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RAMBO/ROCKY MAY WIN THAT "OTHER WAR"

When the Soviets called a news conference in Moscow to denounce some American movies, I figured I should find out for myself what caused the Russians' petulant paranoia. Then, I discovered that U.S. movie critics were equally scathing in their denunciations of those same movies.

The Soviets coined a new word, "warnography," to describe what they called the movies' "anti-Soviet hysteria." The critics must have thumbed their thesauruses to come up with every adjective of contempt from "boring" to "stupid."

But the customers are rushing to see them, and the movie entrepreneur who has so mightily offended those critics with easy access to the media must be laughing all the way to the bank. "Rambo" sold 425,605 $80 video cassettes the day it went on the market.

The target of this new hate/love phenomenon is Sylvester Stallone, whose three movies, "First Blood," "Rambo: First Blood Part II," and "Rocky IV," are record-smashing successes. Since the plot is that the hero, Rambo or Rocky, defeats the Russians, the Soviets and the liberals are as upset as they are about Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars."

The critics tried to tell us that the "good" movies about Communists were "Reds," which glamorized the Communist John Reed (honored by the Russians by burial in Moscow), and "Daniel," an attempt to rehabilitate the reputations of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg (who were executed as spies for the U.S.S.R.). But both were box-office turkeys.

Rambo expresses the collective outrage of Americans that we let a two-bit, backward country in Southeast Asia defeat us. Rambo speaks even fewer lines in his movies than Gary Cooper did in his, but when Rambo was asked to go back to Vietnam, he said it all in one memorable line, "Sir, do we get to win this time?"

Rambo expresses the collective outrage of the American people at the way our nation has allowed our POWs and MIAs to languish for 15 years more or less, caged up like animals, tortured by sadistic captors.

Rambo expresses the collective outrage of our Vietnam veterans at the way they were

treated by the liberals, by the media, and by brainwashed U.S. citizens who spit on them and called them "baby-killers" when they returned home from a tour of duty they did not seek, but accepted only because their country ordered them to go. Rambo blurts out what the Vietnam veteran wants -- "for our country to love us as much as we love it."

The media and the liberals bitterly blasted Ronald Reagan a few years ago for daring to say that our Vietnam veterans were "noble." But Rambo has turned the tide. What has devastated the liberals is not just that Rambo proves that Vietnam veterans are noble, but that audiences are enthusiastically cheering Rambo as he kills the vicious Russians and rescues our POWs still concealed in Vietnam.

Not only men respond enthusiastically to Stallone's irrepressible machismo. Sociologists might think that a Stallone movie is a "man's" movie, but the girls are also shouting "go Rambo" and "go Rocky." Despite a decade of women's lib propaganda that women prefer "sensitive, Phil Donahue-type" men, Rambo/Rocky is an authentic hero to women, too.

All the movies the Soviets are upset about are not blood and guts. "White Nights," with great dancing by Baryshnikov and Gregory Hines, shows the Soviet suppression of freedom of artistic expression. It also shows how the favored few in the U.S.S.R. live the life of the wealthy, while the rest of the people exist like peons.

Rambo is not fighting only the Communists. In "First Blood," Rambo understood only that "somebody wouldn't let us win." When he returned to Vietnam to rescue POWs in "Rambo: First Blood Part II," he discovered that there is "another war going on."

Indeed there is. It was that "other" enemy in the media and the Administrations in power during the Vietnam War which dealt our country a humiliating defeat, and then savaged the valiant men who answered the call to "duty, honor, country" but had no part in the policy decisions.

The movies show that Rambo probably could have beaten the Communists in Vietnam all by himself. But it's too late for that, now.

What has the Soviets and the liberals in paranoid panic is that Rambo/Rocky's fantastic success may win that "other war." Helped by the technology of VCRs in 27 million American homes, Rambo/Rocky is teaching Americans that, when it comes to dealing with evil men, there is no substitute for victory.