

1967

Vietnam North

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Recommended Citation

Gilmore, F. C. and Burchett, Wilfred G. (1967) "Vietnam North," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 20 : No. 4 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol20/iss4/10>

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PROFESSIONAL READING

facts and side-step rockslides of Slavic place-names. No maps--descriptive or graphic--are furnished. The journey is wearisome.

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Burchett, Wilfred G. *Vietnam North*. New York:
International Publishers, 1966. 191p.

Written following a seven-week visit to North Vietnam by author Burchett in the early summer of 1966, *Vietnam North*, like his other recent books, has a definite anti-United States slant. It is laced with quotations from North Vietnamese leaders, all of which set the theme for the book: "All is well in North Vietnam." The publication is dedicated to proving by firsthand observation and high-level interview that except for "the daily indiscriminate air raids on hospitals, schools and densely populated areas," the bombing is not bothering the North. Author Burchett claims that he found all types of surface transport normal and that "more traffic was moving than before (1963) and goods and equipment are arriving on time." He quotes Doan Trong Truyen, State Planning Commissioner, as saying, "We ought to be grateful to the Americans. Their bombs forced us to jump ahead and do things that otherwise would have taken years." Everyone with whom Mr. Burchett talked seemed full of enthusiasm and confidence, whether they were from the civil or military side. The author interviewed all of the cabinet-level leaders and those above, including President Ho Chi Minh. All denounced the United States for her "cruel and ruthless aggression against Vietnam." The book loses much of its plausibility because of the compulsive manner in which the author tries to paint a pastoral picture of the Northern countryside. He has too many "peaceful" scenes of quiet rural living that do not match up with the admission of the numbers of people required to repair the interdicted transportation lines. It would appear that Mr. Burchett has tried to sell his story so hard that he leaves a wide "credibility gap."

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