirty-five percent of them live in California, and Orange County, the home of Disneyland, has become a cauldron of political intrigue as members of the transplanted Saigon elite struggle for leadership of the resistance movement. Former Premier and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, who owns a chain of liquor stores in Orange County, has recently made several public appearances in support of the Lieu-Minh group.

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ROBERT GOLDSTROM

Viet Nam for a Thousand Years?

by Lawrence Walsh

Two, three, many Viet Nams. That was the miserable future Che Guevara held up for our contemplation, for the people who had lost their way in Indochina. Things have not worked out as Che thought they would. Lyndon Johnson's successors have entertained adventures in the Persian Gulf and Central America, but we have not yet parted from reason so completely as to buy into another extreme and doomed commitment in the revolutionary Back of Beyond. Che himself met a violent and pointless end in a firefight with Bolivian militiamen in 1967.

Still, Che was unwittingly prophetic. The Paris Agreements were signed in January 1973, but ten years on, the war refuses to take its place in the rear closet of national consciousness. Its ability to wound and divide after all this time is astonishing. Viet Nam has corrupted our affairs two, three, many times over since those Nobel Prize cut-ups Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger concluded a peace.

The crazed combat veteran barricaded in a convenience store with a gun and a hostage or two, demanding who knows what, is a stock figure on the evening news. The horrendous dividends of Agent Orange have made a war zone of the human gene pool. We cannot put up a monument to our Viet Nam dead without a national brawl. William Westmoreland, the hapless "Westy" of yore, wants the courts to make CBS and Mike Wallace restore his reputation, such as it was.

Meanwhile, some of those who served under the good general are waiting at airports in Kansas City and Tallahassee for other reminders of Viet Nam. These are the men who managed amid the steel and the killing to make love and war, and are now getting to know their children, some for the first time. Western and African features play through the faces of these lovely "Amerasians," but bewilderment does too. They must see something else in their fathers' eyes, something heavier, something very like pain or a remorse past naming.

A crypt in Arlington National Cemetery waits for the remains of an unknown soldier killed in Viet Nam, but the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia says no, absolutely not, not yet. The

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WHEN PEACE IS WAR

Ten years ago the United States withdrew from the Viet Nam War. "Peace with honor," then-President Richard Nixon said after accords were signed in Paris with Hanoi. The treaty went into effect January 27, 1973 in the U.S., and January 28 in Viet Nam. The war continued for another two years, however, until the Saigon government collapsed on April 30, 1975.

A legend is that a few years before the treaty was negotiated the Viet Cong offered the U. S. a paper victory: It could declare itself the winner if it just got out of the country.

What must be recognized in this facesaving retreat from an unpopular war is that the public forced its leaders to abandon it. A later Administration has subsequently balked in its attempts to make overt war in Central America. It is in recognition that only the American people can prevent future wars its leaders desire that the Times Eagle devotes the entirety of this issue to Viet Nam subjects and stories.

SPIES

The only two people convicted in United States courts for spying during the Viet Nam war era — David Truong and Ronald L. Humphrey — have spent one year of a fifteen year prison sentence at the federal prison at Arlington, Virginia.

The two men were convicted in 1978 of stealing U.S. documents and providing them to Vietnamese Communists in Paris during Vietnamese-U.S. talks on postwar relations.

The arrests followed the first foreign intelligence security investigation in which a president — Jimmy Carter — approved warrantless electronics surveillance.

The thirty-seven year old Truong is a Stanford-educated antiwar activist whose father, Truong Dinh Dzu, ran for the presidency of South Viet Nam in 1967 on a peace platform. After winning almost half the vote, he was sentenced to five years hard labor on the prison island of Cong Son. Truong's sister Kim Anh (Monique) is a resident of the U.S., and was also active in the antiwar movement in this country.

Humphrey, also thirty-seven, was an employee of the United States Information Agency at the time the purported documents were reported to have been stolen.

After more than three years of appeals, the Supreme Court refused to consider their claim that the government investigation violated their constitutional rights. Their sentences began in late January last year. Under federal guidelines, both will have to serve at least five years before becoming eligible for parole.