

Lá Thư Thụ Nhân

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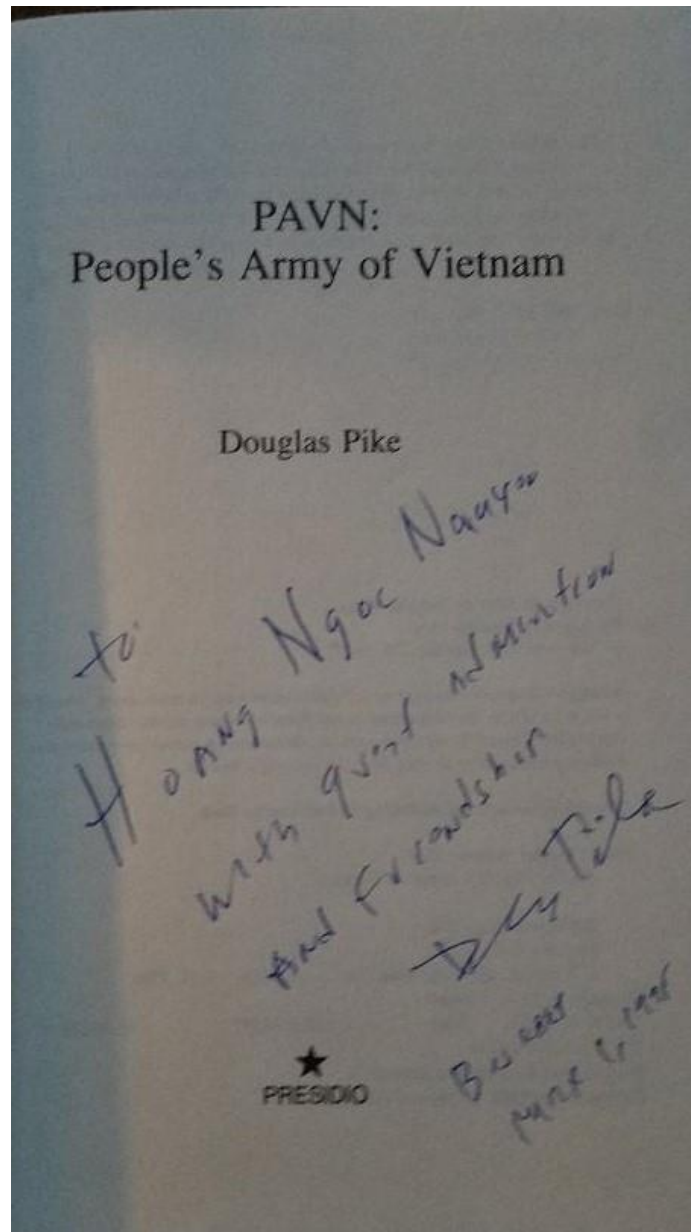
From: Nguyen Hoang

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THE “SPY” WHO LOVED US

Dedicated to Douglas and Myrna Pike





Douglas Pike, a senior officer of the State Department stationed in Vietnam in the 60's, was one of the few leading experts on Vietnam and Communist North Vietnam during the war years in particular. After 1975, he devoted most of his life to archiving the two Indochinese wars (1945-1975), serving as director of Indochina Studies at the University of California at Berkeley (1982-1996) and associate director of research at Texas Tech's Vietnam Center. The following article is a "josstick to commemorate a great friend of the Vietnamese people".

Douglas Pike had the "tough look" of a CIA agent we could always find in spy movies of the Cold War era. We the Vietnamese were quite obsessed with this film genre, and would regard as "CIA" (servicemen) any Americans whose identities we did not know – just to show that we were in the know. Later on, this kind of conclusion became even more gratuitous, for the convenience of strict surveillance by the police of communist Vietnam: all Americans who came to Vietnam after 1975 should be CIA spies in disguise. Douglas Pike, taller than average Americans, was in fact very distinct in his appearance, with a big head, immense face, icy stare, thick beard, broad shoulders, and bear-like stature. He spoke fast in low tone, would limit his speech to the necessary extent. His total stay in Vietnam could be no less than 10 years, but was not infected by the talkathon of many of the Vietnamese. He was described by his Vietnamese friends as a man who did not talk much at the expense of the pensive time, and his action seemed to tell more of his compassion than the man he seemed to be. He was undoubtedly one of the best experts on Vietnam America could ever have and his masterful knowledge of the other side was extraordinary. Douglas Pike was once a senior advisor to National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger on Vietnam-related matters. But in many instances recommendations by advisers could be heeded only if they were something expected by the hearers. This seemed to be the sorrows of Douglas Pike during his Vietnam experience.

The Vietnamese have a saying "a man's life may take just a nick of time". A man's life, even if he can live up to 100 years as the Vietnamese would wish to each other, is short, and may be just enough for a prime concern. For a most respected authority on Viet Nam like the late Professor Douglas Pike, this concern seems to be "What's with Viet Nam?" like he wrote in the preface of his book *War, Peace and the Viet Cong*¹. This lifetime "ultimate question" stems from not only the complexity of the Viet Nam problem (which "defies simplification") but also the compassion he has

¹ Pike, Douglas, *War, Peace and Vietnam*, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1969.

for the Vietnamese people. In Doug's life, these two things – the pursuit of this intellectual challenge and the concern about the Vietnamese people – seem to be inter-related, mutually supplementary, marching in tandem with each other.

Most Americans during the war took a stand, but in Doug's case, where his heart lay – “this” side or the “other” side of the country's 17th parallel – seemed to be an irrelevant question. He took side with the war-victimized Vietnamese people in both parts of the divided country. Being a U.S. foreign service officer, he should be very wary about what he had to say in public. However, his involvement in the investigation of the Communists' alleged 1968 Tet Mau Than massacre in Hue was as well known as his disdain of the military rule in the south and Saigon's so-called “living room” politics. He has chosen to be known as the person “who knew the “enemy” like the back of his hand,” in the words of Frank Snepp, author of *Decent Interval*, neither because he had fallen in love with them nor he thought that the other side was the culprit that should be destroyed. Rather, he believed that someone should do this so elusive job, and as so few would, he then should.

In his book, he admitted that “Vietnam has become the great intellectual tragedy of our times.” I suspect that it is so because while both sides understood that *biết người biết ta trăm trận trăm thang* (know thy enemy and know thyself, you can fight one hundred battles and win all), it seemed that only the Communists could make use of this war axiom. American war strategists knew so much, more than enough and to the negative extent, about themselves and their “ally” in South Vietnam but these “greatest and brightest” minds could not read their enemy's war game. And one could not say the United States was so powerful militarily that it could afford not to know the enemy. As to Pike, by 1968, he had lived in Vietnam for seven years, “which has contributed nothing to my enlightenment” and “my strongest feeling toward Vietnam remains puzzlement.” He warned “such, perhaps, is the truth for all of us,” despite arrogant works by many journalists whose service terms in Vietnam would last a mere 2-3 years. He lamented that “raw opinion on Vietnam is cheap and largely worthless. Even straight facts are of limited value” in the search for an accurate account of the conflict. There was obviously a “crucial knowledge gap” that Pike decided to help bridge for the sake of solving the war. The task, needless to say, was a very challenging one, in view of the well-known elusive and deceptive character of the Asian Communists.

The invaluable conclusion Pike reached after his pensive ordeal in Vietnam was that “the problem in Vietnam since 1954 has been how to convert the situation to a non zero sum game.” And the primary orientation is that “it is best to view Vietnam not as a war that requires victory but as a problem that requires solution.” This “pacifist” Buddhist advice, sounding like Buddha's teaching to exterminate *tham, san, si* (greed, anger, jealousy) in each person in order to put into check one's *nghep bao* (the fateful revenge for the sin one has committed – *karma*), in the wake of the Paris peace conference, unfortunately, went unheeded by all parties. The U.S.-backed Saigon regime failed to “broaden its political base and to develop a government that is rational, efficient, and attractive to the populace.” The price it had to pay was *mat nuoc* (loss of the country). The North Communists still marched ahead for victory, only to see the collapse of the international communist system and its political and economic system's failure to deliver the promise of “freedom and happiness²” for its people. Pike's historical projection was a noble vision of a man who has deep sympathy for a country long devastated by resistance war and internal strife. I think that this vision should make many self-proclaimed Vietnamese nationalists and communists blush of shame. Unfortunately, history did not follow this course – owing to the nonsensical stubbornness and “unpredictability” of both sides – defying the most advanced “scientific research method.”

After the catastrophic conclusion of the war in 1975, those Vietnamese who know him nevertheless would agree on one thing: Doug has always impressed them with his genuine concern

² The banner of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam carries the words: *Doc lap* (Independence), *Tu do* (Freedom), *Hanh phuc* (Happiness) as the three national objectives of the State.

about the plight of their people as victims of something they had nothing to do with. Having witnessed the mass exodus of the South Vietnamese people in 1975 and onward and the abject poverty of the people in the north during his visits of Vietnam in the early 90's, he felt deeply sorry for and upset by the agonizing fate of the Vietnamese, as a people. The nation almost fell apart when millions of Vietnamese, who are known for their strong traditional attachment to *que cha dat to* (father's native village and ancestors' land), were uprooted, plunging themselves into an uncertain future almost totally severed of their past. Many of them are still struggling for survival in this "land of opportunities." Tens of millions of others living in the north still lived the forlorn way their parents and grand parents had known under colonial days. Doug therefore increasingly questioned the real worth or the "justifiability" of the war, suspecting that there must be something utterly wrong, something unreal, pretentious, unsubstantiated or inadequate, in what we have been told about the war by all sides concerned, and no less by "independent" writers. The story of the war, at best, is just like the well known Vietnamese fable of five blind men trying to tell what an elephant is like from what each of them could touch and describe.

This postwar mindset would help explain his activity in the past 20-25 years or so - the dedication with the buildup of a strong, resourceful archive for the use of future generations in the unending pursuit of "haunting questions" about the Vietnam war. Survivors of this war need to get rid of the ghost of Vietnam as they still owe millions of peoples from all sides who have perished their lives for this war a revelation of the truth, which would not be as simple as "we were wrong, completely wrong" or the peace Nobel prize of Henry Kissinger or "the victorious and glorious leadership of the (Vietnamese Communist) Party." I guess that it's Pike's stubborn conviction that once the dust has settled, there will be yet a lot of more stupefying things to learn about the Vietnam war. Maybe what we will learn could be quite different from what we have known. Historian Pike therefore will be remembered not only as the author of 5-6 major works about the Communist side. Pike had not meant to be an archivist, I believe, until he realized that archiving and showing the way to future researchers is also a duty of a responsible historian.

Having no great memory of him before 1975, I should be resigned to small things. I used to be an economic writer of *The Saigon Post*, a daily owned d by Saigon's Ambassador to Washington Bui Diem and also economic correspondent, under the pen-name of *Xuan My*³, of *Vietnam Report*, a bimonthly published by the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations and run by my mentor Nguyen Ngoc Linh and my great friend Nguyen Ngoc Phach, Linh's brother and then a leading journalist associated with the London Daily Telegraph. Douglas Pike was a highly regarded contributor of VNR because obviously no one could match him as a Vietcong-ologist. In the 1 August 1974 issue of VNR, it published a special feature written by Douglas Pike, *North Vietnam in 1974*. My news-analysis *OPIC Recognition May Signal Flock of Investment* followed Pike's article. In fact, after the 1973 Paris agreement, we in the south could learn how unpleasant life could be in the north, and how the south By that time, I had just returned from one year in Oxford, believing naively that I could build up a career as an economist and business journalist without having to bother myself

³ Xuan My is the names of my mother in law (Nguyen Thi Xuan) and father in law (Vo Van My). He followed the Viet Minh movement in 1945, shortly after the birth of wife, and became a senior officer of Hanoi's Ministry of Justice and certainly a ranking member of the Communist party of Vietnam. My mother-in-law remained in Saigon and gradually built up a successful business dealing in construction materials and house building. Xuan My was the trade name of her business. After the national reunification in 1975, the communist and the capitalist got together again after almost 30 years of separation, occasionally arguing over "what way should be best for the people's happiness" but mostly "lived happily for ever until their end," both in 1997.

with political problems. So I missed a great chance to know him, then a senior expert in Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's office.

But the earth is quite round, or putting it in the Asian way, *Huu duyen thien ly nang tuong ngo*⁴. I eventually had him as a "friend" in 1992 via a common friend, Ngo Ngoc Trung, my old mate at the National School of Public Administration in the early seventies, who was working for Pike's Indochina Archive associated with Berkeley's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Pike and three other American professors, including Myrna, his wife, were coming as guests of Hanoi's Institute of International Relations Studies. My first impressions of them were that Pike, according to the "science of physiognomy," had the look of a bear, which "signified" a man of somehow well hidden inner nervousness and restlessness, sober speech, resolute action and quiet but truthful compassion. Meanwhile, Myrna, who had lived for so many years in Saigon and Hongkong, looked more like an obedient and supportive Asian wife, *nang khan sua tui*⁵ in manners than an aggressive American professor. Probably she has lived in Asia for many years, and probably Doug was quite aged and she needed to take greater care of him.

In 1992, then President George Bush had just allowed American companies to set up representative offices in Vietnam to conduct research for business opportunities, pending the final lifting of the embargo and establishment of diplomatic relations – the two things Bush would leave for Bill Clinton to do. Pike, a known advocate for normal ties with Vietnam, believed that now he should and could do something for this process by seeking to bridge the two peoples – if not yet the two governments. Apart from spreading in Vietnam the message of burying the hatchet and smoking the peace pipe, Pike was interested in spearheading a program of exchange of scholars between U.S. and Vietnamese institutions. This program should include cooperation in research projects related to the Vietnam war, out of his hope that fresh information straight from Hanoi's sources could shed new lights on certain still obscure areas. He assessed very correctly at the time that the most difficult thing for a foreign concern wishing to do business, no matter what it was, was to find a proper *doi tac* (Vietnamese counterpart): one which could do the job may not have the necessary political connection while one with strong political connection may not know how to do the job. But he was so heartened by the reception then Deputy Prime Minister Phan Van Khai had given to him, arranged by his host. Still looking at the author of *Viet Cong* and *PAVN* suspiciously ("He works for CIA," people in both Hanoi and Hochiminh City still said), Hanoi had given him a warm welcome in his early trips, hoping that he could use his influence to persuade the Clinton administration to reach without delay decisions on lifting the embargo and establishing diplomatic ties. Some even thought that should the U.S. president name the first ambassador to Hanoi, Pike would be among the strongest candidates.

He was asked to give a lecture on his observation of Vietnam's *doi moi* to a group of senior Party members and ranking government officials in Hanoi. Although not everything he said was pleasant to their ears, *Nhan Dan* (People), the official mouthpiece of the Communist Party (something like Hanoi's *Pravda*), published a lengthy summary of his remarks – maybe with the intent to impress him. Citing crucial problems Vietnam should encounter in its campaign for *doi moi*, he served an indirect warning against a tendency to employ "victories" on the external front to downgrade the under-achievements on the home front. He said something like the real challenge to these market reforms would rest with the creation of an enabling "internal" socio-political environment, which was far from coming in sight in Vietnam. This "conventional wisdom, "

⁴ The full saying is "*Huu duyen thien ly nang tuong ngo, Vo duyen doi dien bat tuong phung*," which means: "If two people are destined to meet, then no distance will be able to prevent them from getting together. Otherwise, if they are not destined for each other, then they won't "meet" even if they are face-to-face. It could be somehow similar to the French saying "*Les grands esprits se rencontrent*".

⁵ The "job" of a Vietnamese wife, traditionally interpreted, is *nang khan*, to place the cloth hat on the husband's head and tidy the pocket in the dress of his national costume when he goes out.

sounding very much like the Confucius thought of *tu than, te gia, tri quoc, binh thien ha*,” (train yourself, bring stability to your family before talking of governing your state and pacifying the whole world). Speaking with unusually sharp insight and calculated candor, he related strong leadership to national consensus and the expectation of the masses. *In fact, they are still the very issues of Vietnam at present.* I was so much enthralled by the thoughtful comments that I decided to write something about it and had it published in *The Saigon Newsreader* on its 22 July issue, although this publication, published under the guise of The Saigon Tourist Association, was supposed to carry only translations of business and tourism-related stories from the vernacular press. As a matter of fact, I had “crossed the line” at several instances in the past, like the stories I rewrote from Vietnamese language newspapers about the Vietnamese family background of a leader of an influential Southeast Asian country.

Although this was his second visit to Vietnam since the ending of the war, he still looked dazed by the changes he was viewing and appeared nostalgic with certain losses. He had great memories of Hanoi, Vietnam’s “the capital of thousands of years of culture and civilization⁶,” though it could not be compared to the Hanoi that most North Vietnamese refugees in 1954 had instilled in mind – a Hanoi with little demographic pressure and still retaining the “snobbish petit bourgeois” style of living. If “ancient” Hanoians were definitely gone, still there were the lakes, the old temples, the 36 shopping streets with narrow roads and tightly jostling houses, and beautiful villas built since the French colonial times. Down south to Hochiminh City, Pike soon found out that the pre-1975 Saigon was definitely dead – the war-time Saigon overwhelmed with American GIs, their girls, roaming war refugees, noisy street demonstrations and a quiet sense of despair and uncertainty - but the spirit of Saigon could hardly die. There was still a unmistakably familiar buoyancy – people hurriedly lived and enjoyed living. And the Saigonese were just the same – no matter if they were the “in place” or the newcomers from the north. It was a well known fact that few people from the south moving to the north could survive both the weather and the social environment in Hanoi, but nearly all, if not all, from Hanoi could feel happy accommodating themselves easily to living conditions in Saigon⁷. And while the dominant lifestyle of Hanoi was much still that of *can bo*⁸, in Saigon *can bo* loved living like common people. All of this Pike could realize easily through his evening excursions in cyclos across Saigon and in meetings with peoples of all walks of life. He had a special interest in knowing how the people are living and earning their living – now that the country was being opened up to the market economy. It’s interesting to him to learn how some of the Saigon people he used to know were faring under the new system: the Harvard educated economist Dr Nguyen Xuan Oanh, an acting prime minister and deputy prime minister in those tumultuous years of 1964-1965 and now a “volunteer” government economic adviser, and former attorney Nguyen Phuoc Dai, a vice president of the Senate of the Saigon regime during 1967-1971 and now owner of a famous restaurant named *La Bibliotheque*, were still pro-government, while Chan Tin and Nguyen Ngoc Lan, both fathers of the Redemptorist Church before 1975, remained anti-government – although the government had changed. Bad habits really die hard! Madam Ngo Ba Thanh, who had staged street showdowns with Ky and Thieu until Saigon

⁶ In Vietnamese, we call it *thu do ngan nam van vat*.

⁷ This could explain why the conflict between the *Trinhs* in the north and the *Nguyens* in the south should last almost two centuries unresolved, and when Emperor Gia Long reunified the country in the 18th century, he decided to choose the midpoint Hue to be the capital of the *Nguyen* dynasty instead of moving to Hanoi.

⁸ *Can bo*, cadres, or government employees, is a privileged class in the classless society of the Communists in all socialist countries. They were assured of not only lifetime employment, but also of regular supplies of daily prime necessities in a economically penurious society where the government had the monopoly of distribution of goods. This rationing system was also based on the ranks of *can bo*, for instance a *can bo* of *chuyen vien* (expert) rank would have more cigarettes than one of *can su* (executive) rank. In each rank there are many sub-ranks. *Chuyen vien* could have up to nine levels, while *can su* six levels. One’s lifetime may not be enough for a person to finish the climbing of this ladder.

fell, was quite unhappy that the government she supported did not let her win in the 1972 National Assembly elections. But her reaction was much milder now, just a complaint to a BBC correspondent!

I was with Doug and Myrna at a dinner staged in his honor at restaurant *Phuong Hong* on *Tran Hung Dao* street, next to *Dai Nam* movie, by a group of former students of the National School of Public Administration. They belonged to the large crowd of “silent minorities” in Saigon. Their education could be quite obsolete, but the dynamism they had in their search for opportunities with the new economic era was quite amazing – some more successful than the others. Pike obviously had a good time with them – all being *Trung*’s former classmates. The old man looked relaxed, even delighted that there were still useful men around in Saigon. He said openly that the success of market economy was imperative, and this result would depend in large measure on the availability of people knowing how to do business with foreign business people, who were coming to Vietnam in increasingly greater numbers. In those years prior to and immediately following the lifting of the U.S. embargo, Pike had been approached by several American businesses wishing to explore the Vietnamese market as a source of supply of primary products like rice, coffee... and also as a buyer of machinery and equipment for agricultural development. He not only urged these people to come to Vietnam but also encouraged Vietnamese businessmen to travel to the U.S.- if only to have a feel of the American market economy.

As publisher of the *Indochina Chronology*, Pike made it a point to make best use of his trips to Vietnam to strengthen the publication which had already been regarded as the most reliable resource of information about postwar Vietnam. His world-famed *Indochina Archive* had a large collection of Vietnamese language materials, including Party documents, newspapers, journals, magazines and books of varied interests published in Vietnam before and after 1975. And since Vietnam turned to the open-door era, *Indochina Chronology* also ambitiously tried to provide more insights into social, political and economic changes of Vietnam today for its highly demanding readers.

With the Communist leaders brought up by the 1954 *Dien Bien Phu* victory the “*chong My cuu nuoc*”⁹ war one by one becoming history¹⁰, the new generation of leaders trying to make history with *doi moi* were hardly known to even the Vietnamese – not to say foreign observers. Although the war was over several years ago, senior leaders’ lives and their prideful “proletarian past” are still kept as “state secret.” The Vietnamese press, very unlike the western media, very seldom provided any background information on its people of public interest – only criminals could afford this luxury of exposure to the public. Pike had a very keen professional curiosity about the current leadership of Vietnam – he was anyway a member of the media¹¹. But as he confided in me, he would like to see the success of *doi moi*, Vietnam’s “only chance of survival in the today’s globalized world.” And this depended mainly on the harmonious and efficient collective leadership of the triumvirate consisting of *Le Duc Anh-Do Muoi-Vo Van Kiet*, however odd they might look to be associated with each other in the normal formula of political compromise. *Doi moi* could be considered the most challenging task to Vietnam’s leadership since the failure of *Le Duan*’s illusionary attempt to develop socialism across the country. Sometimes, to know the present will help to understand something of the past and even to envisage the course of the future. In view of

⁹ *Chong My cuu nuoc* was the most popular slogan during the Vietnam war, which means “to fight the Americans to save the country”

¹⁰ Wasn’t it quite fateful for the opening of a new era, that *Le Duan* died in 1986, *Truong Chinh* 1988, *Pham Hung* 1989, and *Le Duc Tho* 1990.

¹¹ *Douglas Pike* graduated from a school of journalism and for sometime worked as a journalist for *Stars and Stripes* during the WWII.

the intricacies of the Vietnamese leadership, old-young, pro-against *doi moi*, military-civilian, northern-southern, Maoists-Sinophobians, one could understand a lot of political trends by working on some statistics from elections of the Party and appointments in the cabinet of Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet at the time. The Seventh Party Congress in 1971 showed that the dogmatists in the north had an upper hand politically and made a lot of concessions to the advocates of *doi moi* in the south in return - where market reforms were concerned. This coalition between Muoi (half-dogmatic, half-pragmatic and northern), Kiet (economic reformist and southern), Anh (military, conservative and central Vietnam) made everyone happy, even foreign observers who now saw more southerners in the central committee, Politburo, the Party secretariat and the council of ministers¹². Therefore, Trung, on behalf of Pike, shared with me a plan to conduct a survey on *Who's who* in the contemporary leadership of Vietnam at both central and local levels. I found the project quite interesting and challenging, therefore pledged my cooperation in my capacity. Pike had the idea to ask me to go to his center at Berkeley to see how he worked and also to the United States, which I had never been to before. He issued an invitation for me, hoping that we could discuss some joint research effort there. This plan, as well as the *Who's who* project, unfortunately, could not materialize, mainly because I believed that an application for exit visa to visit the well known Mr Pike was the last thing a wise man would do in Vietnam. There was also some uncertainty about the funding of the project. I guessed that Doug had to struggle hard financially to run his center, as the Cold War was already over with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and it seemed that there was not much money left for this “luxurious” archive and research.

The cold war was not really gone in Vietnam then. Top leaders of the country continuously insisted that when you opened the door, “ill wind” would sneak in so that one should remain highly vigilant. American companies tended to hire people with pre-1975 Vietnam experience to work for them in Hanoi and Hochiminh City, but in fact these old hands were not much welcomed. And Douglas Pike was more than one of them. In his later trips, he was not very much enthusiastically greeted, I guessed. There seemed to be an expectation from the host of more concrete cooperation offers that Pike had yet to respond. Then in 1994 Pike was unknowingly entangled in a messy political incident, prompted by the so-called “international conference on democratizing Vietnam” – an initiative of *Lien Minh Dan chu* (the Democratic League), a vaguely defined political organization based in the United States supported by Stephen Young, before 1975 an assistant to U.S. Ambassador to Saigon Ellsworth Bunker on pacification and rural development and at the time a professor of political science at the University of Minnesota¹³. Obviously Young had contacted with some Vietnamese dissidents connected with the former Tan Dai Viet (New Greater Viet Party) or Phong trao Quoc gia Cap tien (The National Progressive Movement) of the late professor Nguyen Ngoc Huy and maybe other clandestine political groups in Hochiminh City, and believed naively that it was already time to “push” Hanoi for opening up the system politically. It was alleged that Young had met either Prime Minister Kiet or Deputy Prime Minister Phan Van Khai for approval of such a conference, which was expected to be attended by those coming from not only the United States but also from Germany, the UK, France, and Singapore... It turned out that the conference, supposed to take place at Metropole hotel on Tran Hung Dao street, was never

¹² The result of the eighth Party Congress in 1997, which for the first time elected a general, little-known Le Kha Phieu, secretary general of the party, however, was markedly different. The Thanh Nghe Tinh clique was dominant, and even economic leadership was snatched out of the southern hands, although the Prime Minister (the “soft” Phan Van Khai) was still a southerner.

¹³ In 2002, Stephen Young published the Vietnamese translation of his unpublished book “Lost Victory,” attempting to account for the loss of South Vietnam as viewed by Ambassador Bunker, the American envoy with the longest tenure in Vietnam during the war. Young put much of the blame on the U.S. media and the lack of political guts of major war policy makers like Robert MacNamara and Henry Kissinger. The book is interesting in its insights into the relations between Bunker and Nguyen Van Thieu, Saigon’s president from 1967 to 10 days before the collapse of the Saigon regime on 30 April 1975.

authorized. Owing to the program, however, the authorities knew fully who in the country were involved. I had no doubt that these Vietnam would have “a hard time.” The Vietnam liaison, a man by the name of Nguyen Dinh Huy, was arrested and received an indefinite jail term. Young was deported. Douglas Pike at the time was in Hanoi. He had heard about this conference and was always doubtful about it, and though he had nothing to do with it, he was advised not to go to Hochiminh City. I was never to see Douglas Pike in Vietnam again.

After I had settled in Salt Lake City, Utah, I paid a visit to him at Berkeley in May 1995. He was not upset, but still disappointed with the way he had been treated. Having no time to cry over spilled milk, he was preparing to move his whole archive to Texas Tech, Lubbock, as it was apparent that he no longer could find a shelter at Berkeley. It was a heartbreaking evacuation, I think, considering that Myrna and he had been under the warm sun of San Francisco for almost 15 years. If he was embarrassed, he did not show it, however. Rather, he voiced the hope that the Indochina Archive that he had built up for almost 20 years would develop more vigorously and the Vietnam Center at Lubbock would widen his scope of activities for the unique purpose of reviewing the story of the Vietnam war. In fact, since its inception six years ago, the Vietnam Center has organized annually a symposium on the war, covering various subjects and attracting scholars from all sides to the event.

I saw Pike another time in April 1997, this time in Lubbock, where he looked extremely relaxed. The Vietnam Archive now had a deserving shelter with able management, modern equipment and adequate fund for development. The annual symposium seemed to be a success, providing a forum for hitherto “unheard voices.” Texas Tech has been launching an extensive program to work with various academic institutions in Vietnam. Its trips to various cities in Vietnam, including Hanoi, Hochiminh City, Can Tho, and Hue...have been warmly received. I had always appreciated Doug’s trust in me, and although we could not work together in an official way, we still tried to cooperate where it was possible. In 2001, Professor Pike sketched a plan in which we would co-author a book about Vietnam’s leadership under the *doi moi* era. We agreed that the first step was to identify who’s who in the game, before going into the interplay of various political forces in political appointments and decision-making. Unfortunately, that was only a dream that we had so cherished together.

Ten years ago, when several “progressive” Vietnamese were so eager about the prospect of normalization of diplomatic relations with the United States, Professor Pike served a warning: don’t expect too much from these economic and political ties, simply because the real problems of Vietnam’s *doi moi* should be solved in Vietnam. After the Seventh and Eighth Party Congresses, many people now should agree with this earnest advice.

As early as 1968, in his said book, he envisaged as a solution the establishment of a Federation of Indochina. Strangely, almost 35 years later, when everything seems to be going in an opposite direction, this passionate recommendation still has some ring in me. The Communists certainly would accuse him of initiating a “reactionary” idea, pointing to the late Hochiminh’s famous saying: “The country of Vietnam is one, the nation of Vietnam is one. The river may dry up, the mountain may wear down, but this truth will stand unchanged¹⁴.” But Pike did not advocate a partition of Vietnam into two countries. Noting the difference at the time in many ways between the north and the south and pointing to historical circumstances, Professor Pike believed that to end the prolonged bloodshed a long term solution should be based on the principle “to live and let live” and the spirit of brotherhood that the Vietnamese themselves have so endeared. Hence, the federalization of the country, just like brothers of a family acknowledging the right to individuality of each person and the need to together erect the family straight and firm. Shortly after the 1975

¹⁴ “Dat nuoc Viet Nam la mot, dan toc Viet Nam la mot. Song co the can, nui co the mon, nhung chan ly ay khong bao gio thay doi” is the mosr favorite quotation by Communist leaders in Hanoi. .

victory, there were leaders in the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) who believed that a “temporary” difference between the north and the south should be maintained. Hanoi, however, hurriedly decided to reunify – only to see the country collapse economically. The problem with *doi moi* in the past 16 years could be handled more effectively if the north and the south could have some “sovereign powers” to determine their patterns of development. If one could not find the merit of Pike’s foresight, his passionate vision for the Vietnamese should certainly also be the aspiration of all Vietnamese, who wish that they “can at last begin to travel on the high road to peace, happiness, and the good life of which fate has cheated them for so long.”

In his lifetime, Professor Douglas Pike has been much obsessed with the “intellectual tragedy” of our times. But from his tireless effort of this lifetime, and as long as the Vietnam Center and the Indochina Chronology could survive his irreparable absence I am increasingly convinced that a happy ending to this tragedy is just around the corner.