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"Why after a decade of economic and military aid, totalling 3 billion, to the Republic of Vietnam have American policymakers and Saigon government officials been unable to counter politically the Communist ideology?" This question was posed to Western ambassadors and military experts, American technicians and economic aid planners, to Vietnamese ex-ministers, generals, colonels, majors economists and provincial officials. Two Western diplomats said they had asked themselves the same question and pulled out files of their reports to read selections from them; one Vietnamese major submitted a ten-page report which he and his associates wrote in response to the question. Almost all interviewed expressed in one form or another the view that "all wars are fouled up--but this one took real talent and ingenuity to make a mess of things,"--as one American explained. This is a synthesis of their thinking, written by a correspondent who has worked in Vietnam for more than three years, and prior that visited briefly East Berlin, Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia.

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## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC VS. DOMINO THEORY

SAIGON--America is engulfed in World War III.  
The Dominican Republic was the Pearl Harbor.

The war is invisible; yet it is nonetheless war, and nonetheless global. For the Dominican Republic affair refuted the basic American fundamental of the domino theory--that if Viet Nam is lost, the Communists would conquer all of South East Asia. In fact, the Communist subversives are already at work elsewhere. U.S. victory in Vietnam will not necessarily stop them. For if North Viet Nam is the "secret base" for South Viet Nam, then Cuba is the secret base for the ~~Caribbean~~ Caribbean and South American and Algeria is the secret base for the Congo and Africa as a whole.

The second Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian powers in Algeria in late June this year is expected to be a major turning point for the Communists in their subversive warfare campaigns. ~~Next~~ Next January, a ~~similar~~ similar but larger Afro-Asian-Latin American conference is ~~also~~ scheduled to be held in Cuba.

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This invisible political war--called the war of subversion--was described by a Vietnamese journalist as "a war of ghosts and goblins--of silhouettes and shadows. You strike at the man, but hit only his silhouette. The enemy is everywhere, yet nowhere." In this sense, the Dominican Republic is far more subtle and sophisticated than the war in Viet Nam, for the subversion is virtually without the guerrillas. Instead of years of jungle guerrilla fighting as in Viet Nam, the subversives have attempted to seize power with only weeks of street fighting.

"The whole post-war world is a battle," one Western diplomat explained, "and the emerging nations are the battlefield. It's a race to see whether the Communists or the Americans will fill the vacuum of power, wealth and leadership created when the colonial nations withdrew. These nations are ripe for Communism--the doctrine of anti-imperialism and nationalism, their doctrine of taking from the haves and giving to the have-nots, their doctrine of refuting Western capitalism because these nations have no capital.

"This is no longer a question of victory in Vietnam, it's a question of the position of American herself. Once Vietnam is lost America is on her way to becoming a second-rate power."

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To the world, Communist-directed subversive warfare appears to be an ideological confrontation with Communism. In Vietnam, it clearly is not.

For the Communist subversives operate behind a secret mask;--the mask of the "Liberation Front"--their appeal hypnotizes uneducated peasants with a magic wand. If the subversives appealed for the establishment of an international conspiracy, it could easily be defeated; instead it preys upon nationalism and anti-foreign-ism. If it presented itself as an atheistic godless society, it would be easy; instead it exploits superstition and makes a mockery of religion. If it presented itself as a totalitarian dictatorship, it would be easy; instead it cloaks its appeal under the guise of freedom and democracy. democracy.

The purpose of the subversive is to hasten the rot of rotten regimes; to break dictatorships and erode government authority; to incite the social-economic-religious upheavals which cause a collapse of law and order. Once they seize power, the mask is removed and the "secret face" of Communism is exposed; the cloak becomes a shroud, the magic wand becomes a sword, But then it is too late.

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Hence, the appeal of the Communist subversive-guerrilla is not Communism at all. One American official explained that of more than 200 Viet Cong prisoners and returnees he personally interviewed, not one mentioned anything about Marxism-Leninism, about atheism, about collective farms or Communist ideology. In the rice-rich Mekong Delta, civilians are shot for calling the Viet Cong Communists. In the northern city of Da Nang where American Marine units have landed, the population refuses to call the Viet Cong Communist--instead has labelled him as "Mister Liberator."

"There's a clash between American ideals and American national interest," one Western diplomat explained. "The Communists use their idealism as a vehicle for their national interests. But these ideals are the same as yours--in fact, they have swiped your ideals. The Communists are promising the peasants a New, Fair, Square Deal 1--land reform, democratic elections, land courts for justice. None of this is unacceptable to the Americans."

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While American troops, helicopters and airplanes, in conjunction with the Vietnamese armed forces, attempt to counter the armed guerrillas in the provinces, the invisible Communist subversives have fomented political turmoil in the six major cities of the country, including Saigon. The pro-neutralist forces hence have become a champion of the free press, by coercing the government to lift censorship bans; they have become a champion of "freedom and democracy" by forcing the government to reduce the curfew hours in Saigon, which are necessary for security purposes; they have forced the government to decree city and provincial council elections, in which even the Communists would be given the right to vote. All this has the effect of weakening the security in Saigon and giving the Saigon government less control--at a time when it needs it most.

"Now the Catholics won't work with the Buddhists; the Buddhists won't work with the Catholics," one Western diplomat explained. "The generals won't work with the civilians and the civilians won't work with the generals; the generals won't ~~mix~~ work with each other and the civilians won't work with each other. Everyone is played off one against another. Every night there's not a coup d'etat, you get down on your little knees and pray. This is Communist subversion."

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As the generals fight amongst themselves in the army, and the ministers among themselves in the government, members of the national police administration face the prospect of being called into the military draft. The other effective anti-subversive organization, the Vietnamese Central Intelligence Organization (equivalent of American CIA), has been requested by pro-neutralist Buddhist politico-priests to be disbanded. Three months following the last semi-coup d'etat, the CIO still has not a permanent chief; the most important province in the country--Gia Dinh, the doughnut around Saigon--still has not a permanent province chief, the current government of Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat is considered to have a number of pro-neutralist element to in it.

The livliest speculation in the diplomatic corps in Saigon is whether or not the Vietnamese government and armed forces will totally collapse--in Chiang Kai Shek style. The French openly predict that it will. America's "friendly allies" have "not excluded that possibility."

Now in VietNam, there's no Chiang Kai Shek. There's no Kuomintang. But then there's no Formosa, either.