

“Appalled”

In the mid-1960s, as I became aware of what the U.S. government was doing to the people of Vietnam, I was utterly appalled by it. What right did the government of the United States (or any nation) have to send its powerful military forces and sophisticated war machines into an impoverished foreign land and massacre millions of innocent peasant villagers in pursuit of a Cold War "victory"? Starting in 1964, I participated in every peace demonstration I could, and didn't stop until the war finally came to an end. Approximately a half-century later, I traveled to Vietnam with a group of former activists against the war, and could still witness the vast devastation wrought by the American military assault: unexploded (and still exploding) ordnance littering the fields; people missing arms and legs; and children born with terrible birth defects from Agent Orange. The irony is that Vietnam (still ruled by a Communist government) and the United States are now friends. The war was not only disgusting, but unnecessary -- a disgraceful betrayal of humanity and common sense that should not be forgotten.

—*Larry, Albany*