

Leaving War to the Generals

To the Editor:

The advice of Gen. Mark W. Clark in a recent Op-Ed article, "Turning on the Heat in Vietnam," is most revealing because it illustrates the sick kind of thinking which got us into the war in the first place and is now being used to prolong the conflict and justify the terrible human suffering. The United States military has been echoing deceits for so long that now even generals have fallen for their own propaganda and continue to view the war in simplistic terms. General Clark announces that there are exactly four possible alternatives open to us, that the "Vietnamization" program has succeeded exceptionally well, that the solution to the problems of Vietnam can be found by intensifying the bombing and that the Vietnam war is really a conventional war just like the one we fought in Korea.

Focusing on the last point, General Clark argues that we are fighting the "same ruthless enemy," thus unable to make any distinctions between Vietnamese peasants and the armies of Communist China. He further declares that in both cases the other side was the aggressor, certainly a gross simplification and distortion, at least in the current war. General Clark then proceeds to chide our enemies for their treatment of P.O.W.'s, forgetting that it was Americans who executed unarmed P.O.W.'s at Mylai. And what about the notorious concentration camps and tiger cages used by the South Vietnamese, where torture and brutality is widespread?

Finally, General Clark has the effrontery to denounce our opponents for the killing of civilians, suggesting that we have not. The ravaging of Vietnam by American bombs is without parallel in the history of civilization, and the millions of innocent civilian casualties surpass in sheer barbarism anything done by the enemy. To those who would shrug this off as "accidental" or "unfortunate,"



we now learn of the United States-supported Operation Phoenix in which reportedly over 20,000 civilians were deliberately tortured and assassinated.

This kind of violence is immoral, contemptible and a disgrace to America, yet General Clark advises more. We wonder if the military will ever understand the war in Vietnam, and we are reminded of the old saying which cautions that war is too important to be left to generals.

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