COMES NOW VIETNAM

The war of resistance against U.S. aggression may drag on. Our people may have to face new sacrifices of life and property. Whatever happens, we must keep firm our resolve to fight the U.S. aggressors till total victory.

'Our mountains will always be, our rivers will always be, our people will always be;
The American invaders defeated, we will rebuild our land ten times more beautiful.'

Ho Chi Minh
Last Testament

This was not the sort of experience for a statesman - to encounter who was planning out a peaceful revolution in his mind. For it could not help bringing up the ungetarroundable fact that, all gentle cant and philosophizing to the contrary notwithstanding, no people in the world ever did achieve their freedom by goody-goody talk and moral suasion: it being immutable law that all revolutions that will succeed must begin in blood, whatever may answer afterward. If history teaches anything, it teaches that.

Mark Twain
A Connecticut Yankee

Phil Worden
Spring '75
INTRODUCTION

The Vietnamese have been continuously fighting for as long as I have been alive. For as long as I can remember, we have been the enemy of the Vietnamese people. Mangled bodies, lying politicians, fragmentation grenades, pungi sticks, the twisted faces of suffering civilians, dripping wealth, charred flesh, have all been beamed at me daily on color T.V. and have helped form my impression of the world I live in. The significance of the War in Vietnam seems to be more an integral part of my life than a topic that can be wrapped-up in a political 'science' paper. But a decent respect for truth and humanity require that we attempt to make sense of what we've done. In the deepest sense of the subject, not to understand the War in Vietnam is not to understand America.

Some claim that the only difference between mankind and the other animals is that man commits murder. I've always thought that the difference between mankind and a pack of mad dogs is that men at least know who it is they are killing. But how much do Americans know about the Vietnamese people? In the spirit of that question, I have started my report with a brief episode of Vietnamese history that Americans should be, but aren't, aware of - the origins of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This is the government that we have tried to destroy, and that has so heroically resisted our attack.
My opinion of that government is one of deep admiration and respect. But more importantly, that government’s struggle for self-determination is an inspiration.

The second part of my report logically follows from the first part. If the Vietnamese revolutionaries aren't the bad guys, why did we make war on them? It is a difficult question to answer. There may not always be reasons behind historical events; many have been led astray by inventing reasons where none exist. I hope I haven't stretched things too much in my attempts to find a reason for U.S. involvement in Indochina.

Finally, to complete the questions 'Who, Why and What,' I have drawn up a brief chronology of Vietnamese history and the course of the war. It speaks for itself - only its ending remains unknown. Recent events in Indochina suggest that the final showdown might be upon us. It is none too late.

My conclusion is brief and relies on the statement of another. Most of what I think about my government and what it's done is best left unsaid.