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1405 Westover Drive
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060

February 7, 1992

The President
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to thank you for a remark you made during your State of The Union Address, in discussing the end of the Cold War. You referred to those of us who served in Vietnam as "victors," the first time I have heard anyone so describe us.

I'm glad that someone in public life recognizes that the war in Vietnam, however muddled, blundering, and wasteful it may have been—as, in fact, all wars are—was necessary. More than 20 years after I came home, the prevailing public image of the war and those who fought it, and the residual emotion of the national debate that raged for years, still lead me to avoid discussing it with my contemporaries who weren't there. I know they won't believe me if I tell the truth: that they were fed a pack of lies by the media from beginning to end; that those lies are so firmly rooted in American mythology that nothing can eradicate them; and that what they "know" about the war is completely wrong. It is useless to tell them that it was a job that needed to be done; that every military and political objective we sought was achieved; and that in the end the collapse of South Vietnam resulted from the disgraceful and dishonorable actions of a spiteful and vindictive Congress bent on rubbing President Ford's nose in the Watergate affair. They don't want to believe that we who served in it weren't sadists, and we weren't immoral; that we were doing what we felt was the right thing to do, and that history has shown our judgment was correct.

I had a very small role in a very small part of the overall play, but I like to think that my service, infinitesimal as it was, helped to bring about the great events of late 1991. I never thought I would live to see the end of the Soviet Union, and if I contributed to that end, I am proud to have done so. I believe that if the world is on the threshold of a new era, we are there because of forty-six years of steadfastness on the part of the American people and their military forces, which brought us a Pax Americana in which the entire world will be a safer place. Thank you for publically noting that those who served and were forgotten played a part in achieving that peace. "Victors" is a word that needed to be said, and if the recognition of our victory was over-long in coming, it—like peace—is here at last.

Sincerely,

Thomas Caceci

Thomas Caceci, PhD
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