

"No miracle in the North" and can "suddenly transform or eliminate the problem in South Viet-Nam".

With these words spoken on February 27, Secretary of State Dean Rusk made the first effort he or any other American policy-maker had made after months of wild speculation, much of it government-inspired, to set the speeding crisis in that coup-ridden, guerrilla torn country in perspective.

For reasons that are not clear, unless, perhaps, they are an attempt to explain away the persistent military failures and political bankruptcy of the American-sponsored regime, official and unofficial spokesmen had been hinting at military ventures again North Viet Nam and earlier Cambodia, on the alleged ground that essential supplies and leadership flowed from these countries to the increasingly-successful guerrillas.

It wasn't until Royalist Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia threatened to sign up with Red China and dared the American military to patrol his border with South Viet Nam to prove a single case as assistance to rebel Vietnamese and French President General Charles De Gaulle openly declared himself for neutralization, with the full realization that even that solution may be too late in coming to save the American face and position that Washington began to try and give reasonable thought to the impending crisis.

By this time, the United States had lost much "face" in all of Southeast Asia and Africa and perhaps more importantly with our allies and closer friends, Red China's Premier Chou En Lai had almost concluded a spectacularly successful tour of Africa and parts of Asia with our obvious difficulties and failures making a perfect background for him, and the whole inexcusable mess had become inextricably had become hopelessly involved in Presidential-year politics.

How could the United States, alone and unassisted, get itself in such a mess, especially with the recent sad French history in IndoChina, culminating in the debacle at Dienbienfu:

There are three essential reasons.

First, by not paying close and liberal attention to the lucid words of that master, in fact the originator of this type of warfare, Mao Tse Tung. Beginning more than 30 years ago the Chinese ~~master~~ ^{philosopher} of what he called "people's war of liberation", /the type of guerrilla warfare by which the ill-fed, uneducated unequipped and hungry people of the backward and underdeveloped countries could seize power from their "colonialist oppressors." He is not only the fellow who dreamed it up,; he's the one who made it work for him. Step by step he has it all spelled out in the most direct and logical language ever used by a politician or a general - and he is preeminently both. His works are readily available in most bookstores for less than a dollar. There is no excuse for American military and diplomatic leaders not understanding them. Yet if our leaders have read ~~them~~ ^{Mao Tse Tung,} they have either not understood him or, more likely, decided, in the face of his unbelievable success, decided the wily Father of Communist China was some kind of a nut and they knew better. It is a fact ^{made all the mistakes} ~~ignored~~ that we ~~did all the things~~ ^{ignored} Mao Tse Tung warned against and ~~didn't do~~ ^{ignored} all the things he said must be done.

Second, we failed to practise what we preach. Talking about democracy and free elections we denied both. We supported every ~~type~~ ^{type} of oppressor and oppression, tolerated every denial of political and religious liberty and justified the unjustifiable because it was "anti-Communist". The contrary is true. Our policies, and we enforced them with our millions, gave the people nothing to fight for and much to fight against. The brightest star, the strongest shield we have to offer the rest of the world is our democracy. When we offer less we guarantee ultimate defeat.

Third, and in some ways worst of all, we made made falsehood, deception and undisguised violation of our pledge word a national policy. We have openly abandoned and publicly violated what should have been our sacred word given at the Geneva conferences. ~~Thus and~~ with the cooperation of an uninformed and un-questioning press the American people were kept in ignorance of the true situation and the brutalities and crimes their taxes were financing and were led to believe the only opposition, both in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world were "Communists". While this was obviously false, it wasn't until General deGaulle openly challenged American policy and tried to direct Western efforts into a compromise position, ~~and~~ that any non-Communist leader tacitly acknowledged the true situation.

Where we go from here, what we can do to save as much as possible from an extremely dangerous situation, and how, if at all, we can preserve as much as possible of our international reputation, are not easy questions or simple decisions. But for a people with our principles, traditions and belief, only one course is possible. That course requires the pursuit of truth, devoid of cute tricks and Madison-Avenue evasions; acknowledgement of error; and both the promise and fulfilment of democracy to the emerging countries.

Whether this can be accomplished after half a generation of a heavy propaganda campaign resulted in a false indoctrination of the public is in itself a big question. And granted a governmental willingness to attempt it, which is unlikely, it is unlikely that the government would survive its effort. What this adds up to is an insoluble political problem.

The alternative may be an even more dangerous and insoluble military problem which could end in a nuclear disaster.