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Flight From North Vietnam

To the Editor:

Maj. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale's recent Op-Ed article, "After the War, Still Vietnam," contains most of the familiar clichés and nonfacts of apologists for the war. Of particular interest, however, is Mr. Lansdale's statement that "the Politburo, of course, needn't resort to a bloodbath to weed out the opposition. As an alternative, it could stampede these people out of the country, just as the million refugees fled from North Vietnam in 1954." The language of the last sentence is masterful in its deceptiveness, suggesting that it was the North Vietnamese who "stampeded" the refugees out.

In fact, as Bernard Fall pointed out in "The Two Viet-Nams," "The mass flight was admittedly the result of an extremely intensive, well-conducted, and, in terms of its objective, very successful American psychological warfare operation." Since Lansdale was personally involved in psychological warfare and other undercover operations in Vietnam at that time, his misrepresentation is hardly based on an unfamiliarity with the events in question. It is simply not consistent with his purpose to point out that the United States not only bears the main responsibility for creating over six million refugees in Indochina between 1965 and 1972 (totally ignored by Lansdale), but that even the famous "stampede" out of North Vietnam in 1954 was our doing as well.

EDWARD S. HERMAN
Philadelphia, Sept. 18, 1972

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