



**INDOCHINA
IN THE YEAR OF
THE SNAKE - 1965**



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Dedicated to

Norman Morrison, 31, a Quaker and a pacifist, father of Emily, 1,
A Good and Decent man.

Who came to Washington one day in November 1965 to
Protest War and to Make Peace. Setting his daughter aside,
Dousing himself with gasoline and with great pain he set himself afire
Outside the office of the secretary of the war McNamara.

He gave his life too early to see his daughter grow up, to
Become a propaganda prop and a postage stamp.

He died too soon see the end of the war and the
Futility of giving his life to the Madmen of the North.

A Mocking kind of Peace came for millions in
The Unmarked ditches, remote fields and streams that became the
Graveyards of the “liberated” Peoples of the South.

May he Rest in the Peace he Prayed to give to others.

Roger Canfield, March 2015

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It seems to me that something has gone awry between 1950 and 1970. It seems that in the 50s and 60s the field [of history] has been captured by (a) Marxists and (b) by “peasant-model-minded” scholars who have so often ignored the conclusions of their own findings and forced them into a preconceived pattern.

A. MacFarlane, The Culture of Capitalism, (Oxford and Cambridge, 1987)

Today, after several decades of being taught distorted history, every field has been infected by Marxist trained ideologues. What makes it so nefarious is that they do not even realize they are the purveyors of the distortions, myths, and lies that are destroying the greatest economic and political system ever created by man.

MacFarlane quote and text from *The Left and the Distortion of History*,
by John L. Hancock, American Thinker, October 25, 2014

http://www.americanthinker.com/2014/10/the_left_and_the_distortion_of_history.html

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Introduction

Political turmoil continued to plague South Vietnam as 1965 opened, with Buddhist agitators leveling bogus allegations of religious persecution against the government. The military participated in several coups, each of which was followed by purges that destabilized the South Vietnamese war effort. Those military officers and politicians who attempted to appease the Buddhists either failed to satisfy the appetites of the militants or made so many concessions as to undermine national security still further.

In February, Communist attacks on U.S. facilities in South Vietnam led President Lyndon Johnson to authorize the sustained bombing of North Vietnam. Rather than hit North Vietnam hard right away, as the U.S. military leadership advocated, he decided to accept the advice of civilian advisers who favored a slow start and gradual escalation. The decision was based on dubious academic theories about the use of violence to signal intent, and on the mistaken belief that the enemy would continue to rely primarily on guerrilla warfare, which was less vulnerable to air strikes than the conventional warfare to which Hanoi was now shifting.

Near the end of February, Johnson agreed to send the first U.S. combat forces to Vietnam. Their main mission was to protect U.S. military installations. President Johnson and many of his advisers did not believe they would be entering a ground war, because of their belief that the enemy was not going to escalate. Attempting to downplay the size and nature of the commitment, Johnson and his spokesmen fostered the view that the White House was not leveling with the American people.

In March, China decided to send seven divisions of military troops to North Vietnam, where they would take over tasks performed by North Vietnamese soldiers and thus increase the number of men whom the North Vietnamese could commit to the war in the South. The Chinese and Soviets attempted to outdo one another in the amount of assistance provided to the North Vietnamese, each seeking to establish itself as the world's foremost communist power. Hanoi's war machine geared up for what it expected to be the climactic battles in the South.

In April 1965, U.S. intelligence identified the presence of an entire North Vietnamese Army division in South Vietnam for the first time, causing intelligence analysts to take seriously the threat of a full-blown

North Vietnamese invasion of the South. That such an invasion was in progress became clear in May with a series of large conventional attacks by North Vietnamese forces. No longer content to conduct harassing hit-and-run raids, the North Vietnamese sought to destroy the South Vietnamese Army in sustained battle, in order to make possible the final conquest of South Vietnam's cities.

As news of South Vietnamese defeats proliferated, fears of a red tide sweeping over Asia filled the capitals of Asia's non-Communist nations. Asian leaders beseeched the United States to save South Vietnam, and offered their own forces to help in the task. In Indonesia, anti-Communist generals notified the United States that America's stance in Vietnam would influence their willingness to resist the Communist tilt of Indonesian President Sukarno. These developments convinced President Johnson and other leading figures in his administration of the validity of the so-called domino theory, whereby the fall of one Asian country to Communism would lead to the fall of others.

On June 7, General William Westmoreland concluded that damage to South Vietnam's armed forces had become so severe that only a large-scale foreign military intervention could avert total defeat. Westmoreland recommended a sharp increase in U.S. troop strength, to 116,000, to halt the Communists. A few weeks later he raised the recommended number to 150,000, and by late July it was up to 186,700. President Johnson was reluctant to make such a commitment, as it was evident that a war within the confines of South Vietnam would be long and bloody. But by the end of July, he approved Westmoreland's troop request. In informing the American public, he avoided rousing speeches on the necessity of the war, fearing that mobilization of the national spirit would undercut the domestic programs that he considered his crowning achievements.

The infusion of American combat forces in the second half of 1965 achieved the intended objective of blunting the Communist offensive. Superior mobility and firepower enabled U.S. forces to crush large North Vietnamese Army units when they reared their heads. Hanoi was forced to abort plans for decisive thrusts on South Vietnamese cities, and focus instead on grinding attrition of South Vietnamese and American forces.

Although the U.S. forces consistently bested the North Vietnamese, they were unable to inflict casualties on the scale Westmoreland