

Ha Noi,
Thursday, January 10, 2008
To the editor,
Dear Sir,

I was grimly satisfied that the lie America's 36th president Lyndon Baines perpetrated to excuse the bombing of the then North Viet Nam 44 years ago has finally been officially exposed "Declassified papers confirm Johnson's lie," Page 3, Viet Nam News Thursday, January 10 2008.

I'm grateful too that members of Federation of American Scientists persisted in pursuing the information necessary to show that the supposed attack by North Viet Nam patrol boats against the destroyer USS Maddox did not happen but was instead a concocted story to excuse prosecution of a wider war.

I was 22 and working late at a major Melbourne, Australia, newspaper when the bells to alert us of a "snap" from the wire agencies began to ring in semi-darkened newsroom and we learned of the "attack."

Later, - the newspaper's news editor and, I the only two members of the editorial team still at work, were chilled at the first reports of "dogfights" in the skies above the 17th parallel - the abstract contrivance that divided north and south Viet Nam - as we plated for an extra city edition to tell our small world the news.

We thought it could well herald the end of civilisation as we knew it because of our unfounded fear that the then Soviet Union would enter the war.

We thought too that the story of the "attack" was absolutely improbable.

Although better-sourced reporters than myself have long since proved that our scepticism was well founded, it is, as I say, satisfying to see the lie finally put to rest.

The Bac Bo or Gulf of Tonkin incident became, as they say these days, a defining moment for me. I have never again trusted reports out of Washington of far-off provocations and have remand ashamed of my own government's acquiescence in many of the subsequent mis-adventures.

Regards,
John Loizou