The Fallout of Abandoning Our Allies

Description

Yesterday, I drafted a piece â€œIraq: The Democrats 21st Century Cambodia?â€• I cross posted the piece at Third World County andI received a comment that linked to an editorial by Gordon Dillow in the Orange County Register from April 2005, which was written 30 years to the month after the final US pullout from South Vietnam.

Donâ€™t take my word for this coming human rights disaster (funny how the Democrats hold themselves up as the champions of this issue, isnâ€™t it?), read about a man and his father in the following editorial, then consider the human wreckage to have and to hold, when we pull out of Iraq, thinking it will stop the Islamofacsists from demanding more and more, until we are nothing leftâ€¦

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> This month will mark the 30th anniversary of a shameful chapter in our nationâ€™s history. Thirty years ago we abandoned a longtime ally, the Republic of (South) Vietnam.
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> And with it, along with millions of others, we abandoned Quang X. Phamâ€™s dad.
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> Quang is an old friend of mine, a 40-year-old Mission Viejo businessman who came to the U.S. as a boy refugee from Vietnam and later served as a U.S. Marine helicopter pilot in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. His father, Pham Van Hoa, now deceased, was a U.S.-trained South Vietnamese Air Force pilot who spent 12 years in a communist â€œre-educationâ€• camp because he refused to leave his country when the North Vietnamese army swept through South Vietnam in April 1975 â€“ this while America, after investing 58,000 of its own sonsâ€™ lives, stood by and washed its hands of the entire bloody and tragic affair.
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> And even though he became an American who loved his country and served it courageously in uniform, for many years that abandonment rankled Quangâ€™s heart. It rankled mine, too.
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> Quang has written a new book about his father, and about his own experiences as a refugee who became an American Marine. Itâ€™s called â€œA Sense of Duty: My Father, My American Journey,â€• published by Ballantine Books (you can get more information at www.asenseofduty.com), and I highly recommend it for anyone who wants to understand what the Vietnam War meant to some of the people who suffered the most because of it â€“ that is, the people of South Vietnam. Itâ€™s powerful, and moving, and in it Quang tries to dispel a myth about Vietnam that still persists.
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> The myth is that guys like his dad didnâ€™t fight for their country.
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> â€œI just want to see South Vietnamese (military men) like my father acknowledged,â€• Quang told me. â€œNot made into heroes or anything, but just acknowledged for what they did. I wanted to set the record straight.â€•

Certainly the casualty numbers tell a story thatâ€™s far different from the myth. The South Vietnamese armed forces lost a total of about 250,000 men killed in the war â€“ a number that, as a percentage of national population, was about 50 times greater than American deaths.

And the numbers of the maimed were even greater. Ten years ago, as a reporter for the Register, I went back to Vietnam to cover the 20th anniversary of the end of the war, and everywhere I went I would meet aging former ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) soldiers who were missing arms or legs or eyes, many of them reduced to beggary because the communist government offered no pensions or even menial jobs for former ARVNs. When they found out Iâ€™d been an American soldier in the war they would often break out yellowed, crumbling, long-hidden South Vietnamese military ID cards and tell me, â€œI was with you, I was with you.â€•

And they were.

Now, I know some of my fellow American Vietnam veterans will disagree with me on this subject. Theyâ€™ll call me up and tell me bitter tales about â€œMarvin the ARVN,â€• about South Vietnamese M-16s that were in perfect condition because â€œtheyâ€™d never been fired, and were only dropped once,â€• about South Vietnamese corruption and incompetence and cowardice. Certainly there was no shortage of such things, particularly in the ARVNâ€™s politicized upper ranks.

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But donâ€™t tell me â€“ or Quang X. Pham â€“ that 250,000 guys died with no brave men among them. Donâ€™t try to tell guys who got their arms or legs blown off that they didnâ€™t fight hard enough. Donâ€™t think that a lot of guys like Quangâ€™s father didnâ€™t have a sense of duty and honor, even as they lost their war, and their country, and languished in brutal communist prison camps for years and years and years.

In the coming weeks youâ€™ll probably see and hear a lot of retrospectives about the Vietnam War, some of them truthful, many of them media myths perpetuated by people who were never even there â€“ the same sort of myths that even now are being created about the Iraq war and the Americans whoâ€™ve been fighting it. More on that in a future column.

But if you think that the Vietnam War was strictly an American war, if you think that the people of South Vietnam werenâ€™t worth fighting for, or with, then I have a suggestion.

Talk to a guy like Quang X. Pham.

And ask him about his dad.

Read the book. See history throught the eyes of one who has been there and project into the future as to what might be as a result of taking counsel of our fears.

Update 11/17/2206:

From John of Castle Arrgghhh!, an email of an Army Officer, who has had mulitple tour in Iraq. He sees something over there and it says weâ€™re about to do what this post is about, in the minds of the

Iraqis, friend and foe alike, from David J. Baer, CPT(P), IN, 3/2/6 IA MiTT Team Chief:

> By all means send my note on to his family. Before I got this job on the MiTT, I was a mechanized infantry company commander in southeast Baghdad and I lost two soldiers so I know what itâ€™s like to write letters of condolence and what kind of loss his family must be feeling. You always hear certain people in Congress talk about leaving Iraq because of the horrible casualties we are taking and whatnot. However, they never seem to be the ones with family over here doing the grunt work. And as for casualties, each loss is a blow, but overall we have been extremely lucky to have as few deaths as we have had since 2003. No one in D.C. ever seems to ask guys like me what we think because they know that we would tell them that we have to stay until the job is done. If you want to win in Iraq, you have to take the gloves off like we did in OIF I and OIF II. We were aggressive and violently kinetic. It worked and the bad guys were deathly afraid of us and the people of Iraq respected us. Now we use kid gloves and the bad guys walk all over us and the people of Iraq donâ€™t think they should support us because we may pack up and leave and then they would be the object of reprisals. Itâ€™s the hard right (lots of offensive action and firepower and not afraid to use it in a city) or the easy wrong (the kinder, gentler approach to dealing with terrorists to try and avoid casualties). I know which one works and which one doesnâ€™t. I know which one will solve this â€œproblemâ€•. It will break a few eggs, but in the end we will have an omelet that will be passably good and tasty.

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How about them apples? Act strong, be respected. Act weak and suffer attacks.

H/T: Third World County reader DC

Trackbacked at: CAstle ARRGGHHH!!!

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