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Death of a Hero

To the Editor:

Nguyen Thai Binh, shot five times on a Pan American 747 at Saigon [news story July 3], died a hero.

I had the opportunity to be with Binh on two occasions: when ten of us occupied the Saigon-consulate in New York and when we "invaded" the small Pennsylvania town of Carbondale to expose the Government-sponsored Vietnamese Studies Center, responsible for training agents of repression in our country. Both times I was deeply moved by his great love for our homeland and his determination to end the American war of genocide.

No Vietnamese would question his sacrifice. By American standards, it may have been an unlawful act, but the man who sits in the White House is trying to bomb our people "back to the Stone Age." There is no attempt to put him into prison. Instead, he is given the highest honor, the American Presidency.

Binh's father has been arrested in Saigon and his mother and sister have been taken into custody. The Thieu regime has rounded up over 5,000 patriots over these past months alone.

We have made it known, through so many years of struggle and sacrifice, that we do not want the United States to dictate the affairs of our country. Yet this has not prevented Mr. Nixon from sowing death on our land or forcing on our compatriots his servant Nguyen Van Thieu. There are many among us still willing to risk our lives to stop his aggression. Nguyen Thai Binh was one such. He has inspired many more.

The stewardess on the airplane spoke of his gentleness. Binh had a knife, but was unwilling to use it against the pilot who attacked him. Yet he was shot in cold blood. Later the pilot joked about this murder as if Binh had not even been a human being. He said he did not regret his actions because he did not trust the American judicial system to convict Binh.

I am writing this letter on your Independence Day. The man responsible for my friend's death did not even believe in the foundation of your nation, the judicial system. The man he killed fought for the same thing your nation fought for almost two hundred years ago: national independence. As you remember how hated was King George's rule, so too you must see how much we hate your Government's domination of our people.

Nguyen Thai Binh is a Vietnamese patriot. I am only glad, as he must have been, that he was able to die on Vietnamese soil. We Vietnamese will continue our and Binh's struggle to the end.

LE ANH TU

Philadelphia, July 4, 1972