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Robert McNamara observed in his 5th lesson of Vietnam "we failed. . . the tasks of winning the hearts and minds of people from a totally different culture"(Fog of War). Winning over hearts and minds entails two things. The first is getting the people to adopt a set of political ideologies. The second, is a willingness to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve the goals of those ideologies. The people must be convinced to go to war. Because the U.S. was building the new country of South Vietnam, the people of that region had to be convinced of both the ideologies of capitalism, and independence from the northern region. They then had to be convinced to fight and die for those ideologies.

Nguyen Qui Duc's story represents a turning point in the war. As a self described elite, Duc's 'heart and mind' had been 'won over' to the cause of an independent capitalist South Vietnam. He speaks of how he enjoyed Rock-n-Roll music, and other cultural influences from the West. However, Duc continues to describe being conflicted as he progressed through adolescence. Ultimately he became alienated from the U.S. agenda by witnessing the violence and destruction caused by the military occupation.

As a ten-year-old during the Tet Offensive, Duc witnessed his father's arrest by the North Vietnamese army. Yet, he describes how he didn't hate them despite witnessing the arrest of his father and the destruction of the bridge over the Perfume River -which had been symbolically important to the people of the city of Hue. Instead of hating the Northerners, Duc describes being confused over the matter. He was friendly to western influence, but also expressed a curiosity about the opposition's motivation. He spoke of having a certain admiration for the message of the lecture he was given by one of the NVA soldiers. Obviously this soldier doing the lecturing was a propagandist; and a ten-year-old is probably susceptible to propaganda. However, the United States employed propaganda techniques as well, and these evidently were only able to make this young person tolerate the military occupation. This story of an evolving change of personal politics does not represent a traditional turning point. However, this was not a traditional war. The United States was trying to create an independent country.

Nguyen Qui Duc was probably born around 1958. President Eisenhower's agenda expected a quick success, leaving his generation to grow up without war. Ten years later, the battle for hearts and minds continued. What was in the hearts and minds of the entire generation cannot be said. However, Duc's story of inner conflict could represent a large segment of that generation. Surely some were so alienated by the military occupation that they joined the National Liberation Front. Duc says he became an adult when he began listening to Vietnamese antiwar songs by Trinh Cong Son instead of Creedence Clearwater Revival. That was his definitive turning point-when he could no longer reconcile his conflicted emotions. This is the moment when his desire for peace trumped his sense of nationalism. This is an individual and personal turning point. One in an entire generation that, according to the U.S. agenda, was supposed to be militantly anticommunist.

In addition to the people of South Vietnam, the American people had to be 'won over' as well. The American people had to be convinced both of the logic of U.S. foreign policy, and be persuaded to use military might to enforce that policy. After volunteering for the military in 1966 to show his patriotism, Steve Sherlock began to doubt the nobility of the war before he was even deployed. By the time he got there, he was "neutral". Steve's story represents an ending of American resolve to 'fight communism' with aggressive military force in foreign lands. Eventually, it seems, there was a failure to keep the hearts and minds of many American soldiers, resulting in an ineffective fighting force, and the end of America's ability to sustain prolonged war. Keeping soldiers motivated to fight, according to Steve Sherlock, became a serious problem, to the point where the Army had to relieve an officer of his command for insisting on the humanity of their enemies. The story he tells of anti-war petitions being passed around the military in Vietnam, and the pseudo-antiwar demonstration on the beach reveal a significant number of individual soldiers who no longer were convinced of the morality and necessity of that war. Contrary to a significant portion of the military publicly questioning the premisses for military action, Sherlock describes his objections to the war in his statement "it wasn't an intellectual protest, just a gut feeling from what I was seeing and hearing" (p. 495). Some soldiers' hearts had not been won over, other soldiers' minds had not. Many of these soldiers threw their medals at the White House steps in a well organized momentous demonstration. This was an end to the willingness of many American's to fight and support that war.

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