
FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

prison proved to be inaccurate and sensationalized.

Accusations that American conduct amounted to genocide, as charged by the Russell tribunal, are "grotesque" and "absurd," says Lewy. The Vietnamese population increased during the war; American aid substantially improved medical care and (temporarily) raised the Vietnamese standard of living. The proportion of civilians killed—45 percent of all war deaths—was no higher than in other conflicts of this century and less than some, including Korea (70 percent of all war deaths).

These "cobwebs of mythology" that contribute to the sense of moral outrage about Vietnam felt by many Americans, especially the young, must be cleared away, Lewy concludes—not just for the sake of historical truth, but also for the sake of our national self-confidence, moral strength, and "future capacity to act responsibly in world affairs."

Dangerous Illusions

"Outwitting 'Smart' Weapons" by Jeffrey Record, in *The Washington Review* (April 1978), Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

In the early days of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, an Israeli tank brigade operating near the Suez Canal was virtually wiped out by Arab infantry armed with antitank rockets. This opening battle, says Record, legislative assistant for military affairs to Sen. Sam Nunn (D.-Ga.) has encouraged the "dangerous" illusion among U.S. light infantry forces (e.g., the Marines and the Army's 18th Airborne Corps) that the "latest generation of so-called smart antitank weapons can neutralize if not defeat the powerful Soviet and Warsaw Pact tank armies."

Of the approximately 3,000 Arab and Israeli tanks destroyed or damaged in the entire October war, says Record, at least 80 percent were knocked out by other tanks. The use of antitank guided missiles by both sides exerted only a marginal influence on the war's outcome.

Today's "smart" antitank missiles, whether guided to the target by wire or by laser beam, are a vast improvement over the recoilless cannon. But they are "line-of-sight" weapons that can hit only those targets which are visible to the naked eye. Soviet military planners have therefore put special stress on night operations and the use of smoke and camouflage. "Virtually every first-line Soviet tank and armored fighting vehicle has been equipped with externally mounted smoke dispensers which can render an entire armored column invisible within a few seconds," Record notes.

The Warsaw Pact countries, which surpass the NATO forces in antitank guided missiles (4,200 to 3,200) as well as in tanks and other armored fighting vehicles (40,000 to 11,000), would use self-propelled artillery to suppress NATO's antitank defenses. The bulk of U.S. ground forces, Record concludes, are simply not organized or equipped for this kind of European conflict.