

How To Get Out of Vietnam

A lot of people throughout the country are beginning to realize that getting into the Vietnam war was a disastrous mistake. In fact, hardly anyone makes so bold as to justify America's entrance into, and generation of, that perpetual war. And so the last line of defense for the war's proponents is: Well, maybe it was a mistake to get into the war, but now that we're there, we're committed, so we have to carry on.

A curious argument. Usually, in life, if we find out that a course of action has been a mistake, we abandon that course and try something else. This is supposed to be the time-honored principle of "trial and error." Or if a business project or investment turns out to be an unprofitable venture, we abandon it and try investing elsewhere. Only in the Vietnam war do we suddenly find that, having launched a disaster, we are stuck with it forevermore and must continue to pour in blood and treasure until eternity.

But just *who* are we committed to, anyway? Surely not the South Vietnamese government, for whatever puppet was induced to "invite" us in has gone long ago, deposed or assassinated. Surely not the people of South Vietnam, the overwhelming majority of whom either back the National Liberation Front or who, at the very least, give no support whatever to our favorite dictator, Marshall [Nguyen Cao] Ky. If we are out to liberate or defend these people, then we are doing it in a most curious way: namely, by

a continuing and apparently permanent process of subjecting them to our methods of mass murder and destruction. “Liberation” — through mass killing and devastation!

We are left with the woeful tale of a few hundred thousand Vietnamese who are committed to the U.S. side; what will become of them when the NLF takes over? Well, there is a happy way out for these people: the U.S. can offer to transport them here, where they can enjoy the benefits of the American Way of Life first-hand. Of course, if this suggestion were ever made, then all of our war-hawks who bleed so profusely for the South Vietnamese at Communism’s door would suddenly find all sorts of reasons for not letting these same free-world citizens into the sacred portals of the U.S.A. It wasn’t long ago, of course, that Orientals were barred completely from immigrating to the United States, and this coercive, racist exclusion was upheld by many of the very same people who want all of us to die in defense of these same Orientals, against the “world conspiracy.”

But how can we get out of Vietnam? Johnson, too, claims to be for peace, but he complains that in all the morass of negotiations or would-be negotiations, he can’t find a way. Well, the way is mere child’s play: the way to get out of Vietnam is to get out. Period. Leave. Withdraw. Scram. And if the American people were to make this demand crystal clear, I’m sure that Johnson and the Pentagon would quickly find the knowledge of how to get our troops onto troopships and bring them home. The war crowd has been trumpeting the slogan, “Support Our Boys in Vietnam.” Well, it seems clear to me that if we are really concerned with the welfare of our boys in Vietnam, the best we can do for them — as well as for the Vietnamese — is to get them out of that death trap and ship them home, and into civilian life.

Then everyone would be happy: Americans and Vietnamese — all except the fanatics who’d be happy to destroy the world rather than allow some Communist, somewhere, to stay alive. And maybe then we’d get used to a world, which existed not so long ago, where America would not decide the fate of every people and territory on the face of the globe.