

Vietnam: unexploded air bombs, shells and mines

By [Global Research](#)

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Vietnam War came to a halt over 30 years ago but the aftermath will tell for another 300 years

-[I]t is necessary to draw up an international programme to assist Vietnam.

And not only Vietnam, for that matter. One should remember that the neighbouring Cambodia and other countries of Indochina are coming up against similar consequences. Another case in point is Yugoslavia, which came under NATO bombing attacks, with unexploded bombs still found there now and then. The situation is much the same in Iraq. The aftermath of the armed aggressions will keep killing people for a long time still if the international community fails to come to grips with the problem.

Vietnam will need at least 300 years and over 10 billion dollars to clear the whole of its territory of unexploded air bombs, shells and mines that have been there since the war against the United States ended in 1975. This came in a statement by the Deputy Chief of the Vietnam armed forces engineer troops Colonel Fan Duk Tuan.

The Vietnam War ended 35 years ago. Yet it is still continuing to incur losses. Under a report that Vietnam has prepared together with the US Vietnam Veterans Foundation over 10,000 have died and another 12,000 have been injured in Vietnam in recent years in the post-war years. They have all hit mines that remained in Vietnam following the US aggression. There is no end of this kind of unexploded mines, bombs and shells in the country, says the first deputy Chairman of the Russian-Vietnamese Friendship Society Board Yevgeny Kobelev, who is certainly in the know, since he was in Vietnam during the war years.

"I was in Vietnam as the ITAR-TASS correspondent in the 1964 through 1967, when the US launched its air warfare against North Vietnam, Yevgeny Kobelev says.

"I saw US military aircraft use no end of cluster bombs to carpet-bomb huge areas of North Vietnam. These cluster bombs, just as other types of bombs, would often not go off. They are still lying there, in Vietnam. What's more, Americans used heaps of ammunition they had had since the end of the Second World War. This is a fact since the Vietnamese found some unexploded bombs, 500-kilo or 1,000-kilo bombs that had been made in 1945. Those bombs, too, would not always blow up on impact. And it is for experts to count just how many such bombs remain scattered over Vietnam today."

Well, experts have counted up the number of such charges, and the figure is staggering. That's taking account the fact that Vietnamese have been de-mining their country for dozens of years to stop the war, which is long since over, from claiming more human lives. The unexploded bombs also negatively affect the national economy.

According to Fan Duk Tuan, last year alone Vietnam spend almost 70 million dollars on de-mining and making land suitable for civil construction. Access to mineral deposits has been complicated and tourism is hard to develop in the situation that's taken shape. Yevgeny Kobelev feels that Vietnam needs international assistance, with the United States and its allies in the Vietnam War due to play the main role.

I think a correct and real way to settle the problem, Yevgeny Kobelev says, is to press for the United States and the countries that either supported the US in that war or were immediately involved in fighting should admit their guilt. And it is necessary to draw up an international programme to assist Vietnam.

And not only Vietnam, for that matter. One should remember that the neighbouring Cambodia and other countries of Indochina are coming up against similar consequences. Another case in point is Yugoslavia, which came under NATO bombing attacks, with unexploded bombs still found there now and then. The situation is much the same in Iraq. The aftermath of the armed aggressions will keep killing people for a long time still if the international community fails to come to grips with the problem.

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