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SATURDAY LETTERS

The Jane Fonda Apology

Many Americans have trouble accepting Jane Fonda's apology to Vietnam veterans. Some still consider her a traitor simply because she went to the enemy camp; others remember the torture that was perpetrated by the North Vietnamese on U.S. POWs who refused to be photographed with her.

Hindsight often allows us to recognize our mistakes, or even our cruelty, which passion or bias had earlier prevented us from seeing. To publicly admit to these mistakes, and to hold oneself fully responsible for them, as Fonda has done, shows rare integrity and courage.

In fact, Fonda's errors of judgment count for very little compared to those of the "best and the brightest" in Washington, whose fixation on a military solution to the "problem" of communism in Vietnam cost 50,000 American (and millions of Southeast Asian) deaths. Thousands of mentally and physically disabled Vietnam veterans haunt our streets today.

The Vietnam War convulsed the nation, and it will be many more years before the wounds are forgotten or healed. We can help the process by accepting Fonda's apology—and admitting that, overall, she was right.

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