



# Absence of Honor

*Nathan J. Allison*

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Absence of Honor is specifically about the people in the shadowy (if not altogether dark) services of the United States of America at a time when its responsibilities and involvement in stemming the growing military presence of the NVA in Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam (and the expansion of communism in general) was expanding as the US military's role decreased and their continued service thereafter. The North Vietnamese plan at the time (a plan formulated and orchestrated by their USSR and China handlers) was simple: The more the US 'Vietnamized' the war; the more they pulled down their forces and retreated, the more the NVA would transit forces to staging areas in Cambodia and Laos. From there they planned to simply fill the vacuum left by the US retreat, when they did eventually pull out. They would mass their forces close to the border but just far enough away to keep their forces safe: sometimes an easy target, but protected from harm by the American rules of engagement. The NVA ultimate aim was to, (when the time was right), launch an offensive with overwhelming force that would overthrow the RVN (Republic of Vietnam) government, following the last evacuation of the American combat forces and then take over the entire region. They were patient and predictable in developing that plan and pursuing its objectives. The CIA had been charged by the State Department in the early fifties and sixties to neutralize the threat of communist expansion (off the books, surreptitiously of course). It had been their war (in the whole region, including Vietnam) at state's behest, starting early in the Eisenhower administration. Then part of the responsibility had shifted, beginning with LBJ, to the Department of Defense (and thus the military), but now (in this book) it is back in their lap for the duration. What would follow was also as predictable as was the NVA buildup: the US, through its state department, would wash its hands eventually of the whole affair, (in part because the country was war weary), but also in part because the political powers and parties in Washington wanted to enjoy a 'peace dividend'. As time past, the state department would give less and less resources to the CIA, but not lessen its responsibilities one iota. The inevitable consequences of such actions would leave the CIA operatives in the field with less and less resources to combat an ever increasing threat and opposing force. The good old congress would also play its part and would cut off all funds to the South Vietnamese as well. Such a course of action would be without honor on the part of the Department of State and the nation's political leaders in abandoning our former allies the Vietnamese, and his allies in Laos and Cambodia, and to a large extent, its own people: but it would not mean that CIA operators in the field and their native allies would fail to display courage, sacrifice, and individual acts of heroism and honor.

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