

The Domino Theory

For those of you that didn't have to live it, the Domino Theory was the guiding light of our foreign policy from the 1950's through the 1980's. Simply put, the Domino Theory speculated that if one country in an area became communist, then all of the country's neighbors would follow suit. Even to write out the principle now seems stupid, but that's how it was back then. People were scared of communism, religious people in particular. For sure you can't have people running around being nice to each other and getting along with out having a God to thank for it, right? More importantly, if you disrupt God's delivery system, the priests and preachers, where are all of those folks going to get jobs? I mean, communism guarantees jobs for all, just not jobs as cushy as Cardinal or Pope.

It sounds like I'm picking a little bit on the Catholics here, but not really. It was one of their ideologues that eventually led the United States into invading Viet Nam and killing hundreds of thousands of innocents. No, I'm not talking about John F. Kennedy, although he did play his part. I'm talking about one Thomas Anthony Dooley.

Thomas A. Dooley was a Catholic, Navy physician that worked in Laos providing aid to the refugees there. Dooley worked as a spy for the C.I.A. and was encouraged to write a book about his struggles. The book was well received and not a Catholic kid who grew up during the 50's doesn't know who Tom Dooley was. Every classroom in Catholic schools around America had collection boxes for Dooley's work in fighting Communism/helping the refugees. When he died, Dooley was perceived by most Americans to be the third most esteemed man in the world, following only Eisenhower and the Pope in popularity.

Nicholas von Hoffman wrote in 1969 that Tom Dooley had created "***the climate of public misunderstanding that made the war in Vietnam possible***". Dooley had reduced the extremely complex issues of Southeast Asia as a battle between good and evil. Eventually the evil of the war in Vietnam War caused the American public to view Dooley's moralistic anti-communism as simplistic pablum.

Simplistic pablum like the Domino Theory. Eventually we left Viet Nam and it fell to some sort of Socialist, Capitalist, Communist, Dictatorship that functions as a good neighbor in the region. Viet Nam's neighbors, Thailand and Cambodia, are still ruled

by kings, kind of the antithesis of communism. Normal relations exist between the U.S. and Viet Nam and you can vacation there anytime you like. Just be careful where you walk.

Unexploded ordnance, left over from the U.S. bombings, are still blowing up and killing people today. Some 42,000 people have died due to the ordnance left behind since the war officially ended. Carpet bombing, the gift that keeps on giving.

That's something to remember when we listen to the candidates present their new "Domino Theory" as it applies to the Middle East. As you listen to our potential presidential candidates, pay particular attention to the religious ideologues, they're grinding more than one axe.

I leave you with the words of my old buddy, Edmund Burke, "***Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it.***"