



**A COUNTRY
STAYS ALIVE
WHEN ITS
CULTURE IS
ALIVE.**

**HOPE NEVER
DIES IN THE
INDOMITABLE
VIETNAMESE
MIND.**

- **SACEI Newsletter** updates you on the latest news about Vietnamese-America.
- It serves as a link between **SACEI** members and those who are interested in the Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American culture.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Janet Nguyen	1
Bao Nguyen	1
Causes of the VN War	2
Jack Broughton: Outspoken Vietnam Pilot	2
When Night Fell in Indochina	2
Second Generation Vietnamese Americans	8

SAIGON ARTS, CULTURE & EDUCATION INSTITUTE



To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese Culture

NEWSLETTER # 74

DECEMBER 2015

As the New Year approaches, SACEI wishes YOU and Your Family

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

and HAPPY 2015 NEW YEAR

Janet Nguyen: CA State Senator-elect

http://www.voiceofoc.org/county/article_70e2bd8c-649a-11e4-972a-532261cdc90f.html

Republican County Supervisor Janet Nguyen is headed for the California State Senate, becoming the first Vietnamese elected official to reach the state's highest legislative body.

With nearly 70 percent of precincts reporting into the early hours of Wednesday, Nguyen maintained a substantial lead garnering 61 percent of the district vote, which included portions of LA County, securing 60,125 votes.

She is the youngest person to be elected to the board of supervisors, the first woman to be elected from the First District, and the first Vietnamese-American county supervisor in the **United States**. Prior to her election to the Board of Supervisors, she served as a city council member for the **City of Garden Grove**.



Bao Nguyen: Mayor-elect of Garden Grove

http://blogs.ocweekly.com/navelgazing/2014/11/bao_nguyen_mayor.php

Garden Grove Unified School District Trustee Bao Nguyen, 34, said he plans to be a hands-on leader as the city's newest mayor. Nguyen will be Garden Grove's first Vietnamese-American mayor.

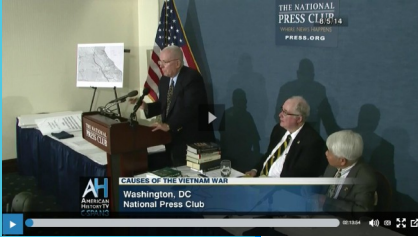
Nguyen beat incumbent Bruce Broadwater by 15 votes in the Nov. 4, 2014 election — that's according to the final tally out this week from the Orange County Registrar's Office. But Broadwater could still ask for a recount.

Nguyen is trilingual in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. He said he plans to use that skill to help bridge divides among the city's diverse population.

Born in a refugee camp, Nguyen arrived to the United States at three months of age. He holds a bachelor's in Political Science from the University of California at Irvine, a master's in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies from Naropa University.



Causes of the Vietnam War by Vietnam Veterans for Factual History



Please listen to this debate about the Vietnam War:

<http://www.c-span.org/video/?320869-1/debate-vietnam-war>

Veterans and critics of the Vietnam War debated the necessity, legality, and legacy of the conflict.

Jack Broughton: Outspoken Vietnam Pilot

<http://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-me-jack-broughton-20141101-story.html#page=1>



As a combat pilot, Air Force Col. Jack Broughton was celebrated for bravery and tactical brilliance during the Korean and Vietnam wars. He received promotions and important assignments and seemed headed to become a general.

But a high-profile court-martial during the Vietnam War for allegedly violating the rules of engagement that ruled certain targets off limits ended his career.

After leaving the Air Force, Broughton was free to speak out about what he saw as the incompetence of President Lyndon Johnson and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in micromanaging the war. Pilots couldn't bomb an enemy outhouse without their approval, Broughton once complained.

"We were poorly utilized, we were hopelessly misdirected and restricted, and we were woefully misused by a chain of stagnant high-level civilian and military leadership that didn't have the [courage] to fight the war that they ineptly micromanaged," Broughton

wrote in his 2007 memoir, "Rupert Red Two: A Fighter Pilot's Life From Thunderbolts to Thunderchiefs."

In Vietnam he flew 102 missions and received an Air Force Cross and two Silver Star citations. The Air Force Cross (second only to the Medal of Honor for Air Force personnel) was bestowed for a mission over North Vietnam on Feb. 5, 1967, when Broughton was flying an F-105 Thunderchief.

"Despite serious aircraft malfunctions, marginal weather and grave damage to his aircraft from an exploding surface-to-air missile, he placed his armament directly on target, scattering fire and debris," the citation read.

"Disregarding the crippled condition of his aircraft, which minimized his chances for recovery to friendly territory, Col. Broughton then willfully acted as a decoy to divert hostile aircraft approaching the strike force."

When Night Fell in Indochina

April 30, 2001 <http://blog.nixonfoundation.org/2001/04/when-night-fell-in-indochina>

By Bruce Herschensohn



On April 30, 1975, Saigon's name was changed to Ho Chi Minh City. Within hours, the American Embassy had been ransacked and left in ruins. Up to a million residents were forcibly moved to the countryside. So-called New Economic Zones (NEZ's) and re-education camps were established for "undesirable elements." Executions and other means of sanctioned death were common. In the cities, typewriters were outlawed, and all residents were required to submit to the authorities a list of books they owned and report "all private conversations deemed contrary to the spirit of the revolution."

Estimates of Boat People escapees from the North Vietnamese victors would reach over one million, with 600,000 drowning in the South China Sea.

As for Saigon's one-time ally, the United States, on the night of the surrender of South Vietnam to North Vietnam former Senator J. William Fulbright announced that he was "no more depressed than I would be about Arkansas losing a football game to Texas."

The end had come for Cambodia less than two weeks earlier, on April 17. The communist Khmer Rouge came into the capital city of Phnom Penh and ordered its immediate evacuation, as well as ordering the evacuation of all other urban areas of Cambodia. Surgeries in progress at hospitals were ordered stopped and the doctors, nurses, and patients, were ordered from the hospital's surgery rooms and patient's rooms and hallways for their journey into the fields. In the largest hospital of Phnom Penh, over 100 patients were murdered by the Khmer Rouge in their beds. Within that one day, three million people were ordered to march into the countryside at risk of death if they stopped walking. On the trek to the fields, it was a capital offense to

Continue on next page

complain about the food. It was a capital offense to talk with each other.

The next day, all married couples were separated, their children taken away, and all family names were changed. Use of one's old name was now a crime. As a result, it was almost impossible for people to find members of their families after their forced separations. Public executions were held all over the country, and starvation was rampant. All of those found to have served in the previous government were executed, as were their wives and husbands. The designation "S-21" became a more dreaded designation than death. It was quickly known throughout the country as the name of the Khmer Rouge's torture chamber in Phnom Penh. ("S-21" had previously been a high school called Tuol Sleng.)

Pin Yathay, a civil engineer who escaped through the western border into Thailand, revealed his last experience in Cambodia: "A teacher ate the flesh of her own sister who had died in her arms. The teacher was caught and beaten from morning to night until she died in front of the whole village as an example, and her child was crying beside her."

All street signs were whitewashed. All money was declared illegal, with rice as the only currency. All medical facilities, religious temples, postal, telegraph and telephone communications were destroyed. Atheism was the new official creed, with the practices of Buddhism and Catholicism punishable by death. Death was the sentence for listening to the radio or dozing at work. Flirting was considered to be promiscuity punishable by death. All books published before April 17, 1975 were ordered to be burned.

Only eight foreign embassies were allowed to function: Those of the People's Republic of China, North Korea, Cuba, Albania, Laos, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Egypt.

The final domino was Laos. On December 2, its name was changed to the Lao People's Democratic Republic. By year's end, Laos had more political prisoners per capita than any other country in the world, including Vietnam and Cambodia. Following the pattern of Vietnam, re-education camps were established for the undesirables. To be sent to Phong Saly meant to never be heard from again. Two hundred thousand Laotians managed to escape to Thailand.

The devastation wrought by Indochina's communist movements will stand forever in testimony against the ideological passions of the U.S. antiwar movement as well as those historians who still want their readers to believe the United States was immoral in its attempt to prevent the communists from conquering our allies.

For now, the testimony is largely mute. Thanks to the work of most historians and authors of school textbooks, a whole generation has been born and grown into maturity that is blind to what happened in Indochina after April 1975. The purpose of this article is to restore those missing or excised facts, which, by their absence, give a false impression of the United States role in Indochina and why the war ended so tragically.

By the end of President Eisenhower's administration there were 685 U.S. troops in South Vietnam. By the end of President Kennedy's administration there were 16,300 U.S. troops in South Vietnam. By the end of President Johnson's administration there were 536,100 U.S. troops in South Vietnam.

Less than one year into the Nixon Administration, on November 3, 1969, the President announced the beginning of what he called Vietnamization, a plan for South Vietnamese to be trained and incrementally take the place of U.S. ground combatants. It was successful. By the end of 1972, U.S. troops had been reduced by 503,900 to a total of 32,200.

Critics of President Nixon still speak about "the secret bombing of Cambodia" and the "Christmas bombing of Hanoi" as though they were acts of unquestionable evil. In fact, they helped save American lives and end the war.

One of the continuing dangers that had faced the U.S. and South Vietnamese troops were the sanctuaries used by the North Vietnamese military inside neighboring Cambodia. North Vietnam had taken over part of the territory, pushing all Cambodians out and flooding the landscape areas with its own military as well as thousands of tons of armaments. After the North Vietnamese stationed there attacked South Vietnam, killing Americans and their allies, they would flee back to safety in that neutral country.

In 1968 Cambodia's head of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, had told a representative of President Johnson, "We don't want any Vietnamese in Cambodia. We will be very glad if you solve our problem. We are not opposed to hot pursuit in uninhabited areas. You will liberate us from the Viet Cong. For me, only Cambodia counts. I want you to force the Viet Cong to leave Cambodia." The difficulty was that if the United States was to do as he wanted and made it public, Sihanouk could no longer claim his country was neutral, which was a perception he wanted to maintain particularly in the eyes of communist China, which he feared might turn against him. Therefore President Nixon, in his first year in office, made the decision to bomb the otherwise privileged sanctuaries secretly. He did, however, receive the approval of Senators Richard Russell and John Stennis, the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Even with so few Americans informed, the information leaked and was revealed in the nation's press. Prince Sihanouk held a news conference in which it became obvious that he approved of the bombing but wanted to retain his public neutrality. He said, "Here it is, the first report about several B-52 bombings. Yet I have not been informed about that at all because I have not lost any houses, any countrymen, nothing, nothing. Nobody was caught in those barrages. Nobody. No Cambodians. If there is a buffalo or any Cambodian killed, I will be informed immediately. But this is an affair between the Americans and the Viet Cong-Viet Minh without any Khmer witnesses. There have been no Khmer witnesses, so how can I protest?" At a later press conference he added that Hanoi had crowded so many communist troops into that area of Cambodia that it was "practically North Vietnamese territory." Prince Sihanouk then invited President Nixon to visit him in Phnom Penh.

In the spring of 1970, President Nixon ordered troops into the sanctuaries to clean out communist forces who had been killing Americans and South Vietnamese. The antiwar movement and much of the media erupted in rage. But countless lives were saved because the sanctuaries had been cleaned out. Our troops were out of Cambodia within three weeks, and the troop withdrawals continued.

Continue on next page

When Night Fell on Indochina...

As he systemically withdrew U.S. troops, President Nixon continued to work for a peace treaty. Encouraged by the antiwar movement, the North Vietnamese stalled. Finally, the President ordered the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in December 1972. Historically this has become known as "the Christmas bombing," although President Nixon had ordered a 36-hour bombing pause for Christmas and a 36-hour bombing pause for the entrance of the New Year.

The bombing worked. Newly revealed records show that the North Vietnamese leadership was profoundly frightened by the bombing. It had already been getting pressure from Moscow, which was paying most of its bills, to stop trying to win militarily. As of May 1972, the secret official policy of the Soviet Politburo was to recognize that President Nixon had decided that South Vietnam could not be allowed to fall. In January 1973 the North Vietnamese came to the peace table and signed an agreement guaranteeing the liberty of South Vietnam with the right of the South Vietnamese to determine their own future.

And yet in the days between the bombing and the signing of the Peace Accords, the American people heard and read the following: Dan Rather (CBS) told his audience that the United States "has embarked on a large-scale terror bombing" with the operative word "unrestricted." He quoted Hanoi to the effect that the strikes were "extermination raids on many populous areas."

Harry Reasoner (ABC) told his audience that "Dr. Kissinger's boss had broken Dr. Kissinger's word. It's very hard to swallow."

Eric Sevareid (CBS) told his audience, "In most areas of the government, the feeling is one of dismay, tinged with shame that the United States is again resorting to mass killing in an effort to end the killing."

Walter Cronkite (CBS) told his audience that the "Soviet News Agency Tass said hundreds of U.S. bombers destroyed thousands of homes, most of them in the Hanoi-Haiphong area...Hanoi Radio said the bombings indicate President Nixon has taken leave of his senses." He let the quote stand.

James Reston wrote, "This is war by tantrum."

Anthony Lewis wrote, "Even with sympathy for the men who fly American planes, and for their families, one has to recognize the greater courage of the North Vietnamese people...The elected leader of the greatest democracy acts like a maddened tyrant...To send B52's against populous areas such as Hanoi or Haiphong can have only one purpose: terror. It was the response of a man so overwhelmed by his sense of inadequacy and frustration that he had to strike out, punish, destroy."

Joseph Kraft wrote, "Mr. Nixon called on the bombers — an action, in my judgment, of senseless terror which stains the good name of America."

A Washington Post editorial commented that President Nixon conducted a bombing policy "so ruthless and so difficult to fathom politically, as to cause millions of Americans to cringe in shame and to wonder at their President's very sanity."

The New York Times wrote that waves of bombers "flying in wedges of three, lay down more than 65 tons of bombs at a time, in a carpet pattern one and one-half miles long and one mile wide...equivalent to twenty of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima." The New York Times informed its readers that all of this was occurring in "densely populated areas." (Four months later, after American military involvement in Vietnam ended, the New York Times reported, "Hanoi Films Show No Carpet Bombing.")

On January 23, 1973 the Paris Peace Accords were initialed for the United States by Henry Kissinger and for North Vietnam by Le Duc Tho. They were signed four days later by U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers, Tran Van Lam, Nguyen Duy Trinh, and Nguyen Thi Binh. Chapter Four, Article Nine of those accords stated, "The South Vietnamese people shall decide themselves the political future of South Vietnam through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision."

Article Eleven stipulated the insurance of the "democratic liberties of the people; personal freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of meeting, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of belief, freedom of movement, freedom of residence, freedom of work."

Chapter Seven, Article Twenty stated, "The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam undertake to refrain from using the territory of Cambodia and Laos to encroach on the sovereignty and security of one another."

President Nixon spoke to the nation to inform the people of the agreement and said that as a result of the agreement, our military involvement there was over. He said, "The people of South Vietnam have been guaranteed the right to determine their own future without outside interference."

On March 12, U.S. prisoners of war were released from Hanoi. A number of them spoke about Jane Fonda's 1972 visit to Hanoi and the broadcasts she made on Radio Hanoi:

"I'm very honored to be a guest in your country," Fonda said, "and I loudly condemn the crimes that have been committed by the U.S. Government in the name of the American people against your country. A growing number of people in the United States not only demand an end to the war, an end to the bombing, a withdrawal of all U.S. troops, and an end to the support of the Thieu clique, but we identify with the struggle of your people. We have understood that we have a common enemy: U.S. imperialism..."

"I want to publicly accuse Nixon of being a new-type Hitler whose crimes are being unveiled. I want to publicly charge that while waging the war of aggression in Vietnam he has betrayed everything the American people have at heart. The tragedy is for the United States and not for the Vietnamese people, because the Vietnamese people will soon regain their independence and freedom..."

"I'm very honored to be a guest in your country," Fonda said, "and I loudly condemn the crimes that have been committed by the U.S. Government in the name of the American people against your country. A growing number of people in the United States not only demand

Continue on next page

an end to the war, an end to the bombing, a withdrawal of all U.S. troops, and an end to the support of the Thieu clique, but we identify with the struggle of your people. We have understood that we have a common enemy: U.S. imperialism...

"I want to publicly accuse Nixon of being a new-type Hitler whose crimes are being unveiled. I want to publicly charge that while waging the war of aggression in Vietnam he has betrayed everything the American people have at heart. The tragedy is for the United States and not for the Vietnamese people, because the Vietnamese people will soon regain their independence and freedom...

"To the U.S. servicemen who are stationed on the aircraft carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin, those of you who load the bombs on the planes should know that those weapons are illegal. And the use of those bombs or condoning the use of those bombs, makes one a war criminal.

"I'm not a pacifist. I understand why the Vietnamese are fighting . . . against a white man's racist aggression. We know what U.S. imperialism has done to our country so we know what lies in store for any third world country that could have the misfortune of falling into the hands of a country such as the United States and becoming a colony...You know that when Nixon says the war is winding down, that he's lying."

Jane Fonda wasn't the only one: Tom Hayden, Ramsey Clark and others had visited Hanoi and met with selected U.S. prisoners of war. Those prisoners who refused to see them were tortured.

Colonel James Kasler said that those prisoners meeting with delegations who came to Hanoi were handed the questions and answers, and the prisoners had to go in and perform. He said the prisoners were tortured to rehearse what should be answered, and that many times the prisoners were tortured again, just to show the others what would happen to them if they failed at the conference.

Commander John Fellows said, "I personally hope that the people who came to Hanoi representing the dissident groups in our country can some day be brought to trial on this, or forced to answer for this. I feel that I personally stayed two extra years because of the groups that kept pressing and pressing for a split in our country."

Captain James Mulligan said, "If I had my way, I would personally like to see them tried, convicted, and sentenced for what they did to me and my friends in Hanoi. They tried to use my family against my country, and tried to deprive me of my legal rights under the Geneva Convention. And the media — why do you think we're so disturbed by the New York Times? While Harrison Salisbury was sitting in Hanoi, me and other guys were being tortured. And I know that he knew nothing about it. He was completely duped."

Captain Harry Jenkins said, "Probably the press is partly to blame for this — the items that were covered, that were talked about. Americans are an impetuous people. We haven't the patience."

Lieutenant Commander John McCain (now a U.S. senator from Arizona) said, "These people, Ramsey Clark, Tom Hayden, and Jane Fonda, were on the side of the North Vietnamese. I think she only saw eight selected prisoners. I was beaten unmercifully for refusing to meet with the visitors."

Major Harold Kushner said, "I think the purposes of Fonda and Clark were to hurt the United States, to radicalize our young people, and to undermine our authority."

Major Norman McDaniel said, "I think that the division on the war, what ever amount of it existed, did in fact prolong our stay there."

Major Jon Reynolds said, "I have always maintained that the anti-war movement in the United States lengthened our stay. It was a source of strength to the North Vietnamese."

Colonel Robinson Risner said, "I feel beyond any doubt that those people kept us in prison an extra year or two. Not just the people demonstrating, but the people who were downing or bad-mouthing our government and our policies. There is no doubt in my mind, and it was very evident to all of us, that the communist's spirit or morale went up and down along with the amount of demonstrations, protests, and anti-war movement back in the States. I could not see stopping aid to the countries I knew needed the aid. I could not see abandoning our friends and allies."

Colonel Alan Brunstrom said, "We felt that any Westerners who showed up in Hanoi were on the other side. They gave aid and comfort to the enemy, and as far as I'm concerned, they were traitors."

All White House celebrations over the return of the prisoners of war and the agreement that had been signed in Paris were quickly muted as the North Vietnamese disregarded their signature on those Paris Peace Accords. The agreement stated that both South and North Vietnam were "permitted to make periodic replacement of armaments, munitions and war material which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the cease-fire, on the basis of piece-for-piece..." The United States was allowed to re-supply South Vietnam, and the Soviet Union was allowed to re-supply North Vietnam, both on a one-to-one ratio for military loss (one helicopter for a lost helicopter, one rifle for the loss of a rifle, and so on).

Instead, the Soviet Union replaced North Vietnam's losses on a four-to-one ratio. The United States stuck to the agreement by replacing South Vietnam's equipment on a one-to-one ratio until the beginning of 1975, when the 94th U.S. Congress voted to stop all military and even economic aid to South Vietnam and Cambodia. It was not a vote to end our military involvement — that had already ended over two years before the vote. The vote was against spending any more money for the people of South Vietnam and Cambodia, breaking our promise to our allies and violating our signatures in Paris. Without the previously promised aid, South Vietnam's and Cambodia's defeat were guaranteed thanks to massive support given to Hanoi by the Soviet Union.

The 94th Congress was flexing its new-felt power over the Presidency. The final and ultimate casualty of Watergate would be Southeast Asia, with the Congress writing its own unilateral peace agreement in which it embraced demonstrators, much of the press, and those

Continue on next page

When Night Fell on Indochina...

whose sense of morality did not include personal risk or, in the end, even economic risk, for the liberty of others.

Prime Minister of North Vietnam Pham Dan Dong put it simply, and in a way that reveals a different perspective on our 37th President than the one presented in the history books. "When Nixon stepped down because of Watergate," the communist leader said, "we knew we would win."

As the U.S. economic pipeline was strangled by Congress, a massive avalanche of supplies went to the Viet Cong and the Pathet Lao from the Soviet Union and to the Khmer Rouge from the People's Republic of China.

General Van Tien Dung of North Vietnam would later write in his memoirs that because of the cutoff of U.S. aid, President Thieu, the President of South Vietnam, was finally "forced to fight a poor man's war."

Long Beret, the Premier of Cambodia, said, "We have no more material means" to continue the struggle and "we feel completely abandoned."

In March 1975, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who along with Le Doc Tho of North Vietnam had won the Nobel Peace Prize for his negotiating in Paris, said that if he had had any inkling that U.S. aid to American allies would be cut back, "I could not in good conscience have negotiated" the Paris Peace Accords.

The New York Times front-paged a photograph of a rope around the neck of a member of the Viet Cong as a South Vietnamese seemed to be tightening that noose. Beneath the photo was the caption, "In Tan Tru, southwest of Saigon, a South Vietnamese soldier questioning a suspected Vietcong sympathizer tightens the noose around his prisoner's neck. After a beating, the civilian admitted being a scout for the North Vietnamese." NBC ran motion pictures of the same event. The New York Times editorialized that "North Vietnam is obviously acting in massive violation of the military provisions of the 1973 truce, but President Thieu has just as clearly violated the political provisions of that accord — the procedures for establishing a coalition National Council to create a new political constitution for South Vietnam. Even now spokesmen for North Vietnam and its ally in the south, the Provisional Revolutionary Government, are insisting that their immediate goal is to implement these provisions and thereby avoid one final battle in the streets of Saigon."

The CBS Evening News of April 15, 1975 gave a report on the fighting in Xuan Loc, 40 miles east of Saigon, in which Bob Simon stated that the battle of Xuan Loc was a symbol of South Vietnam's will to resist and "a symbol of North Vietnam's determination to end the war this year, perhaps this month." Aggressors and defenders become blurred when one side is described as trying "to end the war."

Even as the Cambodian holocaust began, many American leaders commended themselves for helping bring about the Khmer Rouge victory.

Senator George McGovern said, "Cambodians would be better off if we stopped all aid to them and let them work things out in their own way."

Senator Majority Leader Mike Mansfield said, "The cut-off of aid is in the best interest of Cambodians."

Congressman (later Senator) Chris Dodd said, "The greatest gift our country can give to the Cambodian people is not guns but peace, and the best way to accomplish that goal is by ending military aid now."

Many in the media were also pleased by the outcome.

Joseph Kraft wrote in his syndicated column, "Does it really matter whether Cambodia goes communist? The price is small."

Anthony Lewis wrote in his syndicated column that continued American aid to Cambodia could "only prolong the agony of Cambodia."

Tom Wicker wrote there was "not much moral choice" between Cambodia's hard-line communists and its anti-communist Lon Nol government.

As the Khmer Rouge prepared to murder at least a million men, women, and children over the next two years, a New York Times editorial noted that further U.S. aid to Cambodia would "only extend Cambodia's misery."

Sidney Schanberg wrote directly from Southeast Asia: "I have seen the Khmer Rouge and they are not killing anyone...Wars nourish brutality and sadism and sometimes certain people are executed by the victors but it would be tendentious to forecast such abnormal behavior as a national policy under a communist government once the war is over."

The situation looked different to our brave allies.

In Cambodia, General Sirik Matak of Phnom Penh wrote a letter to U.S. Ambassador John Gunther Dean on April 2, 1975, 15 days before the fall of that city, in which he thanked Ambassador Dean "for your order to transport me towards freedom," but he said he would not accept the kind offer. "As for you, and in particular for your great country, I never believed for a moment that you would have this sentiment of abandoning a people which have chosen liberty. You have refused us your protection and we can do nothing about it...You leave, and my wish is that you and your country will find happiness under this sky. But, mark it well that if I shall die here on the spot and in my country that I love, it is too bad [but] we all are born and must die [one day]. I have only committed this mistake of believing in you [America]."

General Matak was reported to have been executed three days after the fall of Phnom Penh, near the start of the genocide of Cambodians.

There were 13 days between the Communist take-over of Cambodia and the Communist conquest of South Vietnam. President Ford appealed to the Congress for military supplies and economic and humanitarian aid for South Vietnam in an effort to save the country from complete defeat. Prominent voices in the national media were against such aid, and their propaganda campaign was put into high gear.

Continue on next page

Americans in South Vietnam were given the secret plans for quick evacuation should it prove necessary.

Newsweek chose to put the contingency plans into print where all, including the enemy, could know about them: "The Pentagon made contingency plans for an all too conceivable eventuality: the closing of Tan Son Nhut by Communist troops or the lethal SA-2 and SA-7 missiles that were being positioned near the airfield. This operation — known as Phase Two — would be carried out by more than 60 giant CH-46 and CH-53 helicopters. The choppers would whirl in from the decks of the U.S. aircraft carriers Hancock, Okinawa, and Midway, now standing off South Vietnam as part of a veritable armada of more than 40 vessels, including two other carriers.

"All Americans in Saigon were advised last week that the May-Day signal for Phase Two would be a weather report for Saigon of '105 and rising' broadcast over the American Radio Service, followed by the playing of several bars of 'White Christ-

mas' at 15-minute intervals. That message would send the last Americans still in Saigon streaming toward 13 'LZs,' or landing zones situated throughout the downtown district, all atop U.S. owned or operated buildings..."

The morning of Tuesday, April 29, began at a very early hour for all residents and visitors in Saigon. It was four o'clock in the morning when the explosions were heard. To those who turned their radios to the U.S. Embassy's Security Network, they heard the call of "Whiskey Joe" in the U.S. Defense Attache Office Compound at Tan Son Nhut Airport. The call of "Whiskey Joe" meant the airport was under attack. Then there was the report that two Marine Guards were dead. Soon there were fires at Tan Son Nhut.

The U.S. evacuation plan was no longer operable, having been published in Newsweek.

New evacuation plans were to be discussed at the embassy at 8:00 A.M., but fifteen minutes before the meeting began, the counselor was asking U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin to get to Tan Son Nhut Airport. The streets of Saigon were filled with people scurrying in all directions by motorbike and by foot, some with bags and luggage and roped together boxes, all this during a disobeyed 24-hour curfew. Outside the U.S. Embassy were throngs of Vietnamese banging on its walls and fences. Streaming from the embassy's roof were thin straws of paper that were once documents, but now shredded into strings.

The embassy staff was leaving from the helipad that was on top of its small structure on the rooftop of the embassy with a long stairway leading up to it. The embassy staff was joined by a pouring of Vietnamese who wanted to get out with them. One helicopter after another took off from, and landed on that helipad, and the helicopters poured their human cargo on the U.S.S. Blue Ridge off the coast of the South China Sea. Soon the quantity of helicopters became unmanageable on the deck of the ship and one helicopter after another had to be dumped at sea immediately after being evacuated, to make room for the latest incoming ones.

But all of South Vietnam couldn't fit on them, and so that day the phenomenon of the Boat People began — Vietnamese, on the seas, searching for refuge now that the friends who had vowed to protect them from aggression were gone.

The morning after the evacuation of the Embassy Staff, a tank smashed down the gates of the Presidential Palace, and South Vietnam as an independent political entity was no more.

NBC's Jack Perkins watched Saigon's War Memorial being toppled into the street by North Vietnamese soldiers, and he said to his American television audience that the statue had been "an excess of what money and bad taste accomplish. I don't know if you call it the fall of Saigon or the liberation of Saigon."

Peter Kalisher of CBS said to his American audience, "For better or worse the war is over, and how could it be for worse?"

Dinh Ba Thi, the representative of North Vietnam in Paris, expressed his "warm thanks to all socialist countries of national independence and all peace and justice-loving peoples, including the American people who have supported and helped our people in its just struggle. The victory gained today is also theirs."

Bui Tin, the colonel of the North Vietnamese Army who demanded and received the unconditional surrender of South Vietnam on April 30, later talked about the war and said, "Every day our leadership would listen to world news over the radio at 9:00 a.m. to follow the growth of the American anti-war movement. Visits to Hanoi by people like Jane Fonda and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and ministers gave us confidence that we should hold on in the face of battlefield reverses. We were elated when Jane Fonda, wearing a red Vietnamese dress, said at a press conference that she was ashamed of American actions in the war, and that she would struggle along with us."

Pham Dan Dong, prime minister of North Vietnam, added to his comment that he knew they would win when Nixon stepped down. He said of President Ford that "he's the weakest president in U.S. history. The people didn't elect him. Even if you gave him candy, he doesn't dare to intervene in Vietnam again. We tested Ford's resolve by attacking Phuoc Long in January. When Ford kept American B-52's in their hangers, our leadership decided on a big offensive against South Vietnam."

Twenty years later, on July 11, 1995, President Clinton announced the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the United States and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Giving such recognition signaled to others that it is unnecessary for a foreign government to keep its agreements with the United States.

Although it was too late to correct the errors of the 94th Congress, it was not too late to insist that the Vietnamese Government observe the freedoms they guaranteed to the South Vietnamese in the Paris Peace Accords. We could have told North Vietnam's Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet that we would recognize the Socialist Republic of Vietnam the day it keeps its word. Giving diplomatic recognition without first insisting that North Vietnam observe its own signature was a humiliation to those Americans who served and to the families of those who will never come back.

The ultimate humiliation would be to continue the lies by being silent regarding erasures that have been made in recording the fate of

Continue on next page

When Night Fell on Indochina...

Southeast Asia. It should be known that it fell because in reaction to Watergate, the 94th Congress used their new-found power to bring about the defeat of South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Their domestic allies were many members of the media who, without conscience, were also flexing their new-found power.

When there was a Soviet Union, its government was a master of revising history. In the early 1960s they decided Stalin had never happened. They took his body out of its Red Square tomb, buried it on the other side of the Kremlin wall, tore down every statue of his likeness, and changed the name of Stalingrad to Volgograd. Most importantly, his name was eliminated from the history books. In the mid-1960s the Soviet Union ignored the space accomplishments of the United States and, by ignoring them, turned them into non-events. In the early 1970s Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago was a non-book. Within their system, non-events, non-books and historical revisions ran invisibly rampant. It can't happen here, we all thought. But it did. Like Stalin, space capsules, and Solzhenitsyn, erasures have been made in our recorded history of the fall of Southeast Asia.

It has become a standard fixture of American dialogue to say that we engaged in an immoral war. That is the boldest revision of history. There is no higher morality than to be willing to die in an attempt to bring about the freedom of strangers.

Second Generation Vietnamese Americans: Vi Thuy Nguyen

It is a collection of stories in print and in pictures of those who were born as American citizens, who share a common Vietnamese ethnic origin, and who primarily grew up or chose to come and live in the Northern Virginia, D.C., and Maryland area. It provides a comparative perspective across generations, across state and country borders, and across various experiences at different stages of their authors' lives. It seeks to capture the impressions of those who live within and those who seek to construct and expand the contours of what it means to be a community.

Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/Second-Generation-Vietnamese-Americans-Comparative/dp/1499374445/>

