

Vietnam: Ten Years After



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PREFACE
Although the Vietnam war concluded ten years ago with the fall of Saigon in 1975 there is a sense in which it never ended. The experience continues to be felt by millions of Americans: by the families of those who died in Vietnam by those who served in the war and returned home to be as much shunned as honored and by those who resisted the draft or demonstrated against the war until the nation became an ideological battlefield. At the highest levels of government the defeat suffered in Indochina continues to have a traumatic impact. The self-doubt and self-questioning that followed Vietnam has not been fully dispelled. The notion of an invincible United States was called into question and policy makers no longer assume that American troops can intervene effectively against Communist;

expansionism anywhere in the
 Since the end of the war a debate has been taking place about
its meaning and implications. A Vietnam literature has grown up
in novelsi¼Œ playsi¼Œ filmsi¼Œ and television documentaries; and in the
forum of magazines and journals many aspects of the war are dis-
cussed i¼Œ often passionately and with wide differences of opinion
and viewpoint. It can be seen more clearly today that the Marxist
utopia envisioned by the North Vietnamese in their \"liberation\"
of the South has not been realized. The regime in Vietnam is
markedly repressive i¼Œ with \"reeducation camps\" for thousands sus-
pected of ideological deviation. A steady stream of refugees i¼Œ in-
cluding a vast number of \"boat people i¼Œ\" have fled from Vietnam
since the wari¼Œ creating a new immigrant population in the United
States and other countries. The economy of Vietnam has been
crippled by a complicated and archaic bureaucracy and by the mo-
bilization of a huge standing army--the fourth largest in the
world--which has invaded and taken over the territory of its
neighbors i¼Œ Laos and Cambodia. At the same time i¼Œ the United
States has begun to honor its Vietnam veterans belatedly and to
reassess its role in world affairs.

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