

WHAT SIX MILITARY LEADERS SAY ABOUT VIETNAM:

GENERAL MATTHEW B. RIDGEWAY *Commander of U.S. forces during the Korean War, writing in Look Magazine, 5 April, 1967.*

"It is my firm belief that there is nothing in the present situation or in our code that requires us to bomb a small Asian nation back into the stone age."

GENERAL DAVID M. SHOUP *Former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, speaking at the 10th Annual Junior College World Affairs Day, Pierce College, Los Angeles, 14 May 1966.*

"You read, you're televised to, you're radioed to, you're preached to, that it is necessary that we have our armed forces fight, get killed and maimed, and kill and maim other human beings including women and children because now is the time we must stop some kind of unwanted ideology from creeping up on this nation. The place we chose to do this is 8,000 miles away with water in between . . .

"The reasons fed to us are too shallow and narrow for students, as well as other citizens. Especially so, when you realize that what is happening, no matter how carefully and slowly the military escalation has progressed, may be projecting us toward world catastrophe. Surely, it is confusing . . .

"I want to tell you, I don't think the whole of South East Asia, as related to the present and future safety and freedom of the people of this country, is worth the life or limb of a single American . . .

"I believe that if we had and would keep our dirty, bloody, dollar-crooked fingers out of the business of these nations so full of depressed, exploited people, they will arrive at a solution of their own. That they design and want. That they fight and work for. And if unfortunately their revolution must be of the violent type because the "haves" refuse to share with the "have-nots" by any peaceful method, at least what they get will be their own, and not the American style, which they don't want and above all don't want crammed down their throats by Americans."

LT. GENERAL JAMES GAVIN *Testifying before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 21 February 1967.*

". . . bombing attacks intended to achieve psychological impact through the killing of noncombatants is unquestionably wrong. Likewise the attack of targets near areas highly populated by civilians, where civilians are likely to be casualties, is also militarily as well as morally wrong . . .

"I believe that we can negotiate with Hanoi and with the National Liberation Front confident that a free, neutral and independent Vietnam can be established, with guarantees of stability from an international body."

BRIG. GENERAL WILLIAM WALLACE FORD *Writing to the Editor of the New York Times, 27 April 1967 (published 3 May 1967).*

"General Westmoreland's statement that American fighting men in Vietnam have been 'dismayed,' and he likewise, by 'recent unpatriotic acts at home,' deserves rejoinder.

"Certainly the country is proud of General Westmoreland, and proud of the splendid forces which he commands. It does not follow that the country is obliged to send them, and itself, to destruction.

"The case against escalation has been perfectly presented by Senator McGovern, and I shall not try to improve upon it.

"The time has come, however, to strike down the implication that whoever does not follow blindly and uncomplainingly in the steady expansion of this war is somehow unpatriotic. Stalwart heroes of the Army and of West Point, who also learned well the motto 'Duty, Honor, Country,' have counseled against a land war in Asia. One thinks of MacArthur, of Ridgeway, of Gavin. There are others.

"I volunteered in World War I and served every day in that war, every day in World War II, and every day during the Korean War. If called, I am quite ready to serve again. This does not release me from the duty, nor deny me the right, of trying to keep my country on a provident and enlightened course.

"I besought my newly elected Representative in 1964 to try to keep us from further involvement in Vietnam. I voted in 1964 for the Presidential candidate who opposed escalation of the conflict. I am still trying. I consider it the highest patriotism."

REAR ADMIRAL ARNOLD E. TRUE *Writing to the Editor of the Palo Alto (Calif.) Times, 3 March, 1966.*

"We can end the Vietnam fiasco without dishonor by (1) dealing with the Vietcong as a major party to the war, (2) implement the Geneva Accords, (3) withdrawing our troops and (4) letting the Vietnamese settle their own problems . . .

"General Ky is naturally willing to fight to the last American soldier and the last American dollar. It is about time that Americans should make their own decisions and stop blabbing about 'commitments' and saying 'it is up to Hanoi!'"

BRIG. GENERAL HUGH B. HESTER *Writing to Veterans for Peace in Vietnam, 8 May, 1967.*

"I opposed U.S. involvement in Indo-China in 1954, as did General Ridgeway, then Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army (see his book Soldier: Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgeway). Both of us feared this would involve U.S. ground forces in the jungles and swamps of Asia against the almost limitless Asian masses.

"I have opposed every increase in that involvement since. I oppose the Vietnamese War now, not only because it is being waged in violation of the U.S. Constitution and U.S. treaty obligations under the U.N. Charter, but also because it is in violation of the basic interests of the American people. The Vietnam War is not a war of self-defense or even of general self-interest. It is a war in the profit interests of only a very few.

"I therefore support these veterans of previous wars who are planning protests and demonstrations in Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day, against the Johnson Administration war of aggression against the Vietnamese people. This is an illegal, immoral and wholly unnecessary war.

"And I hope that these veterans now working for a sane American future will take this opportunity to set up an effective organization, perhaps along a loose confederation line, to work for a prompt end to a war which is betraying our great traditions as a free, just and peace-loving people.

"I know of no more fitting or proper task for men who have demonstrated their devotion and loyalty to the American people by risking their lives in combat, than by protesting against the terribly dangerous and unnecessary war the Johnson Administration is imposing upon the people of Vietnam. Their action, I believe, in doing these things, constitutes the exercise of patriotism in its very highest form."

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