

Vietnam Diary

Viet Cong fighter

We have had no peace in Vietnam. The French invaded in the late 1800s and we were controlled from France. Then Japan invaded in the Second World War. After the war, instead of independence, we were given back to France! However we were sick of foreign rulers and mounted a war for independence. In the 1950s fighting against the French rulers was in full swing. Who knows what would have happened, but then the USA stepped in on the side of France.

Why did the USA intervene in our independence movement? They are terrified of Communism. They hate and fear Communism more than anything. You see, the North of our country has fallen under Chinese influence. China, that's right, a huge, powerful and obsessively Communist country.

The French have left now and the Americans are still here, still trying to control us. They are determined not to let Communism spread. The man they want to lead us is unpopular and corrupt, we could never support him. In fact the whole government cannot be trusted. They take American money and allow their own people to be killed. They should protect us, not just allow more foreign invaders to walk through the door.

Only the Viet Cong are fighting America and the Vietnamese government. They are Communist, but more than that, they want Vietnam to be governed for the Vietnamese people. This is why I have joined the Viet Cong. I don't care so much about Communism, I just want my country to be free from foreign meddling.

We have nothing like the resources of the Americans; no tanks, helicopters, heavy guns or planes. We just have our desire for freedom. We are waging a war they cannot win. In the fields, in the villages, in the jungle; we wait, we fire single bullets from doorways or the tops of trees. They don't realise we are there until their comrades fall dead beside them. They do not know where we are or how to attack us. We blend in. This is our country and we want it back.

American soldier

What am I doing here?

We are destroying this beautiful country and killing these gentle people. I am not a politician. I am a soldier. I signed up as soon as I heard about the war. I want to fight for my country- it is an honour. But the more time I spend here I am doubting the Generals more and more.

For a start- what will we gain even if we manage to destroy the Viet Cong? A devastated, angry population which will have no love for America. Yes they might be Communist, but what real harm will that do us?

The Generals say we must prevent the 'domino affect' - if South Vietnam becomes Communist, as North Vietnam has done, then all the surrounding countries will fall.

I get this, I do, but it is so far away from America. Really, what is the harm?

And fighting in this place is a living hell. They hide in the rice fields and jungle. They shoot at us, when we turn around we can't see anyone. Our nerves are shredded.

We get a tip-off that the Cong are in a village, we march down, storm in with our guns and grenades, to find a woman sweeping a hut with a baby strapped to her back and an old man dozes in the sun outside. Who gave us the tip? Whoever it is can't be found.

Last week in another sector they dumped some chemical from the helicopters over the jungle. It stank, it burned your eyes from a mile away. God help anyone stuck in that jungle. After about half an hour the leaves and creepers seemed to have melted. We burned the jungle with that filth!

We are destroying this country. No good can come of this.