

Dave Van-Arnham, of 1730 Harrison Ave, Apt 353, Bronx, NY 10453, this week brings you the finale of the marathon 4-week Ted Pauls letter (in FD's #164,165,166,167). Whew! TED continues and concludes:

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FIRST DRAFT #167

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This ~~That~~ China can't start the revolutions by itself, and that the revolutions are the new threat that faces us... is not a point that should have to be argued at length; it is perfectly apparent. Yet we hear time and time again Hawks asserting that it is worthwhile for thousands of Americans to die in this war because it will avert other similar conflicts. This is bullshit, Dave, and it shouldn't be too difficult for a man of your intelligence to figure out. Winning such wars in Malaya and the Philippines did not prevent the Vietnamese war of national liberation from occurring, and no matter what we do in Vietnam it will not prevent other wars of national liberation from taking place. Indeed, your own commentary in #161 offers evidence of this: you refer to the insurgency "building up" in Thailand, and the one that "just started up" in Cambodia. But don't you understand what that means? Making our stand in Vietnam has not prevented the Communists in the neighboring countries from undertaking insurrection; propping up the number one domino does not strengthen the others in the line. ~~Let's see;~~ for one thing, I suspect that if we'd let Viet Nam fall four years ago, the new NLF's wd have popped up four years ago and gone at Cambodia and Thailand hammer and tongs -- why not? And why shdn't they start now, with the US being fairly well stood-off in Viet Nam because it won't use its strength correctly. Especially why shdn't they start now, when they're all convinced we're going to eventually leave Viet Nam to the communists anyway? -- dgv}}

If there were really, as you appear to believe, an international headquarters of Communist insurgency where buttons were pushed and revolutions directed all over the globe, I imagine that its leaders would be deliriously happy at the US involvement in South Vietnam. Why? Because we are pouring so much of our wealth and energy into this one small, insignificant country that we are virtually ignoring the rest of the world. We spent \$22 billion last year in Vietnam to achieve "progress" that is hardly measurable with a microscope. Spent elsewhere, how much good might that money have done? It could have been spent in other countries that are not now threatened with serious insurgency but probably will be in ten years. The funds and effort poured into South Vietnam could have been used to construct socio-economic institutions in a half-dozen countries that would have made them resistant to "wars of national liberation". In essence, we are spending all of our time attempting to treat a terminal case -- or, to mix the metaphor, to put out a raging fire -- instead of concentrating on prevention. It is especially true in insurgency that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. ~~Hell,~~ of course the money could be much better spent elsewhere; I don't claim otherwise. If the situation had been handled by intelligent men of good will in a sensible manner years ago, we'd be a lot better off, and so would all the Viet Nameese. If we can achieve a peace settlement (that will preserve the South Viet Nameese from simply being hadded over lock stock and barrel to the communists without any recourse to amenities like voting) I'd say to do so. But you'll notice, in this regard, that the communists are not interested in any peace not concluded on their terms. This seems curiously indicative, and I'm prepared to discuss the relevance of this. -- dgv}}

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I hope this letter has made some impact on your thinking. Let me reiterate: the US is not preventing Chinese expansion -- quite the contrary, since it is only by being "bombed back into the Stone Age" that the Vietnamese could be put in a position where they were willing to accept Chinese overlordship--; and the US is not preventing future wars of national liberation by fighting in Vietnam -- on the contrary, it is imperiling its ability to aid countries in becoming immune to insurgency. All it is doing is keeping a pro-American government in power in a country which is of no economic or strategic interest to us. Is that really worth the monstrous drain on US resources and manpower which is now the third largest war in which this country has ever participated?

Cheers,

☐☐ Ok, that's LETTERS TO THE EDITOR for this month...

No, seriously, I thank Ted for his letter, and I hope he doesn't mind that the realities of my fan life these days made it necessary for me to stretch it out over four issues. But in nearly every case, I'd like to point out, the recipients of FIRST DRAFT will be receiving all four issues together (I may even tack a staple on to emphasize the point that there is a common topic).

I also hope Ted pardons my occasional overeagerness to get my ~~(+)~~ say in; I don't print that many letters (hell, I don't get that many letters) and I'm not in the groove that comes to one with the frequent handling of such a situation.

I don't think between us we got down to that many Basics, but a few things did come out that might prove interesting. I myself am actually far more Liberal than I'm usually willing to let on; and my protective coloration as a conservative is simply because I feel that the world is in a Tight Place and has been since communism began its great outward power push in 1944. I think that communism is not a workable institution, nor a desirable one, nor one that the world will be in peace sustaining anywhere in a power-bloc sufficient to end peace wherever and whenever it chooses. I think that we are damned lucky that for the most part the communists are as silly and ineffectual as we have been, and that this is actually the only thing that's kept us all from falling under the curtain of their great and far more than medieval darkness. I think that the communists cause more harm than good (before you smile involuntarily, consider that as the most simple statement of a situation that's possible, directly akin to another belief of mine, namely that religion causes more harm than good). I consider that the United States causes more good than harm, except when extreme right/extreme left whipsawing has caused it to stumble off into its own special kind of intermediate darkness that I have no particular liking for.

What does the world need? Birth control (voluntary, I hasten to add); an end to religious intervention in the Realities; food; education; time; an end to the simplistic nonsense of the military -- and the even more simplistic nonsense of the militant ideology, communism. I believe that communism has not work and cannot work, and that it causes more harm than good, and that it is even more a snare and a delusion than Catholicism. But if Catholicism is set up in its place (let us say), the first person you'll find out in the streets is me. Symbolically, anyway; I'm a fairly lowgrade coward... ☐☐ I am quite willing to discuss these matters at length in the future, and I am, finally, hoping you are the sane...

-- dgV