

Lies in Nixon's November 3rd Speech on Vietnam Policy

A. Origins of war

1. Nixon's facts

"Fifteen years ago, N. Vietnam, with the logistical support of Communist China and the Soviet Union launched a campaign to impose a Communist victory on South Vietnam by instigating and supporting a revolution.

"In response to the request of the Government of S. Vietnam, President Eisenhower sent economic aid and military equipment . . . ."

2. Facts of record

a. 15-1/2 years ago, just before the end of the Vietnamese war with France, Nixon was urging Eisenhower to "put our boys" into Indochina in support of the French: the Radford plan for sending American planes to defend Dien Bien Phy by massive air strikes.

b. Fifteen years ago, the exodus of the Vietminh guerrillas and regulars from South Vietnam began, in accordance with the Geneva Agreements. About 80,000 went North in 1954 alone. By the middle of May 1955, the last units of the Vietnam People's Army left South Vietnam.

c. Chinese and Russian support was not extended to North Vietnam until 1959 and 1960.

B. The Nixon-Ho letters of last summer

1. Nixon's facts

- a. His letter to Ho Chi Minh was an initiative for peace.
- b. Ho Chi Minh "flatly rejected my initiative."

2. Facts of record

a. Nixon's letter contained no <sup>new</sup> initiative. "My speech on May 14 laid out a proposal which I believe is fair . . . ."

"We stand ready to discuss other programs as well, specifically the 10-point program of the N. L. F."

b. Ho's letter in reply did not reject any initiative, was conciliatory, and contained negotiable concessions. (See speech by Ed. Muskie, Senate, Nov. 7th.)

"The over-all solution in 10 points of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam . . . is a logical and reasonable basis for . . . settlement. . . ." (not, "the only correct basis", as specified earlier -- this is a concession leaving the matter open to negotiation.)

"The United States must . . . respect the right of the population of the South . . . to dispose of themselves."  
(an agreement with Nixon's own stand)

"With goodwill on both sides, we might arrive at common efforts in view of finding a correct solution of the Vietnamese problem."

"Sincerely"

(extremely conciliatory.)

C. The Massacre of civilians by the NLF at Hue

1. Nixon's facts

"We saw a prelude of what would happen in South Vietnam (if we withdrew) when the Communists entered the city of Hue last year. During their brief rule there, there was a bloody reign of terror in which 3,000 civilians were clubbed, shot to death, and buried in mass graves."

2. Facts of record

a. In the American assault to retake Hue within a month after NLF occupation, 80% of the buildings were demolished, 2,000 civilians were killed, and looting (particularly by ARVN troops) was widespread. American & ARVN forces rendered 3/4 of the people homeless. (Townsend Hoopes)

b. "The Americans pounded the Citadel and surrounding city almost to dust with air strikes, napalm runs, artillery and naval gunfire . . . . The mind reels at the carnage, cost, and ruthlessness of it all." (David Douglas Duncan, combat photographer quoted by Hoopes)

c. Reliability of reports of massacre and torture. During February and March, reports proliferated of mass graves, of people buried alive, and/or mutilated.

The most valuable report <sup>(made after an investigation of the rumors)</sup> came from Stewart Harris.

It was published in the London Times (March 27, 1968).

He is a responsible journalist, opposed to the American commitment in Vietnam. He did his very best to give a balanced and considered judgment.

He was taken to a number of graves in which shot civilians had been buried. Some, he was told, were buried alive.

At Nam Hoa, about 10 miles south west of Hue, he saw two bodies, their arms tied behind their backs. They had been shot. At the village of Long Tho, 3 miles south west of Hue. Here he saw five bodies. Two of the dead were High School boys, the third was 20 years old. Only one, the hamlet chief, could have been called a "prominent citizen." He was not allowed to go to the grave "because the fighting was too close." He did not find this suspicious.

At Gia Hoi High School, east of the citadel, he saw 22 new graves, each containing between 3 and 7 bodies. He was told that they had been shot but "some had been buried alive."

He saw more grave sites at Tan Quang but, "heard later that these may have contained only the bodies of peasants killed in cross-fire."

Here is the list of his informants:

JAKES: Frank Jakes, an American official in charge of pschychological operations.

OSTARA: Warrant Officer Ostara, an Australian adviser with the SV army.

KELLY: Bob Kelly, the senior province adviser in  
Thua Thien

SHARP: Lieut. Gregory Sharp, an American adviser with  
the 21st Vietnamese Ranger Battalion, who claimed  
to have seen corpses of men buried alive.

\* Three Australian Warrant Officers

\* Three Vietnamese Officers who also claimed to  
have seen some corpses buried alive.

\* The brother of a Vietnamese policeman who had  
been shot

\* The Police Chief, Doan Cong Lap

\* A number of unarmed people ("safer anonymous")  
who claimed that 4 Vietnamese priests had been  
taken away and three foreign priests killed (on the  
north of the river, Stewart reports that Catholic  
institutions had not been touched.)

Here are Stewart Harris' conclusions:

"Summing up all this evidence about the behaviour of the  
Vietcong and the North Vietnamese Army in Hue, one thing  
is abundantly clear and ought to surprise no one. They put  
into practice, with their usual efficiency, the traditional  
communist policy of punishing by execution selected leaders  
who support their enemies, the Government of South Vietnam  
and its American allies. They also executed American civilian

advisers. This is done "pour encourager les autres."

Oddly enough, one of the more conservative reports came from Police Chief, Doan Cong Lap, who estimated the total number as 200. Other civilian casualties he gave were: killed - 3,776, wounded - 1,909, captured - 1,401. (It is of course impossible to know whether the captured were forcibly taken away or voluntarily joined up with the NLF.)

Nguyen Van Tien, deputy leader of the PRG Delegation in Paris, told Wilfred Burchett (Guardian, December 6, 1969)

"Between January 30 and the end of February 1968, US bomb shells destroyed 90% of the houses in Hue. Over 2000 people were left in the streets buried by rubble and killed by that same US which is pretending to defend liberty, aided by puppets and traitors to their own people. We buried the victims of these bombardments in mass graves. When the time comes, witnesses are available who will reveal the truth about the mass graves."

On December 8, the Washington Post reported that the chairman of the House Committee on Internal Security held a public screening of Defense Department photos of the 1968 Hue massacre -- "to put press coverage of the alleged US atrocities at My Lai in what he called 'a proper perspective'."

"But a 30-minute slide presentation prepared by the Pentagon unexpectedly included only two pictures of victims of the Communist massacre. The remainder showed maps,

diagrams of graveyards, numerical charts, Communist propaganda quotations against a pink background with a blood-red hammer and sickle superimposed, and photos of bound and disfigured bodies from elsewhere in Vietnam.

'Don't you have any more photos of atrocities in Hue?' committee chairman Richard H. Ichord, D., Mo., asked Lt. Col. Arno L. Ponder, the Army briefing officer. 'I'm quite surprised you have so few.'

'I don't know of any more,' Col. Ponder said."