H-PAD supporters,

This coming March 16 is the fiftieth anniversary of the massacre of over 500 Vietnamese civilians by U.S. troops at My Lai. H-PAD calls on its supporters to join others in remembering this war crime. Two H-PAD Steering Committee members, Ellen Schrecker and James Swarts (part of the Veterans for Peace delegation) are in Vietnam and will be attending the Memorial Observation in My Lai on March 16th.

The H-PAD Steering Committee is supporting Vietnam Peace Commemoration Committee’s statement, “My Lai:  Never Again-- A Public Appeal for Moral Responsibility” (attached). We wrote in response, “Statement on the 50th anniversary of the My Lai massacre by Historians for Peace and Democracy” (also attached), which will be read at the Vigil to Commemorate My Lai, Friday, March 16, in Washington, D.C. across from the White House (<http://www.vietnampeace.org/my-lai> ).

Please consider signing the Commemoration Committee’s appeal at <http://www.vietnampeace.org/my-lai-public-appeal>), and also the Veterans for Peace statement, “Open Letter to the People of Viet Nam by Veterans for Peace,” at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdTOduPMh4lNWkk0U4IikkSGG4pGqVrWUj3korvlaEbkw9Byg/formResponse>.

Finally, we ask you to attend events commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the My Lai Massacre on March 16, or, if possible, organize a vigil or other event of your own.

[Signed, co-chairs]

There was some mention in some email somewhere that we planned to send information about the My Lai Commemoration to our big list, but as far as I can tell it was never done.  I think we should do it asap.  Specifically I think we should send a message that:

1)      Note the 50th anniversary of My Lai on March 16;

2)      Notes that H-PAD members Ellen Schrecker and James Swarts (also part of the Vets for Peace delegation are in Vietnam and will be attending the event at My Lai on the 16 [My Lai Memorial Observation in My Lai on March 16th] (I seem to remember that two more H-PAD members were mention as attending this in our emails, but I can’t find this info);

3)      Includes our “Statement on the 50th anniversary of the My Lai massacre”

4)      Ask supporters to ; also

5)      Attend My Lai events on the 16th if there is one nearby, or organize something on this date.

If you two are good with this I’ll draft it and send it asap.

Andor

\*AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF VIET NAM\*

Many Americans, especially those of us who came of age during the American
War in Viet Nam, understand that our war in Vietnam was a crime of untold
proportion and a massive violation of international law. As citizens under
this government, we have to accept responsibility for its actions. It is
with that realization in mind that we engage with you as the 50th
Anniversary of the My Lai massacre nears.

\*We acknowledge\* that this terrible massacre was a clear atrocity, but also
we recognize that it was not an anomaly —  that it is one of many such
abominations that many of our soldiers inflicted on the people of Viet Nam
during the American War.

\*We acknowledge\* the deep and tragic suffering we have caused you — death,
destruction, the ruin of your land, and the torturous rending of your
social fabric.

\*We acknowledge\* the great sacrifices you have made to resist our
government’s global, imperial designs, including battling the civil strife
our military forces brought to your society as they pitted governments they
manipulated against your resistance forces. Many of our soldiers deepened
and exploited the divisions in your society.

\*We acknowledge\* the virulent form of racism that our government brought
from our country into yours as it made almost no attempt to understand your
rich history and culture.

\*We acknowledge\* that this racial animus led us to assault your people with
what our government leaders imagined was "impunity," using our Pentagon’s
almost unlimited funding and massive firepower to kill, maim, and poison
your land and people.

\*We acknowledge\* that even after our armed forces had withdrawn from your
country, abandoning our government’s colonial designs, many U.S. government
officials continued to wage economic warfare against you to thwart your
efforts as you rebuilt your reunified country.

\*Therefore, we pledge the following:\*

\*We will make an honest effort\* to try as fully as possible to understand
and feel the impact of the war on your families and your land, to empathize
with your struggles and suffering and to share our experience with others.

\*We who were directly engaged in this war will continue to publicly
confess\* our
complicity in your country's suffering.

\*We will do all in our power to make amends \*by supporting efforts to
assist you in the healing of your land and your people.

\*We pledge\* to keep learning, and taking to heart, the lessons our people
should have learned from the American War in Viet Nam as we work to attain
peace and social justice in our own country.

\*We who were complicit in the American War in Vietnam will continue to
search our consciences \*as we face our own direct and indirect
participation in a system that enabled our government to start and escalate
this war against your land. We cannot undo the wrongs we have done, but we
will use our remorse to work for world peace.

YOUR NAME:

YOUR TOWN/CITY:

YOUR STATE:

-- Doug Rawlings

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