

## THE IRRATIONALITY OF VIETNAM

The arguments of Mr. Adam Yarmolinsky may sound convincing, but unfortunately, his brand of logic is hard to fathom.

Supposedly Mr. Yarmolinsky sincerely believes that the Viet Cong control of large areas of Viet Nam is based largely upon terror. It is not to be denied that terror is used but it appears that this terror is used more against the Saigon officials sent out rather than directed against the mass of the people. Can this explain the morale of the Viet Cong? Unfortunately, one man does not seem to have this same faith in the efficacy of terror. His name is Premier Ky. According to James Reston (New York Times Sept. 1, 1965), "Even Premier Ky told this reporter today that the Communists were closer to the people's yearning for social justice and an independent life than his own government." If this is true, and Herr Ky should know, then why should terror be the main kingpin of the Viet Cong control? Moreover, the theoretical concepts of guerrilla warfare are based upon obtaining the cooperation of the population by exploiting political grievances, why then should the Viet Cong throw all this doctrine overboard? The truth seems to be otherwise, and one is amazed to find how Mr. Yarmolinsky can maintain such a profound faith in terror. Christ supposedly marvelled at the faith of the Roman soldier. One can only marvel at Mr. Yarmolinsky's faith in terror which is frightening in its own merits. It is frightening since Mr. Yarmolinsky, as a rather misguided practitioner of realpolitik must naturally then view this same terror as an instrument which we could use. One only wishes that Mr. Yarmolinsky had as much faith in democracy and the United States.

It seems that the Administration, and people like Mr. Yarmolinsky, are inclined to paint pictures of the situation to suit preconceived notions. Napoleon once remarked that, "The first qualification a general in chief is to have is a cool head, which receives exact impressions, which never gets excited or dazzled by good or bad news....There are men who, due to their physical and moral constitution, create a picture out of everything...nature has intended them either to command or direct the grand operations of war." This Napoleonic dictum applies also to the statesmen who must direct the blows.

If the war is essentially one of aggression and not one of guerrilla war, then Mr. Yarmolinsky, and the Administration, must explain why after almost 2½ years of steady bombing and great military pressure, little seems to have been accomplished. After all, the United States is the most powerful nation in the world and Viet Nam is only a very little nation - one of the weakest in the world.

We have mesmerized ourselves into painting false pictures and we cannot comprehend that perhaps, if Fuller's cyclical theory of tactics is correct, then the Vietnamese, despite their inferiority in arms, are actually using more advanced doctrine. How else can it be explained?

Moreover, if Herr Ky is correct that the Communists have a more idealistic program, then what logic is it that maintains we have some mystical obligation to the Vietnamese regime? The only obligation should be to our own vital interests, but one has yet to show that we are fighting for such aims. According to Captain Russell Grenfell, "It cannot be over-emphasized that national interests are the only valid factors to justify going to war. Unfortunately, once involved in a war, even a cold war, democratic politicians tend to get carried away by idealistic rhetoric which turns them into champions of humanity and world reformers. World reform, however, is the very worst of all objects to be sought by war. For major war never makes the world better but always worse. Therefore to seek the 'betterment of the common man' and such beatific concepts by getting masses of common men, women and children killed, maimed, and rendered homeless is nonsensical."

"That is one reason why the slogan often heard since 1939 that nations have a duty to fight for this or that cause is deplorable. No country has a natural duty to fight anywhere or to kill anybody. If there is any moral duty at all in this connection it is not to fight and not to kill. Every country that keeps out of a world war is a country saved for peace and civilization."

It is difficult to maintain that we must remain in Viet Nam since this is a test case and a Great Power cannot admit defeat. Clearly we are failing and no amount of propaganda is going to change it. We are certainly not impressing our Allies or anyone else, but feeling ourselves. Great Powers have, after a fashion,



admitted defeat in the past and survived - the Soviet Union did it in 1962 and England did it in 1783. It would be possible to take the nation out of Viet Nam (and there are 1000 ways of doing it), but it would take far more courage than Mr. Johnson seems able to muster. It would seem expedient to fire some generals and get others with a little gray matter upstairs - perhaps some Israeli generals. Lincoln fired a number of generals before he found a winning combination, but, alas, this also takes some courage on the part of the Chief Executive. Unfortunately, Mr. Johnson seems content only to "...speed glum heroes up the line to death."

REW