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SAIGON—These are the political mistakes that high-placed sources in Saigon believe the United States has made during the past decade of involvement in Viet Nam.

1. The American political posture in Viet Nam has been essentially negative, rather than positive, that is essentially anti-Communist, rather than pro-something. The overwhelming impression is that the American policymakers are attempting "to stem the tide of Communist aggression" or "to teach Hanoi a lesson." This implies a status quo political ~~at~~ political position in a country that is changing in its post-colonial development, and is, indeed, fighting for change..

"Nothing negative has ever prevailed over something positive," one Western military expert explained. One of the most frequently asked questions by Vietnamese captains and majors on the battlefield is "What are we fighting for?" as they take one look at the political turmoil in their rear area of Saigon."

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While some Americans in Saigon pay some lipservice to the principles of freedom and democracy, these are, as one American government employee explained, "hollow words that mean little in % Asia." As one Western diplomat explained, the Western concepts of democracy and freedom have never been simplified and codified as have the Communist % ideology. There are no American prisons for democracy as there are Communist prisons for revolution.

"One can not understand these American principles unless he has reaped the benefits % of them, of seen them first hand," one Western diplomat explained. Hence, he explained, the principles in which Americans believe must be translated, demonstrated and visualized by for the Vietnamese--by the Vietnamese government--and this has yet to be done.

Hence, the first political problem during the past decade has been to realize there is a political problem-- and to act positively.

2. The American policymakers view the battle in Viet Nam as principally, if not solely, a military operation, against armed Communist guerrillas. They are operating dramatically on one front while the Communists are operating on six fronts--political, economic, social, cultural, psychological and military, all integrated into one powerful stream of warfare.

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"Suppose you lose your billfold in a dark place," one Vietnamese provincial official explained. "But you insist on looking for it where there is light because it is easier. Well, you are now looking for the Communists in the light place--the military field--but you never, never find them all--they are also where you refuse to look."

During the past decade, 81.1 mil was spent on the Military Assistance Program for weapons, tanks, ammunition for the Vietnamese armed forces. In addition, 81 mil was spent in Vietnam from American economic aid funds. But 75% of the economic aid was for the purpose of paying the salaries of the national army through the commercial import program. (These figures exclude the salaries of American servicemen and government officials, and all their operating costs, such as gasoline, parts and ammunition for American-owned equipment in American units).

It's another matter that the Vietnamese national army was built to counter an invasion instead of the guerrillas, and that once the "slow motion invasion" began a year ago the army was slow in re-acting.

3. There is no grand, dramatic political strategy for winning the political war in South Viet Nam comparable to the dramatic military actions.

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The bombing raids, in North Viet Nam, have not or cannot win the political war within the South; but without them the war could never have been won--or contained--because of the sustained influx of North Vietnamese troops, weapons, and much more significant, political leadership cadre. If the raids have not won the war, however, they have in effect won time--they have provided the time to act politically.

Sources in Saigon now hope for an enormous political bomb--or nuclear proposition--to reverse the adverse political tide. Hence, the military operations would not be considered as an end in themselves, as is now the case, but the means to an end--an honest, efficient government, a land reform program for the peasants, a smashing medical-educational program that would escalate the nation economically and catapult it socially-politically into the 20th century. Hence, these sources argue, the elaborate and effective military battle plans have in effect given the nation time to formulate and implement a massive blueprint for the political-economic-social development of Viet Nam. Instead of Vietnam being simply a military battleground, it would also become a political showplace.

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"We lack any political imagination," one young American government civilian employee explained. "We are fighting against revolution. How can we expect to win. It's like advocating the murdering of mother."

One western ambassador said that it was "politically inadmissible" that 200,000 refugees in the central part of the country--victims of an autumn flood, Communist terrorism and friendly bombing raids--had not been made a symbol of the pro-American revolution by the Vietnamese government. "They are given charity rice and propaganda lectures--they should be put in factories and apartment houses to show the world the benefits of fleeing the Communist side. Some anti-Communist refugees are not given help by the government and return to Viet Cong areas."

Another source criticized the American officials for not forcing the Dien regime years ago to establish "centers of prosperity" in which the Vietnamese people and the outside world could see the results of American presence. One Western military source decried the fact that for 10 years American has been launching a counter-guerrillas operation--yet now they had the means to revolutionize the total nature of war itself--he advocated that instead of killing people with mortars and bombs Communist battalions could be captured by the use of non-lethal gas, that instead of killing the Communists, they could be defected simply giving them a tummy ache.

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One high-ranking Western official decried the fact that television had not been introduced in Vietnam as a means to relay government propaganda to the villages, to educate the children and to show adult films on better farming methods. More than three years ago, private Japanese companies made proposals for this; the Japanese government has tentatively offered technical assistance and funds. A television station would cost half-billion dollars; successive Vietnamese governments have postponed the decision on this; American authorities appear cool to the idea; economic planners are more interested in Japan's contribution to a \$9 million dollar bridge for the Mekong River.

4. The United States has political power in Viet Nam, but chooses not to use it; yet at this time the Saigon is too weak to act with political dynamism and effectiveness.

"We have the power to take names and kick fannies, one American explained. "But we don't do it. We are still timorous about interfering in a nation's internal affairs." One Western ambassador said: "The first basic fault in the system," one Western Ambassador explained, is : you are too respectful of Vietnam independence so you do not interfere in making decisions on great issues--and in my

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my opinion you should--while instead you are very particular, you poster them on small things of almost no importance. This creates the wrong impression and does not get the results. Your instructions should be more articulate but fewer."

American generals, colonels and captains admit they do not talk politics with their Vietnamese military counterparts; and no other American agency has been given the responsibility of cementing all the fighting Vietnamese political factions together. This is in contrast to the Viet Cong and the Communist apparatus--a guerrilla is first and foremost a politician, and then a soldier; the Communist political cadre--perhaps with only the rank of sergeant--decides what villages will be attacked, and the military commander, with a rank of major, follows his orders.

The Viet Cong military apparatus is of a secondary, supporting nature to the Communist political machine; hence American's efforts to defeat the guerrilla still has not defeated the political subversive. American advisors in the provinces admit that even once the Communist guerrillas are defeated, still the Communist political cell infrastructure in the village is rarely destroyed.

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The introduction of new French faces on mainstreet of Saigon, the increasing number of pro-neutralist Vietnamese who have arrived from Paris, and thousands of pro-neutralist and pro-Communist Vietnamese who have been released from prison within the past 18 months is more important in the subversive field than the introduction of American combat marines and paratroopers is in the counter-guerrilla military field.

"With the amount of money you are spending in the military field," one Vietnamese major explained, "you could buy all the land from the landowners and give it to the peasants. You could pave Viet Nam with gold."

A .155 mm. howitzer shell costs \$70; a 500-pound general purpose bomb costs \$180--and tens of them are expended daily and nightly in Viet Nam.