

# Three Roads to War

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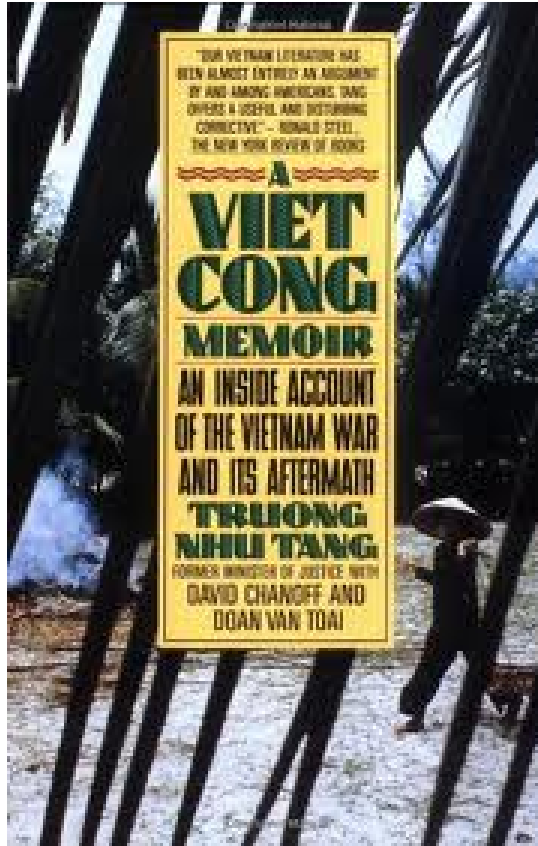
"OUR VIETNAM LITERATURE HAS  
BEEN ALMOST ENTIRELY AN ARGUMENT  
BY AND AMONG AMERICANS. DANG  
OFFERS A USEFUL AND RETURNING  
CORRECTIVE" - RONALD STEEL,  
THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS

**A**  
**VIET  
CONG  
MEMOIR**

**AN INSIDE ACCOUNT  
OF THE VIETNAM WAR  
AND ITS AFTERMATH**

**TRUONG  
NHU TANG**

FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE, WITH  
DAVID CHANOFF AND  
DOAN VAN TOAI





nhật ký

# ĐẶNG THÙY TRÂM

Những trang viết về  
cô gái thanh niên xung  
phong là của  
một nữ liệt sỹ  
27 tuổi.



NHÀ XUẤT BẢN HỒ CHÍ MINH

# Nguyen Ai Quoc with Trotsky



*The new new product costs*

19p. 10p

# BUSINESS WEEK

A BUSINESS WEEK PUBLICATION

WEEKLY

SEPT. 25, 1966



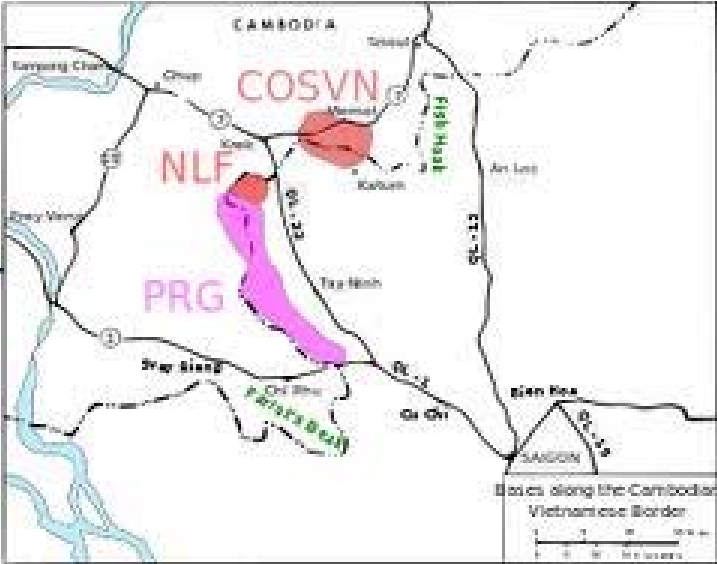
Is Ford, Richard S. McQuay to lead  
a new generation of management?  
(McQuay's story)















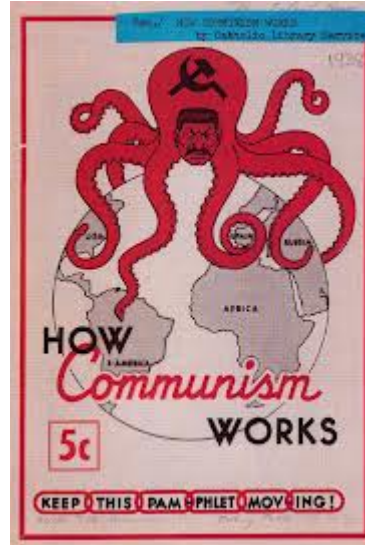
# US Foreign Policy toward Vietnam 1954-1968

- Dominated by a set of beliefs based on:
  - Recent historical events
  - Concept of US role in the world



# First Core Belief

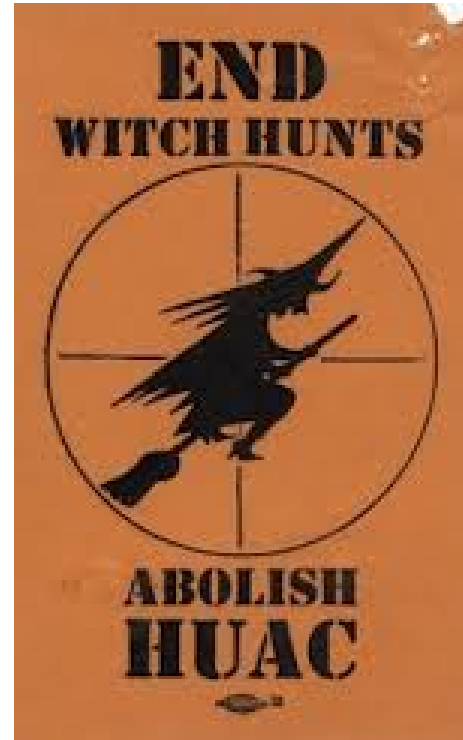
- Monolithic, aggressive, advancing Communism focused on world domination
  - “Loss” of China in 1949
  - Iron Curtain
  - Chinese intervention in Korean War





# The “Red Scare”

- Senator Joseph McCarthy
  - “card carrying Communists” in many areas of US life
  - “in this briefcase...”
- Colonial and nationalistic movements misinterpreted as advancing Communism
  - Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Vietnam



# US Response in Vietnam

- Linking itself to governments with little popular support, but...
- “Anti-communist”
- Attempt to build an independent, non-Communist Vietnam
- Unable to find a leader able to unite the South against North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front

# Second Core Belief

- The Domino Theory
- If Communist aggression unchecked, the successive collapse of vulnerable regimes
- Fighting the Communists “on the beaches of California”
- Must “contain” Communism wherever found



# Fears of “Appeasement”

- 1938 – Chamberlain and Hitler
- Munich Agreement led, not to “peace in our time,” but to further German aggression



# Third Core Belief

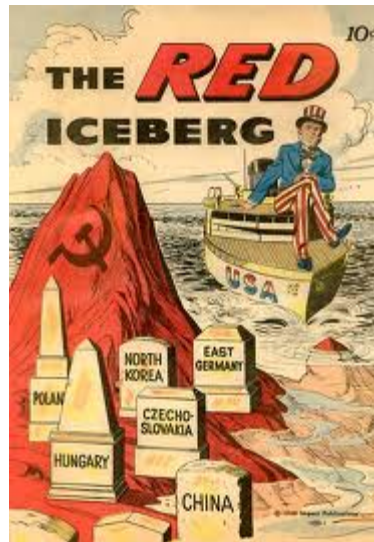
- American “credibility” must be maintained
- US could not be seen as a “paper tiger”
- US retreat would tell Communists we would not stand by our commitments
- What would happen to Japan, South Korea, and West Germany if US could not be relied upon?

# Vietnam as Test Case for Core Beliefs

- Symbol of US standing by its commitments
- An “Asian Berlin”
- Proving ground for
  - US policies of “nation building”
  - Use of counterinsurgency forces (the Green Berets) to combat wars of “national liberation” as espoused by Mao Zedong

# No US President wanted to be the first to Lose a Foreign War

- Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon haunted by memories of the McCarthy era
- Political consequences of appearing weak against Communism





# Initial Attempts

- Military advisors, financial aid, covert CIA action used to support Ngo Dinh Diem
- Diem a strong, but autocratic leader
- Exercised power through his family (Madame Nhu – “the dragon lady”) and confederates
- Many enemies
- Unable to win support of countryside

# The US Takes Over

- Diem assassinated
- Followed by a series of weak leaders
- Johnson administration decided US must take the lead or South Vietnam would be lost
- At its peak, US commitment of over 500,000 troops and massive airpower against the North and South

# Johnson's "Duplicity"

- LBJ wanted to protect "Great Society" program
- Never formally declared war
- Instead, used the "Tonkin Gulf Resolution"
- Never fully informed Congress or US people of what was being done in Vietnam
- Led to a massive "credibility gap"

# US Policy in Vietnam

- Apply massive military force
- Create the security necessary for pacification
- “Win the hearts and minds” of the South and drive the North to negotiate
- Unfortunately, massive bombing of the North and huge “body counts” did not drive the North to sue for peace

# Military Views of the Conflict

- “If you grab them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow.”
- “War is our business and business is good”
- “It’s the only war we’ve got”

# Failure of US Policy

- North Vietnam could replace its forces and supplies regardless of US bombing
- Tet Offensive of 1968 proved to US public that the war could not be won
- Sadly, five more years of war were needed to end US involvement

